



Rise of the Sparrows

Sarina Langer

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As a homeless orphan, shunned for having the gift, Rachael knows how to survive. The visions of people dying are only hers to see. The shadows are her safety. When Cephy comes into her life, having a friend—a friend as feared by the villagers as Rachael—seems too good to be true.

And it is. Her visions are worse since Cephy came along, and Rachael's gut feeling urges her to walk the other way. Alone.

When Cephy burns down her old home, the villagers respond with violence: they call on the White Guard to take Rachael and Cephy away for execution. Together they flee into a world they know nothing about. In the unknown awaits a Mist Woman, a prophecy, and a young rebel who sounds sincere –

but in Rachael's experience, no one ever is. And how can she trust him when he believes in an ancient prophecy that seems to refer to her, and asks her to commit regicide so that people with the gift can be free?

Suddenly the cold shadows of Blackrock's winter don't seem so bad, and Rachael is torn between finally having food and warm shelter, and surviving on her own as she always has. The Sparrows—fighters of the resistance—believe in her because the prophecy names her. But can she be the leader they need when she can't control her own magic?

Rachael knows the struggles the gifted endure all too well. Perhaps it's time she stopped hiding, and fought back.

Rise of the Sparrows Details

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From Reader Review Rise of the Sparrows for online ebook

Aravind M (Honest reviews and promoter) says

Review coming soon.

Becky Wright says

Rise of the Sparrows - A fantasy, with its feet, set firmly within the realms of a dark medieval land, where magic and sorcery are outlawed through fear and one Kings necessity to keep order. Where the gifted are shunned, discarded and murdered as infants. In shadows they live, in hiding they survive on their gifts and wits. However, there comes an uprising.

Brilliant! Firstly, I have to say, being high fantasy, this is a little out of my normal reading genre. However, it is this simple fact that made it this even more of a fabulous read. I loved it! A triumph as a debut novel and a great accomplishment, and a testament to the author's ability.

As an author, Sarina Langer's style is clear, crisp, to the point, with an individual flair for phrasing and structure. This was perfect within the realms of a story packed with dark peril and excitement. Sarina keeps you travelling at a great pace, with just enough descriptive narrative to give you scenic bearing but it's never overdone, this enables the reader to paint in the rest, leaving the book in your hands, a personal one.

I'm now off to start book two!

G.R. Thomas says

I absolutely loved this book. Creating a new and fantastical world is no easy task and this author does it with ease. The prologue was dark and sinister and immediately I needed to know so much more. The protagonist is likeable from the get go as she's real, unsure and scared which makes her believable in an alternate reality. She's vulnerable yet instinctively very strong which I loved. This book reads like a seasoned author penned it and I found it hard to put down. In my busy life I was picking it up constantly in all my free moments. I look forward to future stories from Sarina Langer. Thankyou Sarina for a thoroughly fabulous read

Rose Montague says

This was a very solid read and an impressive debut novel. The writing is terrific with well developed characters and once the action gets going it picks up pace and turns into an exciting read. Looking forward to the next one!

Emily Wrayburn says

Review originally posted on A Keyboard and an Open Mind 30 October 2017:

I've had this on my Kindle for so long, probably since it came out! It's one of those books I wished I got to sooner, because I ended up really enjoying it.

I think one of the best things about this book was the fact that Rachael, the main character, was no special snowflake when it came to saving the world. Yes, she is a Chosen One, but she struggles to develop her magic and it is acknowledged that prophecies are vague and that things may not work out the way anyone expects.

I also really enjoyed the character development of Cephy, a young girl Rachael befriends after Cephy is kicked out of home due to her magical abilities.

The other characters were also well-developed. I particularly liked Cale, the leader of the group of rebels known as The Sparrows, and Aeron, the witch who seeks to disrupt the rebellion and put a child of her own on the throne, was suitably nasty.

I did feel that there were times when characters justified the deaths they caused a bit too easily. There are some pretty shocking death scenes, too; not so much from a violence perspective (the level of violence is pretty standard fantasy fare) but the fact that they happen suddenly and caught me by surprise on a few occasions.

The world-building is simple but effective. There is no drowning the reader in unnecessary description. New locations are described as needed, and the history of the world is explained over a few conversations between Rachael and more knowledgeable characters.

Overall, this is a strong series opener and I've been hearing good things about the sequel. I'm looking forward to continuing this series when I have the chance.

Beverley Lee says

This is a strong and confident first novel from a new name in high fantasy. It's no mean feat to create an alternative world that is believable, but the author does this without the usual bogging down of too much detail. Rifarne seems like a real country, with all the politics and problems that can contain.

The protagonist, Rachael, isn't the usual kind of heroine, and we see her grow as a character throughout the book. She has a gift, but she struggles with it, as she does with trust - I really liked that. The story is told from multi point of views, and I enjoyed the insight from the supporting players as the story unfolded.

The prologue was deliciously dark, and pulled me in right away. Sometimes prologues seem unnecessary, but this one was an enticing hook and introduced one of my favourite characters.

The story ends with a very clever twist, one I didn't see coming and that I loved, and there are questions left unanswered for future sequels. I very much look forward to continuing Rachael's journey.

A debut author to definitely watch!

Nerys says

Rise of the Sparrows is a great and relaxing read (although the ending was thrilling). A great debut novel! I can't wait for the sequel.

I was very fond of the characters. They easily grew on me. I found myself not wanting to stop reading this book, also when there was no action. There was a small lack of dialogues, but when there was one, it was usually a good one.

The ending was a rush. So many things happened in a very short time! I liked it, but at some points it seemed to easy. I think the author could have taken more time for some events.

The only disturbing thing was the constant repeating of sentences. There were a lot sentences which ment the same, just differently expressed. This happened especially at the beginning.

Claire says

A confident series opener and debut.

This review was originally published on my book blog.

The author gave me an advanced reader copy of *Rise of the Sparrows* to read in return for an honest review.

The story in *Rise of the Sparrows* is told through various character viewpoints using a consistent close third-person voice. The main point of view is that of Rachael, the seventeen-year-old protagonist.

Many of you will be pleased to hear that, *Rise of the Sparrows* is refreshingly free of the front-and-centre romance (and therefore the dreaded love triangle) which now seems almost obligatory for this genre when the main character is a teenage girl. There are hints at a relationship which could develop further in future installments, but the heroine's thoughts are mercifully free of worrying about what she looks like and what it would be like to kiss boys. Also, though Rachael has visions which show her the future, that's the extent of her "special" abilities. It was nice to have a female lead who wasn't a ready-made, all-conquering bad-ass. Which isn't to say Rachael isn't a fighter, but the lethal magic powers and superior fighting skills belong to secondary characters. Meanwhile, Rachael makes use of her instincts and street-smarts to try to stay out of trouble.

The plot is well-handled. You always know you're in safe hands when a fantasy novel has a map at the front – it shows the author has thought through the mechanics of getting from A to B. And it's not shy about being sufficiently grim when necessary, as the dark and bloody prologue makes clear from the get-go.

The characters are well-drawn and vivid, although I would have liked more information about the world they lived in. I wanted to know more about Rifarne and its neighbouring countries, its history, its monarchy, its politics and how our characters slotted into this panorama. Of course, I imagine this is my impatience and more will be revealed in the next parts of the series. Also, I understand sometimes you have to sacrifice exposition to keep the story moving forward. But a few times while reading I felt like I was looking at a picture in which the foreground was in sharp focus and filled with wonderful detail while the background

was fuzzy.

The highlight of the book for me was its action sequences, perhaps precisely because these require immediacy rather than background info. One extended escape/chase sequence in particular was incredibly gripping (sorry to be vague... trying to avoid spoilers!).

Overall: if you enjoy fantasy fiction and are looking for a good story which bucks many of the recent trends in the genre, I urge you to pick up *Rise of the Sparrows*.

Mollie says

Rise of the Sparrows is a high-fantasy, action, adventure with twists and turns around every corner. I was hooked from the very first page.

The world created is nothing short of mesmerizing. Thanks to stunning vivid descriptions with meticulous details, Rifarne felt like a tangible place. A country with a real history and real problems. When it comes to this magical world, its prophecies and politics, no stone is left unturned.

Just like the world, the characters, too, are well-thought out and developed with clear motivations and goals. Each one perfectly imperfect and human. Wonderfully real and complex. Especially the story's heroine, Rachael. The journey she takes and the woman she develops into is extraordinary. Rachael's character arc is unforced and natural, nothing about it feels contrived or cliché. The same can be said for Cephy, a young girl with a powerful gift who's longing for acceptance and love. Both of these characters are beautifully drawn and honestly written.

But great world building and awesome characters means nothing if you don't have a strong main plot, interesting subplots, and excellent pacing with the proper amount of ups and downs, highs and lows. This book has ALL of that and then some. It's a story that sucks you in from the very start and doesn't let go until the final page. It's action packed and entertaining while at the same time heartfelt and thought provoking. Not to mention, it makes you feel ALL of the feels.

If you love excellent story telling, intricate world building and wonderfully developed characters, then Rise of the Sparrows is a definitely a book you should check out. You'll find yourself thinking about this story and its characters well after you've finished reading the last page.

Julia Blake says

First of all, let me just say, as a busy working mum and author myself, time to read is very rare, when you add to this how slow a reader I am, it all adds up to me not getting through books very quickly. But, I finished this book in under three days. This is practically unheard of for me, and an indication of just how good it was.

Right from the first page, I was hooked. The story of Rachael, the abandoned orphan living rough on the streets of a small town, is guaranteed to tug at your heartstrings. Despised by the locals for her powers of prophecy, Rachael has led a solitary, hard life until she meets Cephy. Also possessing magical powers, Cephy has been turned out by her bigoted father and, in desperation, turns to Rachael for help and guidance.

When circumstances force the two girls to flee the town, and take their chances in the wild forest, the story really begins to hot up, and, after that, it's action all the way. Cleverly using short chapters to keep the pace snappy and the reader hooked, the author pulls no punches when it comes to putting her characters in danger.

The book is well written, the characters nicely developed, with well rounded, three dimensional personalities. Their motives are always rooted in sound, human logic (and we all know how reliable that is) so, even when a character is considering an action that has us, the reader, howling in disbelief, we can see the reasoning behind it.

Being told she is the much longed for leader of a fabled prophecy, Rachael has difficult choices to make, and the reader suffers along with her, as she finds herself being drawn into the prophecy, almost against her will. I would, maybe, have liked a little more background information about the Sparrows, the resistance group Rachael is supposed to lead, but understand that would have slowed the pace down. Perhaps in a future sequel - because I am confident there will be sequels - flashbacks could fill in some of the gaps.

The last quarter of the book is a roller coaster of a ride, with main characters being sacrificed with an almost George R. Martin disregard, until the final confrontation. I am not going to say anything because of spoilers - if you want to know what happens, read the book. But, maybe a tiny part of me felt the conclusion was just a little too easy and a little too fast, however, this is such a minor point and may only be because I genuinely did not want the book to end.

All in all, a thoroughly enjoyable, fast paced read. The author is plainly very talented, her use of language is clever and appropriate, with the plot being well thought out and logical. I would highly recommend this book to anyone, and hope to see more from Ms Langer very soon,

Ellen Read says

Rise of the Sparrows by Sarina Langer

I absolutely loved this book. Sarina Langer has masterfully created a new world filled with fantasy, prophecy and magic.

Rachel is a homeless orphan and is shunned for having 'the gift' - which in her case is visions of people dying. Cephy, who joins her, has a much more powerful and darker gift. When Cephy burns down her old home, the villagers of Blackrock respond with violence. The two flee and head into the forest, a world alien to them.

They encounter new dangers. The White Guard is chasing them. They meet a Mist Woman, who offers them shelter, but Rachel instinctively feels she can't be trusted. Then a young rebel tells Rachel she must fulfil a prophecy. He takes her to meet the Sparrows; but can she trust him?

The story moves along at a great pace and the ending is action packed and filled with energy and excitement, with twists and turns.

The characters are well written. The story strongly crafted.

This is a fabulous first novel for Sarina Langer. I look forward to the next book.

Ruth Miranda says

Wow!! What an excellent read this was! A book I took a gamble on because the cover had been catching my eye for weeks around social media, so once I saw it was free, I added it to my Kindle, without any idea of what to expect. Some covers do that for me, and the title put in my mind reminiscences of Brian Jacques wonderful series of Redwall. I was indeed expecting sparrows of the animal kind. What I got was Rachael, and she is one of the best constructed characters I have ever come across, so well done Sarina Langer on this one. Rachael is so easy to relate, at least for me. She's weak and scared, she's riddled with low self confidence, low self esteem, tons of self doubt. She's wary of others, shields herself from forming bonds and relationships in fear of being hurt and betrayed, refuses to open her heart for the very same reason. She's sounded like my kindred spirit, in all this. But she's also very resilient, and persistent, and loyal. Once her heart is won over, she's loyal to a fault, and through all her fears and weakness, through all her - oh so human - faults, she is one brave individual. As for the story itself, it was a page turner, a world well built without having to resort to constant needless explanations of why this is like this and why this happens, which tends to happen a lot in fantasy. I prefer books where things - like magic and what not - are simply because they are. I would definitely recommend this to anyone who likes a good read, and who tends to root for the underdogs. Well done, what a great book.

Nicola Rose says

Had me hooked from the brilliant prologue! Rachel is an understated heroine, but she's not to be messed with!

I'd have liked to have seen more of a developing relationship between her and the other characters, and I do feel there was a little too much telling rather than showing.

More could have been made of the ending too, which wrapped up a little easily, BUT the epilogue hooked me back in! This is a very promising start to a new series, I'm looking forward to seeing what comes next. If you want magic, prophecy and people at war, then give this a go!

K.J. Chapman says

I was privileged to be a beta reader for Sarina Langer. My review of this book is based on the beta copy I read.

Fantasy, action, magic, and abilities- this book has it all. The main character, Rachel, was a breath of fresh air- wise for her age, untrusting, and a heroine who wants anything but to stand out. Blending in, being 'normal', has always been Rachel's wish in life, but she has to embrace the fact that normality isn't hers. She is destined.

Her hard street life and encounters with the intolerant townsfolk and the White Guard have left her wary, tired, and outcast. Her character arc develops perfectly and true to Rachel's personal growth throughout the narrative. All the characters are believable, and have essence of light and dark in them. Cephy, in particular, was brilliantly written. An impressionable, scared, powerful child- a boiling pot for disaster, right?

Langer masterfully builds a world of magic, prophecies, outlawed organisations, corrupt royalty, and dangerous beings. Rachel has to join the only people who have ever tried to help her, but risk her own life to do so, and fulfil a prophecy she doesn't fully believe.

Dark twists, heart breaking moments, and a fight for what is right keeps the pages turning. I wholly recommend this book, and can't wait for the next installment. I need to find out how the ever adapting street girl handles her new role?

Author Dawnette Brenner says

Enjoyed this fantastic fantasy, dark and captivating!

Life on the streets is difficult and survival impossible - not for Rachael, she's the strength of five men! Intelligent and resourceful. Painfully she is degraded and shunned; are members in our society treated the same way? Born with a gift, a prophecy-will she rise? Yes, she fulfills the prophecy, the Rise of the Sparrows, she's made it as Queen of Rifarne!

Langer captures the heart of her reader, immediately you mourn for Rachael, Cephy and turn, page after page. Tumultuous events happen to orphans, and the fighters of the resistance believe. Rachael's never had such support, it's no wonder she's captivated by it!

No more spoilers, read it for yourself!
