



## The Lyre Thief

*Jennifer Fallon*

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Her Serene Highness, Rakaia, Princess of Fardohnya, is off to Hythria, where her eldest sister is now the High Princess, to find herself a husband, and escape the inevitable bloodbath in the harem when her brother takes the throne.

Rakaia is not interested in marrying anyone, least of all some brute of a Hythrun Warlord she's never met, but she has a plan to save herself from that, too. If she can just convince her baseborn sister, Charisee, to play along, she might actually get away with it.

But there is trouble brewing across the continent. High Prince of Hythria, Damin Wolfblade, must head north to save the peace negotiated a decade ago between the Harshini, Hythria, Fardohnya, Medalon and Karien. He must leave behind an even more dangerous conflict brewing between his wife and his powerful mother, Princess Marla.

...And in far off Medalon, someone has stolen the music.

Their quest for the tiny stolen lyre containing the essence of the God of Music will eventually touch all their lives, threaten everything they hold dear and prove to be far more personal than any of them can imagine.

## **The Lyre Thief Details**

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Author : Jennifer Fallon

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## From Reader Review The Lyre Thief for online ebook

### Erin Arkin says

The Lyre Thief by Jennifer Fallon is the first book in the Hythrun Chronicles series and once I started this book, I had a tough time putting it down. Fallon created a story that took me on a journey right along with her characters and once I hit the last page, I wanted the next book so I could see what happens next.

The world that Fallon has developed here is built around her characters and she did a wonderful job of exposing the different customs and beliefs along the way. What I didn't get was a solid understanding of the world these characters lived in but in the end, I don't think it hurt the story at all. Each chapter is from another character's point of view and as the story moves forward, it all ultimately ties together and I have to say, Fallon did a great job of creating a story that not only provides the reader with the whole picture but the way she brought all the different pieces together was great.

The main story is that of Rakaia, the daughter of the King of Fardohnya. She has been betrothed to a King in Hyrthria as part of a treaty and because there are secrets her mother has been keeping, she will do whatever she can to get away from the harem quickly. As she and her sister (base born so not acknowledged as royalty) Charisee make their voyage, Rakaia puts Charisee in a position that she has no way out of.

As Rakaia and Cherisee ultimately end up on separate paths, their stories are destined to intersect again and I loved how it happened. In the end, while Rakaia has done something fairly selfish, she wasn't just thinking of herself. She wanted more for Cherisee and thought they could both get something out of the arrangement. Granted, she went about it in a way that wasn't fair to Cherisee but I can see where she was coming from.

One of the other pieces of the story I enjoyed was the way the Gods were integrated into it. Everyone worships a God and when Cherisee came face to face with Jakerlon (the God of Liars) I loved how he not only explained everything to her but also got Cherisee to realize it is in her best interest to embrace her situation and make the best of it.

One of the pieces of the story that was left fairly open ended was what was going to happen with R'shiel. As the Demon Child, she is different from everyone else but she has been on a mission for a while now to find the man she loves. The only thing she knows is that Death has him and she is willing to do whatever it takes to get to Brak and potentially bring him back...no matter what the price.

As I mentioned, all of the characters in this story are linked and eventually their stories become intertwined. I've only mentioned a few here but there are probably 10 different character's points of view that are covered and despite that, the story doesn't get confusing. I admit that there were some definite aha moments as things started to come together and in the end, I really enjoyed this book. If you are looking for a solid fantasy that happens to be a very character driven story, consider checking this book out. I am looking forward to the next book in this series and will definitely be checking out the other books that Fallon has written as they all appear to link back to this series and will perhaps fill in the blanks on some of the questions I have.

Thank you to the publisher for the review copy!

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## **Lema says**

Sadly a DNF because life is too short to read confusing clichés..

Why confusing? Because I feel like I crashed a party at midnight, I was aware that this is a part of an overarching series, but at least this is a first book in an independent trilogy.. Still, introducing the world still felt like a dump of recaped info..

Why cliché? The plot introduced in the first couple of chapters was very engaging but then the way it went did not catch my attention, and the few things that held my interest were apparently just passing by. I actually strted reading this in September, but then I lost interest and put down, I decided now to give another chance but it feels like I'm forcing myself.

Maybe I'll pick it back up in the future.. remains to be seen.

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## **Dark Faerie Tales says**

Review courtesy of Dark Faerie Tales

Quick & Dirty: Stolen music, a dangerous switch, and an even more dangerous game is afoot.

Opening Sentence: "Were it not for the voices in his head, Mica would have been incredibly lonely."

The Review:

Naveen wonders why Princess Sophanny is so desperate to have her daughter married to an old man, but he believes her when she says it is because of what will happen when the heir inherits. He knows that she is leaving something out, but he isn't sure what. However, when Sophanny pulls Rakaia aside to tell her that she will be marrying the old Lord of Highcastle, she tells her that she isn't the daughter of the King, and that she must flee once she is out of the city so he can't kill her if truth comes out. They come up with a desperate plan that involves her switching places with Charisse.

Meanwhile, in Medalon the Lord Defender finds out that someone has stolen the Lyre, and that the music has gone silent. He sends Caden out to find the stolen lyre. Rakaia tries to convince Charisse to switch places, but decides to leave and force her into that position. She finds a passage out with a caravan, and leaves a letter with Charisse telling her that. Charisse is about to come clean about switching places but she is informed that the caravan has been destroyed and there are no survivors. She knows that Rakaia is dead and no one will ever find out the truth unless she tells them.

Damin, the High Prince, is almost assassinated, but when he is healed they find that he is in an unnatural sleep and that Death is holding him because of something R'ishiel has done. Rakaia is not dead, but has been saved by R'ishiel who leaves her in a pub, where she finds employment with Mica. Mica has plans of his own, and soon Rakaia finds herself falling in love with the troubled young man. When he plans to sing for King Hablet she confesses the truth to him. Damin and the Lord Defender's wife remain in their comas, R'ishiel has bargained for entry in the Halls of Hell. Everything is becoming clear.

Apparently this is book 7 in the Hythrun Chronicles, but the first book in the War of the Gods series, so coming from the perspective that I have not read any of the other books in the Hythrun Chronicles, that being said, you don't need to read them in order to read this one. Jennifer does an amazing job of filling in a lot of

blanks, but to be honest it wasn't until I went to type up this review that I realized that there were other books before this. That is how good this book is at telling the story.

I wasn't sure that I would like it, but I found myself sucked in and devouring this book. I couldn't stop reading it, and that cliffhanger has me dying to read the next book in this series. I will also probably go back and read the first books in the Hythrun Chronicles because I enjoy this world so much. I am really interested to see how this all plays out. Even with so many viewpoints the story comes together beautifully and you don't spend a lot of time being confused about who or what part they will play in the storyline.

Notable Scene:

"A chill gripped her as she hurried along the wide tiled hall. Rakaia had been chosen to marry the lord of Highcastle-and that meant her handmaiden was going to be redundant. Nobody took their slaves with them to their husband's house, particularly not slaves from Hablet's harm, as everyone assumed that meant-not unjustly-they were Hablet's spies.

FTC Advisory: Tor/Macmillan provided me with a copy of The Lyre Thief. No goody bags, sponsorships, "material connections," or bribes were exchanged for my review.

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### **Anni (Tea in the Treetops) says**

Took me a while to get through this one but I really love this world and the way that Jennifer Fallon writes! I haven't read any of the previous series, and while I felt that I was missing some of the references to past events, it didn't get in the way of this story. Great stuff!

Review posted on Tea in the Treetops in June 2016:

The Lyre Thief is the first in a new trilogy, set in Jennifer Fallon's lands of Medalon, Hythria and Fardohnya. High-stakes political fantasy is woven together with family drama and a touch of romance, and even though I haven't read any of Jennifer's previous series, I really enjoyed this book.

Even though this story is set some years in the future, many characters have returned and I did feel like I was missing out on some of the back-story at times. Nevertheless, this is an entirely new chapter in this world, and I was able to pick up the missing threads. In this new story, there's the princess who switches places with her base-born half-sister to escape marriage to an elderly lord, the royal family of Hythria and their looming negotiations with Medalon, plus the Demon Child and her quest to find her lost lover. Then there's the young lad who steals the God of Music.

The Lyre Thief is the first part of a complicated story with many threads, but they are woven together very well and told from several points of view. It has been a while since I read such a complex political fantasy and it took me a while to get into the rhythm of it, but the story didn't feel slow at any stage and there was plenty to keep me reading.

What I enjoyed the most was how realistic each of the characters felt. There's enough of the everyday goings-on in each household to give a rounded picture of each person involved in the story, and I especially enjoyed reading about Adrina and Damin Wolfblade and their young family (for perhaps obvious reasons). The Demon Child R'Shiel also intrigues me – I'll have to try to get a hold of the Demon Child trilogy to find

out more about what happened with her and Brak.

The ending leaves us with a dreadful cliffhanger and I can't wait to see what adventures book 2, Retribution, brings.

Read this book if you enjoyed Jennifer Fallon's earlier series. Even if you haven't read her other books, The Lyre Thief is engaging high fantasy with endearing characters and enigmatic magic.

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### **Micaela says**

The latest installment from my favorite author! The Lyre Thief is the first of a sequel series to Fallon's Hythrun Chronicles. The chronological first three of those, The Wolfblade Trilogy, are absolutely amazing works of art. Next, The Demon Child Trilogy is her first published work, and pretty good, though no where near as polished as the later series. This new book is certainly a fun read, but there is a lot of rehashing what went on before, because the story is in a large way a direct fall out from what happened at the end of Demon Child. One of the things I most admire about Fallon as an author is her willingness to recognize her potential own loose ends and challenge them to a duel rather than sweep them under the rug (see Tide Lords). The exposition is worked in pretty well, but there is still rather a lot of it. Fortunately, that was pretty much my only big complaint, and the exposition was necessary for new readers unfamiliar with the backstory.

Now for the goods. Fallon has developed some charming characters for the new series, and a very unusual sort of crisis to deal with. Charisee, Rakaia, and Kiam are the new Next Gen main characters, but they interact well with the old cast. If I have to nitpick, I might say that Rakaia's arc is a bit more jarring than the others, partly because she ends up being a bit more reactive than active after a while, because hers is the POV through which the reader gets to know the disarming and a little insane Mica, who is going to be central to the overarching plot but is not himself a main POV. In other news, Fallon is still deft with dialogue and witty banter. We get to meet Jakerlon, the God of liars, for the first time. He's a hoot. Adrina and Marla still don't like each other, and we love them for it. Check check check. I think my most lasting impression from this book is going to be the development of the troubled character Mica, aka Mikel from Demon Child. He is the real loose cannon that indirectly sets most of the action in motion, but there is a mystery about him that is not yet fully teased out, and his is just the most disturbingly compelling story going on. It is hard to describe, so just take my word for it and read the book...

Mostly, this book is a lot of set up for the main story line of the series. That main plot has yet to be elucidated, but I am confident that Fallon has something fabulous in mind for us, as this is a world she is confident in, and she has a knack for selling bold plot choices (again, see the Tide Lords Trilogy). This particular novel has enough going on in it, what with all the lies and thievery and magicky stuff, to keep us occupied until the main act gets here. I look forward to the reread, and to the next installment.

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### **RitaSkeeter says**

#### **Re-read February 2016**

It's been a long time since the days of my starry eyed Beta review (see below), but I loved this book - as I do all of Fallon's - so of course I purchased my own 'official' copy now the book is published and had a re-read. I enjoyed this book as much now as I did back in 2014!

I'm not much of one to recount plot, but to sum it up in a few words we have a harem, hidden identities, revenge, romance, and intrigue, all on an epic fantasy scale. But in the interests of me being able to remember details of this book for when book 2 comes out (contains major spoilers): (view spoiler)

There are old favourites in this book, along with a cast of new characters. They range from the sympathetic, the lustworthy, to the downright sinister. If you ask me, there is nowhere near enough Damin Wolfblade in this book, though the void is filled somewhat by Kiam Miar. Fallon has always drawn characters well.

*Hot tip:* For those who haven't read Fallon's work set in this world before I suggest starting with the Hythrun Chronicles, the first book of which is Wolfblade. While you could probably read this book and grasp most of it, I think the deeper understanding of the world building that comes from having read from the beginning is useful.

### **July 2014 Review**

I was browsing Facebook one gloomy Autumn day back in May when Jennifer Fallon posted on her page that she was looking for beta readers for her newest book - this book - The Lyre Thief. I had been checking her page regularly because of the snippets she was posting from the book. Those snippets were enough to tell me this book was going to return me to Hythria and neighboring counties, and those much loved characters from The Demon Child and Hythrun Chronicles trilogies.

So, I did what any respectable fangirl would do, and emailed Jennifer to apply straight away. Imagine my delight when checking my emails late last night to discover the holy grail - the manuscript for The Lyre Thief. I've demolished that 600 page plus manuscript in less than a day. I'm not sure how good my beta reading skills were because - I'm being honest here - I was too interested in devouring the book. I really couldn't put it down. Every chance I got I sat down to read, even if only a couple of pages at a time.

I won't give the plot away at this point, but this is a book well worth waiting for. I'll be having Amazon deliver me a 'real' copy on my Kindle on release day, ready to re-read. The story is tight and well-plotted, but what I really love about this book - what I always love about Fallon's books - are the characters. There are some old favourites here, but also some new characters whom I loved also.

But let's get serious. I do have a problem with this book. A big one. How on earth am I supposed to wait until number 2 is published?!

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### **Rebecca says**

I received The Lyre Thief from Tor for review- it was a great surprise to find it randomly in my mailbox one day. Prior to this I hadn't heard of Jennifer Fallon or her previous books, though I'm extremely glad I had the chance to read this book. I have plans to go back and read her other works, which are set in the same world and feature many of the characters that make appearances in The Lyre Thief. This book was a stunning work of fantasy, with a rich plot, captivating characters, and a deep and complex culture.

The Lyre Thief features an absolute classic case of switched identities- the Fardohnyan princess Rakaia trades places with her slave Charisee to escape an undesirable marriage arrangement and the consequences of her birth. I LOVED Charisee as she slowly began to adjust to her role as royalty and she batted her eyelashes at the mysterious Kiam Miar, assassin and half-brother to the Hythrian High Prince. I liked Rakaia somewhat less at the beginning, but she got considerably better as the book progressed. I'm particularly looking forward to the next book to see how Rakaia handles her new situation. Adrina and Damin (while present) were extremely likable characters as well.... This book was absolutely full of powerful, determined, awesome female characters. Now that I reflect upon it, there were more female characters running the show and determining plot than in pretty much any fantasy novel I've read. LOVED IT!

While the plot mostly focused on Rakaia and Charisee's storylines, there were several other plot threads worked in which will most likely continue to develop in forthcoming novels. The theft of Gimlorie's lyre, R'Shiel's quest to the underworld, and some later developments are going to play pretty big roles later, if I may be so bold as to say so. Some of the story arcs are actually continuations from previous books written by Fallon. Such complexity speaks of great talent. This was an addictive story and I read at every opportunity I had, from breaks and lunch to right before bed.

I 100% recommend The Lyre Thief- it's fantastic and deserves recognition, in my opinion. I was heavily vested in the characters and was totally in love with Kiam and Charisee's obvious interest in one another. It's so rare that I find a really lovable romance in a non-YA fantasy novel and the feels were definitely present. Besides, Kiam is an assassin and that in itself is a totally romanticized profession in fantasy novels, but he wasn't jaded about life which was so refreshing! I want happy endings!! I've added Fallon's Wolfblade trilogy to my list of books to read because the little snippets I got of Damin Wolfblade captured my attention and got me curious. Very curious. It's not too often that I get this excited about a new (to me) author and my emotions are in TURMOIL! I'm so ridiculously excited, and I've basically been foisting my thoughts and recommendations on anyone who will listen! Check it out people!

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### **Mogsy (MMOGC) says**

4.5 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <http://bibliosanctum.com/2016/03/11/b...>

2016 fantasy releases have been blasting away all my expectations so far, and as a result, we're not even officially into spring and already I have a long list of contenders for favorite book of the year. The Lyre Thief is most definitely going to be one of those contenders, as I'd known within the first fifty pages. This is a book that captured my attention from the start.

It was also the first time I've read Jennifer Fallon, and interestingly, I actually hadn't known that The Lyre Thief was a follow-up series until I read the blurbs for Medalon and the other books in her Hythrun Chronicles: Demon Child and Hythrun Chronicles: Wolfblade sequences. Fallon eases us into the world so gently and seamlessly though, I felt no disadvantage from not having read the previous series—and you know how picky I can be about such things! For one, a decade has passed since the events at the end of the Demon Child books, so we're looking at essentially a brand new story. Second, the author does a superb job of catching new readers up, making sure to cover all the important information about the history and the characters. I was extremely impressed and pleased at how naturally she worked in what we needed to know without resorting to any info-dumps or awkward flashbacking. It really feels like a fresh start.

At the center of this book is a pair of siblings: Rakaia, Princess of Fardohnya, and her baseborn half-sister Charisee, a slave in the king's harem. But as it turns out, Rakaia is not of royal birth herself. Terrified that the king will find out, her mother Princess Sophany quickly arranges for her daughter to marry a Hythrun Warlord as a way to get Rakaia far away from Fardohnya and out of harm's way. Sophany hatches up a plan for Charisee to take the place of Rakaia, since the two girls have known each other closely since they are six years old and look so much alike that they can practically pass for each other. Charisee, however, knows nothing of the plot right up until Rakaia makes her escape, forcing her hapless half-sister to keep up with the pretense of being a real princess.

Meanwhile, in far off Medalon, a token of the God of Music has been stolen, setting off a chain of events that can destroy all the magic that the gods have helped mortals create. Who knew that a tiny golden lyre could cause so much trouble? Its theft has far-reaching consequences that touch many lives, from Rakaia and Charisee to the High Prince Damin Wolfblade and his stepbrother Kiam Miar, guild assassin. At the heart of it all is R'shiel, the Demon Child herself, resurfacing again now after ten years of searching for Death, and she will not stop until she gets what she wants.

The Lyre Thief is such a rich tapestry of love, courage, and adventure, woven from so many story threads that each carry their own meanings and strengths. It is everything I want in a sweeping narrative: a cast of interesting characters, a setting filled with exotic and detailed locales, and a rich world filled with the things that make it feel alive—like history, culture, and religion. The best part is that none of this feels overwhelming, even though much of the world-building had already been established by the previous series. Past events have played no small role in the plot of this story, and there are also a lot of characters, some new and some returning. Still, it never got to be too much, even as the author explained the complex relationship ties (the Wolfblades, for instance, are a huge extended family) or recounted important historical events that led to the current political climate between the various kingdoms.

This is also a fast-moving tale, with an unceasing momentum helped by a strong sense of timing and well-chosen POVs. My favorites are of course Charisee and Rakaia, each experiencing a new life for the very first time and finding love in the most unexpected place. Each chapter brought new surprises, making The Lyre Thief hard to put down. Twists and turns are plentiful, and the book also had this tendency to lull me into a false sense of security before dropping major plot bombshells. Every so often I would be enjoying the story as it progressed down a pleasant path when all of a sudden something horrific or shocking would come out of nowhere and blindside me. I learned very quickly not to underestimate Jennifer Fallon's storytelling skills! She has a real talent for engaging readers, and I was certainly captivated by every scene.

For the absolute best results, it would probably help to read the first two series in the Hythrun Chronicles first, but I want to also stress that it is completely unnecessary if you just feel like diving straight into The Lyre Thief. However, I can't guarantee that you won't want to pick them up after you read this anyway, because the novel is just that good. I loved it so much, I've already added the previous trilogies to the TBR because I want to learn everything I can about this irresistible world and the characters. Highly recommended, and I can't wait for the next book.

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### **Carolyn says**

Where have I been that I have not read Jennifer Fallon's books before? She is such a fantastic writer of top quality fantasy fiction! Along with a number of titles, she has previously written the 'Demon Child' and 'Wolfblade' series both set in the the same world as 'The Lyre Thief' and collectively known as 'The Hythrun

Chronicles'. Despite this being my first foray into that world, it did not take long to come up to speed with the characters, their realms and relationships, although if you have read the previous series you would have a much better understanding of this world (and yes, I will be reading her earlier books asap). It certainly helped that snippets of past history were included where necessary as well as a list of characters at the end of the book, so it did not take long to get a good feel for the world and become engrossed in it .

I was immediately hooked into the story. It starts with two important events which eventually overlap in this book and no doubt, future sequels. In the first event, Mikel, a young man imprisoned by the Gods audaciously escapes by stealing a tiny golden lyre belonging to Gimlorie, the God of Music, throwing an important covenant between the Gods and men, into disarray. He then makes his getaway into the world where he plans to take revenge on the humans involved in harming him. In the second event, Rakaia, a Princess of Fardohnya is sent off by her father to marry an ancient warlord as part of an agreement over trade and borders. Rakaia is pleased to escape her father's harem where she faces an uncertain future and is able to take her lifelong maid and friend Charisee with her for company. However, she has no intention of playing nursemaid to an old man while stuck in a cold, lonely castle and has a plan for escape. As the plot unfolds Rakaia and Charisee must both spin a web of lies that will threaten their lives if it ever starts to unravel.

This book has all the best elements that make up great classic fantasy. Wonderful, clever, easy to read prose, interesting, complex characters and great stories, full of love and adventure with twists and turns that keep the plot moving off in different directions and then weaving back together again. The story is told from different points of view so that we get to hear the characters voices and get to know them well. Most of the great characters are women - Rakaia, Charisee, Adrina (Rakaia's sister), Marla (Adrina's mother in law) and R'Shiel, the demon child with Rakaia's father Hablet and brother Alaric, Mica the minstrel and Kiam the assassin playing important supporting male roles that are likely to evolve in future books. I hope we don't have to wait too long for the next in the series as I am so looking forward to the next instalment in this enthralling story.

*With thanks to Netgalley and the publisher Harper Collins Australia for an e-copy of this book to read and review*

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### **Kristen says**

*The Lyre Thief* is the first of Jennifer Fallon's books I've read but it won't be the last since it is thoroughly enjoyable! It follows several characters, most of whom are quite interesting, but the highlight is following Charisee pretending to be Princess Rakaia. I loved Charisee, who is kind, outspoken, and clever; her story is both fun (especially when conversing with the God of Liars, who takes an interest in her situation) and heartbreakingly sad. I'm really looking forward to the second book in the War of the Gods trilogy!

Full Review: <http://www.fantasybookcafe.com/2016/0...>

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### **Anya says**

I am completely surprised by how much I enjoyed this book! My one complaint is that without reading the previous series, there are times when I was definitely playing catch up on information other readers would

have known already. However, despite not normally liking a politically driven plot, I loved how vivid all of these characters were and all their separate adventures. The world is rich and expansive, the gods entertaining in their meddling, and I was never once bored!

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### **Ariana Fae says**

THE LYRE THEIF by Jennifer Fallon was one of best fantasy novels I have read this year, and I have lost count on how many books I did not finish, so this was a great surprise. It was wonderful re-visiting old friends from the Hythrun world and making new ones. Although the story revolves Rakaia and Charisee, I have to say the stand out character of the book was Liam. Liam had me smiling at his kind heartiness, not what you expect from an assassin and he described himself perfectly in the book-a sentimental idiot.

I loved that the story is filled with strong willed women who were at the center of things and calling the shots from Adrina, Marla, R'shiel and the two main protagonists. The world building is phenomenal, the pacing just right, and all the threads are woven together beautifully. Mix in mischievous gods, politics, a hint of romance, and characters determined to get what they want and you have a pretty awesome story. Jennifer Fallon did a wonderful job and I can't wait to read the next book in the series.

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### **Bookwraiths says**

Originally reviewed at Bookwraiths.

Bringing to mind the days when fantasy by the likes of Barbara Hambly, David Eddings, and Stephen R. Donaldson dominated the bookstore shelves, *The Lyre Thief* is a triumph of that type of classic storytelling; a masterful amalgamation of traditional themes, colorful characters and divine beings which will entertain even the most demanding fantasy aficionado out there.

Told through multiple points of view, this first installment of the *Hythrun Chronicles: War of the Gods* elegantly and effortlessly weaves together the stories of Rakaia, Princess of Fardohnya, her half-sister and slave Charisee, the master assassin Kiam, High Princess Andrina of Hyrthun, and the infamous Demon Child. Each individual journey mesmerizing in and of itself, but also touching upon and leading toward the others in a wonderfully orchestrated dance which keeps the narrative fresh, entertaining and causes the pages to fly by rapidly.

Beginning it all is the plight of Princess Rakaia. Having lived a privileged (though stifled) existence in her father's royal harem, an unexpected revelation by her mother throws her whole life into turbulence and threatens to result in her painful death. This news and her mother's desperate plan to save her causing not only trepidation but guilt as it involves placing her slave half-sister and lifelong companion Charisee in harm's way.

Charisee herself is annoyingly ignorant of all the political machinations going on with her sister and the other members of the royal family. Indeed, she doesn't sense any wrongness when Rakaia comes to her with a plan to swap places: Charisee becoming the Princess Rakaia and heading off to marry a Hythrun Warlord while Rakaia becomes the freed slave Charisee. Obviously, she realizes their ruse might lead them into trouble, but

the opportunity to finally change her role in life overcomes her initial misgivings, leading her to don the role of Princess of Fardohnya and journey forth with the Master Assassin Kiam to her (Rakaia's) royal wedding.

Meanwhile, a continent away, Princess Rakaia's sister Adrina is living a charmed life as High Princess of Hythrun with a husband she loves and children she adores. If not for her shrew of a mother-in-law, it would be paradise. But then everything is thrown into chaos by the actions of two people: King Hablet of Fardohnya when he sends news that Rakaia will be coming to live with Adrina until her marriage to a Hythrun Warlord and the Demon Child Ry'Shiel when she stirs up the god of Death himself.

As for the Demon Child, she is a nearly divine being who has grown less and less enamored of the world she saved in the past. The wonders of the earth having become commonplace to her; its inhabitants tedious at best; and her lonely lot in life complicated by the fact the only person she ever loved and felt companionship for resides in hell due to a deal he made to save her life. And so (tired of hiding in the shadows) Ry'Shiel begins an epic quest to retrieve long dead Brak from the halls of Death no matter the consequences to her former friends — including Adrina's husband Damin Wolfblade.

And while the stories of these people play out, an even more extraordinary one is taking place: the theft of the lyre of the God of Music. The disappearance of this physical manifestation of the divine covenant between the gods and men jeopardizing the very existence of the world!

There really are many, many wonderful things to say about this book. One could begin by talking about the flowing prose, which is informative and colorful but easily digested as well as wickedly clever at times. Or you could focus on the characterization; these differing people evolving into individuals whose lives and struggles matter to you as a reader. Then there is the depth of the world, the unique races and cultures, the dynamic of gods, man, and magical beings interacting, or perhaps the constant references to the characters' previous adventures in the past; all of it giving this story a depth which makes it feel so much more real. But, really, reading comes down to entertainment to me, and this book is highly entertaining, addictive even, sucking you into the narrative and never giving you any reason to loose interest or set it aside.

As for any criticisms, the only one I have is the characters' references to adventures in the past. While this definitely lends a weight of history to the world and these people, explains their attachment to one another, it does feel forced from time to time. There are several instances where two characters who are having a conversation on a current situation suddenly diverging off into a multi paragraph discussion of some past event which only tentatively has anything to do with the current crisis. No, these episodes don't ruin the narrative, but they are a distraction from time to time.

*The Lyre Thief* is one of my favorite fantasy finds of the past few years. It not only entertained me, but it opened up a whole new fantasy world to discover and enjoy, specifically Jennifer Fallon's *Hythrun Chronicles* novels (Demon Child and Wolfblade.) And if you love classic fantasy or merely need a break from more grimdark faire, I'd highly recommend you pick this novel up and enjoy.

I received this book from the Tor Books in exchange for a fair and honest review. I'd like to thank both of them for allowing me to receive this review copy and inform everyone that the review you have read is my opinion alone.

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**Lisa says**

Full review at The Speculative Herald: <http://www.speculativeherald.com/2016...>

4.5/5 stars

The Lyre Thief by Jennifer Fallon is packed full of all my fantasy favorites. Assassins, thieves, undesirable arranged marriages, scandalous secrets, switched identities, bandits, magic. Oh, and dragons. It checks lots of boxes, and honestly, it does it all quite well.

I quickly became engrossed with the characters. The story is told through numerous POVs, but all are done well and all provide clearer insight to the overall picture. Quickly you can identify a pair of sisters as being central to the story.

Rakaia is a princess of Fardohnya, which on the surface sounds like a pretty good life. Until you learn the real details. She is one of scores of daughters of the King who has a harem, so lots of wives, lots of children. In addition to his wives, the harem also includes court'esa. These are men and women who are experts in the art of sexual pleasure. Somehow of out of all the children born to the King from his legitimate wives, only one of them is a son. The rest? Daughters that he can use for political or economic advantage as they are traded off as wives to secure some advantage for the king. Pretty much, they are just a commodity he has in excess.

Since she was very small, she has been inseparable with her half sister Cherisee. Cherries is the King's daughter from one of the court'esa. As she is not a legitimate daughter, her role in life has been to be a slave and servant to Rakaia. The two girls are close in age as well as close in appearance. They become more than just servant and princess, they become close friends and playmates.

But Rakaia was not destined to keep the pampered life of a princess. Her mother has a secret, one that makes her fear for her daughter's safety and future. For this reason, she works out a deal to have Rakaia sent off to marry a border lord who is probably close to 80, and if the rumors are true, also syphilitic. Nice. What young girl wouldn't be thrilled with that prospect! Now enters the plan of switched identities! It will call for Rakaia to flee, leaving Cherisee to take her place as princess and bride. So, Cherisee is left trying to play the role of pampered princess, a role where she must learn to think more about herself and her own desires instead of always looking to make everyone else happy. And Rakaia is left completely on her own, needing to leave her royal life as just a memory and learn how to survive in a world she has been quite sheltered from.

I would be remiss to not mention the role of gods in this story as well. They can walk amongst us humans, and do. I have to say, this added an extra layer to both the world as well as my enjoyment. They could be quite entertaining! And then there is the conflict of the tiny stolen lyre. A token of the God of Music that is worth more than you would think. Without it, everything could change.

I can't say the book is without imperfections, but the ones I found I realized I just did not care. This is a book that had me reading late into night, and I realized before finishing it was also one that would leave me craving the next book because the further I read, the less pages I saw remaining, the more I felt I was just not ready to put the book and story down. I eagerly wait for the next installment so I can find out what happens next!

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**Britt says**

There are multiple character POV's that are incredibly intricately woven. I began to worry that I was not going to be able to fill in plot holes left by the last series but it quickly became apparent I need not fear. Fallon does a great job of informing the readers with out loads just strait info dumpage. The epicness of what is going down is incredibly easy to grasp yet still very intriguing at the same time. I can't stress enough just how broad a picture she is able to paint. This review was originally posted on Please Feed the Bookworm [Click here to keep reading bout my feels!](#)

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