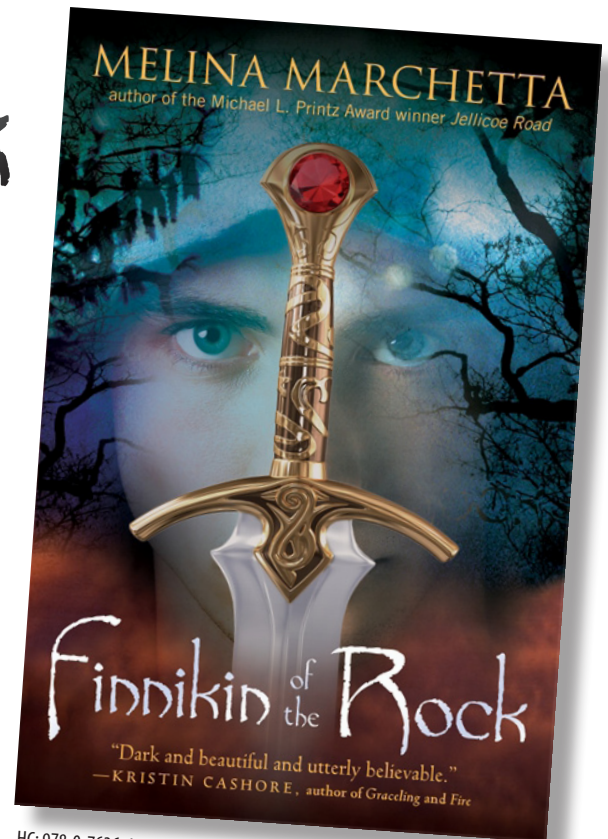


Finnikin of the Rock

BY MELINA MARCHETTA

**“IT’S AGAINST THE
RULES OF HUMANITY
TO BELIEVE THERE IS
NOTHING WE CAN DO.”**

— EVANJALIN



HC: 978-0-7636-4361-4 • PB: 978-0-7636-5292-0 • E-book: 978-0-7636-5175-6

Finnikin was only a boy when the king and queen of Lumatere were slaughtered, his father imprisoned for treason, and their kingdom torn asunder by a blood curse. Ten years later, he is being drawn back to his homeland—and toward his destiny—by Evanjalín, an enigmatic young novice whose daring and ruthlessness take his breath away.

In this bold departure from her contemporary novels, Printz Medalist Melina Marchetta has conjured an epic fantasy full of magic, intrigue, romance, and bloodshed.

— about the author —

Melina Marchetta has earned international acclaim for her realistic fiction, which includes the Printz Award-winning novel *Jellicoe Road* as well as *Saving Francesca* and *Looking for Alibrandi*. *Finnikin of the Rock* is her first fantasy novel. It won the Aurealis Award for Best Young Adult Novel in Australia, where the author makes her home.

**“DARK WILL LEAD
THE LIGHT, AND OUR
RESURDUS WILL RISE.”**

— SERANONNA’S PROPHECY



CANDLEWICK PRESS
www.candlewick.com

Discussion Questions

1. What are the boyhood pledges that Balthazar, Finnikin, and Lucian make to one another? How does each fulfill his pledge?
2. During their years of exile, Sir Topher and Finnikin "always had a plan. Never a dream" (page 26). Why didn't they allow themselves dreams?
3. What is the *Book of Lumatere*? Why does Finnikin keep it so carefully? What does Evanjalín think of the project?
4. "There is no more ideal a prisoner," Evanjalín says to Trevanion, "than one who is locked up in his own prison" (page 74). What is Trevanion's inner prison? Why is imprisoning Finnikin the surest way to set his father free?
5. When Finnikin's mother dies in childbirth, Trevanion places his newborn son under the care of Perri the Savage, a man who fully earned his nickname. Why does Trevanion choose Perri for this job?
6. "Never underestimate the value of knowing another's language," says Evanjalín. "It can be far more powerful than swords and arrows" (page 165). At what points in the story does she prove this statement?
7. Does Finnikin truly have control over his own destiny? "The gods make playthings of us," he laments to the Barakah (page 310). "But it is we mortals," the priest-king replies, "who provide them with the tools" (page 311). What does the Barakah mean by that? What do you believe about your own destiny?
8. How highly does Evanjalín value the truth? What does she place above it?
9. Blood is an important element in this novel. What are the various roles it plays throughout the plot? What does it signify to men? What does it signify to women?
10. Finnikin and several other characters voice their thoughts and feelings throughout the novel, but Evanjalín's inner life stays hidden. How does this color your understanding and sympathy for her? Why do you think the novelist treats Evanjalín differently?
11. "Whatever it takes" is a refrain echoed by several characters. What does each one mean by that vow?
12. Discuss Lagrami and Sagrami, the two great goddesses of Lumatere. What distinguishes one from the other? How do their followers differ from one another? What does Lady Celie believe happened to Lagrami and Sagrami in ancient times? Why does she blame this confusion on men (pages 232–233)?
13. What are the traditional roles for women in Lumatere? How does Evanjalín defy those conventions? How does she also conform to them?
14. Discuss the many despicable qualities of Froi. Why is it so easy for Evanjalín to sell him into slavery? Why can't she ever truly abandon him? What does she admire about him? What is his enduring value to the people of Lumatere?
15. Badgered repeatedly by Froi to reveal her magic powers, Evanjalín insists that she has none, until she gives him her ruby ring at the Valley of Tranquillity. "That is my magic," she tells him (page 317). What magic is she referring to?
16. During his exile, Finnikin often imagined an important role for himself if the kingdom of Lumatere was ever restored. What was that role? What are the prophecies he misinterprets? When does he realize his mistake? How does he react?
17. Both Finnikin and Evanjalín feel responsible for the desecration of their homeland. How did they aid the enemies of Lumatere when they were children? Is their later guilt justified?
18. What are the ordeals that Beatriss suffered after the five days of the unspeakable? Could her people have endured without her sacrifices?
19. "I despise those who use force and greed as a means of control," Tesadora says to Finnikin when he accuses her of hating men. "Unfortunately for your gender, such traits are found more often in the hearts of men than women" (page 388). Do you agree? Why or why not?
20. Evanjalín and Finnikin share a great love, but they are also fierce and stubborn rivals, and they can never be equal partners. What future obstacles do you foresee for the pair and for their homeland?

