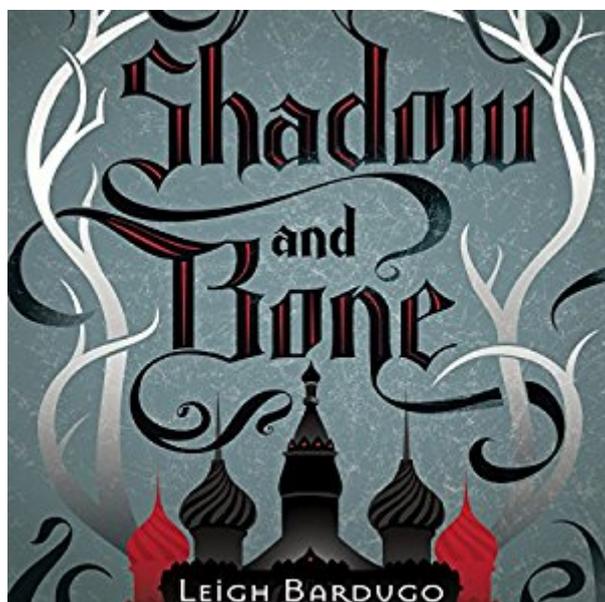


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Shadow And Bone



Synopsis

Surrounded by enemies, the once-great nation of Ravka has been torn in two by the Shadow Fold, a swath of near impenetrable darkness crawling with monsters who feast on human flesh. Now its fate may rest on the shoulders of one lonely refugee. Alina Starkov has never been good at anything. But when her regiment is attacked on the Fold and her best friend is brutally injured, Alina reveals a dormant power that saves her life—a power that could be the key to setting her war-ravaged country free. Wrenched from everything she knows, Alina is whisked away to the royal court to be trained as a member of the Grisha, the magical elite led by the mysterious Darkling. Yet nothing in this lavish world is what it seems. With darkness looming and an entire kingdom depending on her untamed power, Alina will have to confront the secrets of the Grisha... and the secrets of her heart.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For hundreds of years the land of Ravka has been divided into east and west by a miles-wide void of darkness called The Fold. Another name for it is the Unsea. Probably because the only way to travel across it is to use sand skiffs which use sails to glide across the wasteland inside the Fold. Within the Fold, no light enters. So once you are inside you can't even see your hand in front of your face. You can use torches and lamps, but you really don't want to attract notice while you're in the fold. For, you see, something or actually, some THINGS live in the fold. Here there be monsters. The volcra, blind, flying humanoid creatures with razor sharp teeth, are attracted to any light source

or noise. They are always ready to feed on any voyagers across the Unsea. Now you might question why, if it's so dangerous, does anyone even try to cross the Fold? It's due to geography. Ravka is hemmed in by hostile countries to north and south and to the east, there is nothing but mountains. Across the Fold lies Ravka's port cities, it's only means to export and import goods, supplies, and wealth. In essence, West Ravka is the backbone of the land's economy. The only way to get across the Fold is to bring armed guards or soldiers, and hopefully, some Grisha. Grisha are the equivalent to what we would call sorcerors. They don't really use magic though. They simply have the ability to manipulate matter at its most basic level. Kinda more like the alchemists in Fullmetal Alchemist. Some can control the elements such as the Inferni or Tidemakers. Others are soldiers or healers that can effect living things, either positively or negatively. Some are even used in manufacturing.

How can I convey the awesomeness of "Shadow and Bone?" Admittedly, this book wasn't an instant pick for me when it showed up in my Vine selections. But then I remembered I had put it on the wishlist I use to keep track of upcoming books, so I grabbed it, and wow, am I happy I did. I hated having to put "Shadow and Bone" down. Real life is always so annoying when you're in the middle of a great book, and that's just what this is. I'm going to try every way I can to get my hands on a copy of book two before it comes out, because I'm THAT eager to find out what happens to Alina, Mal, the Darkling, and Ravka. At the start of "Shadow and Bone," Alina is a regular girl.

Unremarkable, even. She's terrified of crossing the Shadow Fold, but then, so is everyone else. The Fold is a swath of darkness across Ravka, cutting the country off from the sea. Volcra, monsters that attack humans, live in the Fold, and it's said they can smell human blood from miles away. Mal, Alina's best friend, reassures her that nothing is going to happen. But of course, something does happen. On their way across the Fold, the volcra attack. When they go after Mal, nearly killing him, Alina is desperate to save him. Somehow, she does. Light suddenly fills the Fold, driving the volcra back. And that's where the story really starts. Alina is whisked away from her life in the army to train as a Grisha. Grisha are sort of like witches or mages. Usually, children are tested to see if they have Grisha abilities, and if they do, they are taken to a special school to be trained. Alina didn't pass the test as a child, but she's one of the most powerful Grisha ever. Only she can get rid of the Fold and rescue Ravka from darkness.

This FANTASTICALLY EPIC FANTASY starts off with Alina and Mal as orphan children in a group home. They are the inseparable right from the start. Years later we see them in the first army. Alina is a mapmaker, and Mal is a tracker/hunter in the same regiment. They are still inseparable, but Mal

has outside interests and Alina only has eyes for him. Oh course, he doesn't see this. Their next assignment is to cross a dangerous area called the Fold. This is really dangerous and so the army has Grisha to accompany them. The Grisha are a magical breed who each wield a certain skill. (All children in this kingdom are tested for Grisha skills. Alina and Mal didn't have any.) The fold is a dark space, created hundreds of years ago by a dark Grisha. The land is full of killer Volcra. When their ship is attacked by Volcra, and Mal is injured, Alina's power manifests in a burst of light to get the dark killers away. When the Grisha see what Alina can do she is swept away from Mal and her regiment to join the Grisha and train to save the world from the darkness. Ok, now that we have that little summary out of the way, let me tell you everything that I LOVED about this story. The world building: I don't even want to imagine all the details that went into this for the author. It is just magical. There is a Russian feel to this world. It is elaborate and rough. The world is extravagant and full of details of tongue, food, dress and custom (click for more info), that make it very unique. The army life for Mal and Alina is about what you would expect, but then we trickle in the politics and the presence of Grisha and it becomes something really unique. Alina is whisked away to the Little Palace to live with the Grisha, and there nothing little about this place.

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