



## A Muddle of Magic

*Alexandra Rushe*

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*What's a nice Southern girl doing in a place like this?*

Whisked from humdrum Alabama to the fantastical land of Tandara by a mage who won't take no for an answer, Raine Stewart finds herself tangled in a muddle of magic. A Dark Wizard is out for her blood, a demonic golem has orders to dispatch her . . . and she stinks at magic. Being a wizard, even a baby wizard, is harder than Raine thought.

Raine and her companions find sanctuary amongst the famed warriors of the snow-capped nation of Finlara, and Raine is reunited with her dear friend, the frost giant Tiny Bartog. In short order, she unearths a magic mirror, a dread curse, and a tragic, ill-fated love affair.

Safety, however, is an illusion. The dreaded Magog's Eye is still missing, and war looms. It seems an entire world hangs in the balance, waiting to see whether Raine will be able to harness her magic. But with a little help from her friends, she'll survive . . . she hopes.

## A Muddle of Magic Details

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Author : Alexandra Rushe

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## From Reader Review A Muddle of Magic for online ebook

### Vanessa says

I am such a sucker for ensemble fantasy tales. I really enjoyed the continuation of Raine's story in A Muddle of Magic. Raine and her companions seek refuge in Finlara, and as Raine's luck would have it, she stumbles into a controversy with her first steps into this land. I like the fact that Raine has no idea about protocol and bumbles around as you would imagine you would if you were yanked from this world into a mythical one. She has an endearing way that offers help to those in need. She is intelligent and has very good insight, and yet is at times vulnerable.

In this installment, we concentrate more on Raine as a person and we delve into more of the background of the "group". Holed up in Raven's father's castle, Raine has to move cautiously through the Court and discovers secrets which are so much more than she bargained for.

Surrounded by her friends she tries to avoid the attention/kidnapping by the Dark Wizard's minions. There are happy moments and some much harder ones.

There wasn't much magical instruction, (in fact her instructor barely appears in this novel), or anything conclusive, and I would say that this book was more an exploration of Raine and some of her side characters. This does not end in a cliffhanger, but there is more of a sense of fading away, rather than a definitive direction for the band of friends. I really anticipate the next book in this series.

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### Steve says

Great book 2 of the Fledgling Magic series

I loved this book. It is every bit as good as the first one in the series. Everything I wrote in my review of the first book applies here: excellent character development, well-paced action, and amusing banter between characters. The outstanding world building started in book 1 continues. Normally I don't have patience for world-building that doesn't directly add to the story, but Alexandra Rushe does it so well, that I thoroughly enjoyed her detours. I strongly recommend this book for fans of the genre. I am not sure how it would be to read as a stand-alone, so I also recommend that "A Meddle of Wizards" be read first.

Disclosure: I received a complimentary copy of this book via Netgalley for review purposes.

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### L Simpson says

I received an advance copy of this title from NetGalley.

Fans of "A Meddle of Wizards" will love the sequel. Alexandra Rushe delivers on her second tour of Tandara, offering magic, romance, ancient curses, political intrigue--and a fair helping of humor.

As she continues her magical training--her mouse form \*still\* isn't right--Raine finds herself the ward of the powerful Rowan of Finlara. While he willingly offers her protection from her pursuers, his shrewish wife is another matter. An attempt on Raine's life on her first night under the Rowan's roof sets the tone for the rest

of her stay, as she fumbles her way through court life, attempts to break a centuries-old curse, and tries to keep her wits--and her life. I look forward to the third installment in this series.

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### **Mariam says**

Quite nice story. I like how the author developed the characters, world, creatures and story. One thing that usually irks me when people travel to different world has always been the language. Even though they go to different world, with "aliens", it seems like everyone speaks english. Not in this series. When Raine met Bree for the first time, you can see he speak a different tongue but with magic they start to understand each other. And the special words for each culture salients that fact, different world, different cultures.

The more I read the more I want to find out these secrets Raine is uncovering. Why did the Gods curse Gertie? Why did Finn act as 5 Rowans instead of staying as Finn the first Rowan? Who took Raine to Earth? Why not take her twin too? What's the story of Raine's biological parents? What and who is Chaz? And I also can't wait for Raine and Raven to be together.

When is the third book coming out???

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### **Terrie says**

A fast-paced fantasy novel with well-developed characters, I would recommend this book to readers who like novels by authors such as Phillip Pullman and C S Lewis. The author uses imagery well to create a believable world and relatable characters.

This is the second book in the Fledgling Magic Series. Raine continues her magic training having previously been transported to Tandara, a world of unstable nations ruled by unpredictable gods. She finds herself tangled in a muddle of magic. A Dark Wizard is out for her blood, a demonic golem has orders to dispatch her . . . and she stinks at magic. Being a wizard, even a baby wizard, is harder than Raine thought.

Along with her companions, she finds sanctuary amongst the famed warriors of the snow-capped nation of Finlara, but finds it increasingly difficult to keep her wits about her, as she tries to break a curse and keep her life.

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Carrie says**

A Muddle of Magic by Alexandra Rushe is the second book in the Fledgling Magic fantasy series. The story in this book has continued on from the first book of the series, A Meddle of Wizards, and should be read in order to get the most from the story. Told from multiple points of view the world includes things like wizards, trolls, giants and many other things.

Raine is the main character of the Fledgling Magic series in which she had been living on our world as we know it alone and fighting constant illness when she thought she was beginning to hallucinate. Instead of

hallucinations though a man popped out through her mirror and brought her into a totally new world.

Raine finds out that she is actually from this world but was hidden away in Alabama to keep her safe from an evil dark wizard. She teams up with the group that has brought her into her world to set out to defeat the wizard and finds new dangers around every corner as they travel across this new world from land to land.

Well, my review for A Muddle of Magic can be summed up quite simply really, it's a case of it's not you it's me. I knew after the first book that this series was a bit out of my own normal reading material but I did gain interest in Raine and her crew enough to want to try the next book despite the flaws I had found in the first. However, picking up this second installment I really struggled with getting back into the story at all. The flow of this just seems off to me and a lot of the plot seems predictable with Raine and her magic. I think if you loved the first then you will probably love the second but for me it's just not a good fit leading me to rating this one at 2.5 stars.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.com/>

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### **Douglas Meeks says**

This second installment in the misadventures of Raine and her companions is a wee bit better than the first since the world building is pretty much done but a lot of surprises await. The evil Dark Wizard still wants her dead and the synopsis mentions that she unearths a magic mirror, a dread curse, and a tragic, ill-fated love affair which gives you no idea how momentous all of these things are and they are not all but she does have an aptitude for finding trouble.

The story seemed to move a bit quicker and sometime a bit after the 50% mark I could not put it down and read late into the night to finish it.

While I still feel that Raine has a large amount of TSTL some of it is expected due to her background but I was less than happy with the ending this time, not bad but more of a ending that kind of left you in the middle of no place but to wait for the next book.

Bottom Line: A great story and a LOT of things happen but if this is going to be a trilogy this is the middle third which sets up a lot of things that are not going to happen until the next book so overall 4 Stars for a riveting story and hoping I get that next book soon.

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### **Destiny Bridwell says**

I received a copy of this book for a fair and honest review. This is a second book in a series. Raine finds herself in a magical world and trying to stay alive. The world of this series is well detailed and the characters are fun and developed well. I like that the book is told from different POVs. It gives the world and story more real feel. The magic and magical items are interesting. I hope there is another book.

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## **S.J. Higbee says**

This is an amazingly rich, detailed world – and I was a bit more adrift than was ideal, given I hadn't read the first book. But this portal fantasy adventure was great fun with a wealth of magical beings – there are dragons, giants, a rich variety of trolls and fairies, wizards, seers, ghosts and shape-shifters. I enjoyed Raine's character and while there were times she was a bit overwhelmed, she mostly coped with the major culture shock extremely well. Since she arrived in this fantasy world, she has managed to make a number of friends with some powerful beings – sufficiently successfully so as to draw down some very unwelcome attention from a powerful dark wizard. So with a huge price on her head, she is also having to be continually guarded – which she finds especially irksome, given that before she was yanked into this portal world, she was an invalid with a poor prognosis.

While the adventure is mostly in Raine's viewpoint, there were moments when suddenly we would get someone else's pov, which I found a bit jarring. That niggle aside, I really enjoyed this world. It is very much a classical fantasy adventure in the Tolkien tradition with a rich variety of different creatures and Rushe is deft at giving us plenty of description without holding up the pace too much. I loved her serpent Flame, while the puzzles surrounding a number of the other main characters kept me turning the pages and enlivened a long train journey.

There was plenty of snark and humour thrown in amongst the plots, kidnappings, brutal fights, snooty courtiers and lantern-jawed heroes. My favourite is probably Gertie, the foul-mouthed, drink-loving troll who takes Raine under her protection and is full of smart-mouthed opinions about the outraged courtiers and haughty queen who hates her. And in amongst the banter and nonsense, there are some poignant moments of loss and heartache in the form of unrequited love and a desperately unhappy marriage.

I'm impressed that Rushe has managed to pack so much vividness and detail into a book just shy of 400 pages – she achieves this by also ensuring the pace keeps moving forward as fantastical creatures, magic artefacts and scheming wizards spin through her story. And there might be a muddle of magic – but there is nothing muddled about the storytelling. While I obtained an arc of *A Muddle of Magic* from the publisher via Netgalley, the opinions I have expressed are unbiased and my own.

8/10

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## **Rea says**

Actual rating maybe 3.5 stars?

I picked up the first book in this series on a recommendation from another author. Despite its faults, I enjoyed *A Meddle of Wizards* and immediately put book 2 on preorder.

Upon its release, I delved into *A Muddle of Magic*, my expectations set high. AMoW involves a lot of travelling, which constantly put the characters in danger. In AMoM, the characters spend the vast majority of their time at the Finlaran court. This means they get caught up in court intrigues, but there are fewer external threats.

I really enjoyed the story here up until the point where I realised that a number of the overarching subplots wouldn't be resolved in this book. (view spoiler)

I was disappointed by the use of Chaz's character here as well. It seemed that every time he showed up, he was just telling Raine that he was leaving with another character and then he disappeared again.

This book is more concise, with the story mostly following only Raine (with a couple of sections following Raven, and a very few parts following completely different characters). This worked much better for me than the sections of AMoW that pulled me out of the main story in order to spend just one chapter with another character.

There's no information yet on when to expect the next book, but I'll certainly be reading it in the hopes that having Raine back on the road will iron out some of the misgivings I had with AMoM.

As a final point, the style is better here than in AMoW, however seeing "at all" constantly written as "atall" was driving me batty, and there are a few homonyms (or close homonyms) that are used incorrectly.

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### **LAB? says**

(ARC received through Net Galley.)

The 2nd book in this series did not disappoint. In fact, I felt very involved in this story and enjoyed the adventures of the crew. This book read like a fantasy adventure should and I felt immersed in the world the author has created. We got to meet some new characters and there was some great humor. (I love Flame!) There were also some secrets revealed that really have me looking forward the next book.

In short, start with book 1 (A Meddle of Wizards) and then join the fun in this book, as it sets up what I feel is going to be a glorious finale.

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### **Jaime says**

I loved the first book, and I will admit I was a bit worried about a sophomore slump since this book takes place in one nation and was not a journey. I am happy to say I was very wrong. There were tons of adventure, magic, and huge reveals. Some I guessed easily, some took me by surprise, and all have sparked some theories about who what really happened and who is really who. Not only was there character growth emotionally, but there was physical growth as well. Raine is still bumbling into trouble and at times it is annoying, but I have to remember to give her a pass because while she is a adult her sickness left her so sheltered that she is basically making all the adolescent mistakes now that she should've made ten years prior.

All the old gang is around and some new friends and foes have been introduced. There was love blooming all around, and enemies declaring war. Although the ending was not a cliffhanger, the next adventure is about to begin and I can't wait for the third book.

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### **Meghan Lloyd says**

You wouldn't believe the amount of excitement I felt when I got my hands on this book! The first book in

this series was so much fun to read, and I have been eager to read the next installment ever since. Alexandra Rushe did not disappoint in delivering an engaging, fast-paced book that kept me on the edge of my seat to the very last page. There were many surprises that I did not see coming, and I think the character development was truly phenomenal. Readers get to really understand the backstories of the characters, and explanations for some odd behaviors come to light. It was enlightening and inspiring, and although it ended on a cliffhanger, in a way, I don't begrudge the author for ending the book this way. It's definitely going to have me salivating over the next book as soon as I hear about it!

Raine Stewart is on the next leg of her journey as a fledgeling wizard, pursued by a Dark Wizard and seeking sanctuary where she can find it. Accompanied by familiar faces and navigating the new waters of Tandara's noblemen and women, Raine faces brand new challenges and discovers adversaries she would never have dreamed of before. As if she doesn't have enough to deal with, she comes face-to-face with a magic mirror, gains knowledge of a terrible curse, and wrestles with her feelings for a certain half-elf/half-Finlar nobleman. Life is about to become more difficult, and Raine will need the help of her friends to face it.

While I did not need the romance in order to enjoy the story, I was ecstatic to see the romance included in this book! There was none in the first book, and it was truly not needed with all the other things Raine had to deal with. In this book, though, the romance provided some comic relief when things became dark, and it was a welcome aspect to the story. It was subtle and complicated, and at times I just wanted Raine and Raven to kiss and get it over with. I expect a really good one in the next book, Ms. Rushe. Pretty please.

The curse was probably the most exciting part of this book, because it brought a fairytale quality to the story! It was quite fun to read about and try to decipher where it was going in the book as a whole. Would the cursed woman be dead? Would she be trapped by an evil wizard? Would she be someone in disguise? I would never in a million years have guessed the truth!

I eagerly await the next book in the series! Alexandra Rushe has done a fantastic job building the world of Tandara, and I can only imagine it will continue to get better with each book. Well done!

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\*\*I received a free copy via NetGalley and this is my honest review.\*\*

### **Shannan says**

The second in the series, and I'm hungry for the third. Raine is still kinda stumbling along trying to learn her magic, Flame has grown impressively, Breferton is still.....Breferton.

The issues between Glannon and his fear of Raine being his end are continuing to grow and there's issues in Finlar I'm intent to get to the bottom of.

The ending is much like the series in that it holds your focus and leaves you wanting more. The characters win your heart and the plot keeps you glued to the pages. I love the books and want more.

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### **Marta Cox says**

Second instalment of the stories about Raine who finds herself in Tandara a land of magic, legends and

Gods. Raine might not have known much about magic but discovering that she's a Wizard with powers of her own has been a steep learning curve. Luckily Raine has made what I can only describe as 'interesting' friends and as she arrives in Finlara seeking sanctuary she's going to need to listen because life at Court can be a dangerous place.

Hmm this is a little tricky to review because much as I loved the assorted supporting characters at times the world building didn't quite work for me. Perhaps it was too many foreign sounding words as I did frequently stop to try to work out what the characters were trying to express which sadly took me out of the story. I did however enjoy the supporting cast with its Trolls, Giants, Dragons and even a most pretentious and garrulous Unicorn so clearly the author has a sense of humour. The crux of the story with a curse at its heart unfortunately took a while to really start to move the story along but I can honestly say that I didn't want to put the last third down until I'd finished it. I know that Raine is the heroine, our protagonist if you will but it just felt like she was a simple cog at times and part of the ensemble cast so hopefully Raine will actually do more in the next book.

If you enjoy fantasy that's not terribly adult with amusing characters ( I'm undecided if I prefer Gertie or Flame ) and can put up with characters making googlie eyes at each other whilst being heroic then this series might well be entertaining to you. The cover art has gone from bad to worse but finally the overall plot has got very interesting.

This voluntary take is of a copy I requested from Netgalley and my thoughts and comments are honest and I believe fair

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