



The Crown of Embers

Rae Carson

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She does not know what awaits her at the enemy's gate.

Elisa is a hero.

She led her people to victory over a terrifying, sorcerous army. Her place as the country's ruler should be secure. But it isn't.

Her enemies come at her like ghosts in a dream, from foreign realms and even from within her own court. And her destiny as the chosen one has not yet been fulfilled.

To conquer the power she bears, once and for all, Elisa must follow a trial of long-forgotten—and forbidden—clues, from the deep, hidden catacombs of her own city to the treacherous seas. With her go a one-eyed spy, a traitor, and the man whom—despite everything—she is falling in love with.

If she's lucky, she will return from this journey. But there will be a cost.

The Crown of Embers Details

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Author : Rae Carson

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From Reader Review The Crown of Embers for online ebook

Katie says

Holy cheeseballs covered in roly polies. I can't form a coherent thought after finishing this book this morning. I will say that I was distracted ALL DAY at school because of the feelings pulsing through me after gobbling this book up. I just. I can't. I don't.

AAAAHHHHHHH. BRAIN IS IMPLODING.

There were so many times I wanted to smack all the characters! But thank GOD Elisa does what she does at the end, even if she does a certain other thing before then that makes her do the certain thing that she does. It's just so maddening!

I will admit, though, that the only thing wrong with this--and it wasn't even bad, because I was celebrating once I figured it out--was that I knew what was going to happen with Hector as soon as I found out he was heir to his father's southern holdings. I'm just. I can't.

AAAAAAAHHHHHHH.

K. says

8/2/2017

I SHIP IT LIKE WHOA. Full thoughts to follow.

5/2/2016

OH HEY IT'S MY FIRST NEW FIVE STAR BOOK OF THE YEAR. About bloody time.

I loved everything about this book. Well. That's a lie. I didn't love the cover of this edition, because it's made of lies. Like, in no way is this series set in a Middle Eastern inspired world. It's VERY CLEARLY a Latin American world with Latin American characters. And yet, there's a mosque on the cover. Just because it's set in a desert, doesn't mean it's Middle Eastern, cover designer...

ANYWAY.

The story was fast paced and action packed. The world building was trickled out from start to finish, no info-dumping to be seen. Not everybody gets to live, the food sounds amazing, and I really enjoy the religion and the magic system. The characters are great, the setting is great, and I ship it like whoa. Basically? This was a fabulous middle book that never dragged or felt like it was creating artificial tension, and I'm very glad I have the third book waiting on my bookshelf at home. Because I NEED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

Ashley Brooks says

Ok. So the whole time I'm reading this series and they talk about this girl with a gem in her bellybutton this is all I can see

Anybody? Ok. Moving on.

Giving this one a 4.5 as it didn't really pull me in as hard as the first book. However, this may be as a whole my new favorite YA fantasy series. I love the balance between politics, romance, and the magical elements of this story. I don't feel like I'm being smothered in cliché romance, the magical stuff is really interesting and the politics are just what you want them to be--shady as shit.

Samantha says

4.5 stars

Norah Una Sumner says

"I want to be queen of this great country not because someone is holding my hand, but because I can do it. Me. Elisa."

Damn son. I'm an emotional mess right now. This book was so damn good I want to somehow imprint it into my brain so that I can replay certain scenes over and over again. I liked Elisa in the first book but I love her in this one. I could finally completely connect with her and sense her huge character development. I really like Mara and Storm, too. And that last moment with Ximena, wow, *bad ass lady alert!* Oh, Hector, dear:

Can't wait to read *The Bitter Kingdom!*

Favourite quotes:

"Given a choice between my life and yours, I will choose mine. Every time. Without hesitation."

"You made me cut and dye my hair."

Surely he understands that we face greater problems? "I thought it would greatly improve your looks," I snap.

"Shorn hair is a sign of shame. You humiliate me greatly."

"I'll light a candle tonight in honor of your dead tresses."

"I will not pretend weakness. Not ever, not for anyone."

"A quarterstaff is not very subtle. Or handy. If an kidnapper comes at me, what am I supposed to do? Say, **"Excuse me, my lord, while I pull my enormous quarterstaff out of my bodice?"**

Jeff says

JUST AS GOOD AS THE FIRST.

Everyone....if you haven't read this book becu~~z~~ of ur bajillion other books in ur tbr pile....I forgive you....
Ur life will be spared....

Now pick this series up now and read it. ;p

THERES JUST SO MUCH FEEELZ EVERYONE.

THE FEEELZZZZZ.....AND ACTION.....AND AMAZING CHARACRERS.....prepare to fall in love.

Thomas says

Females! Young-adult females! And males, too, I suppose - drop what you're reading and check this series out. Or finish what you're reading and then check it out, as Rae Carson has come into her own with *The Crown of Embers*. Similar to the Mortal Instruments trilogy, the first book in the Fire and Thorns trilogy (*The Girl of Fire and Thorns*) didn't win me over, but its sequel did. Boy, it did.

In *The Crown of Embers* Elisa continues her quest to fulfill the duty given to her by her Godstone. As queen of her kingdom, one might expect this to be easy - but it is anything other than that. Riots begin to break out as some are dissatisfied with her rule, enemies emerge from inside and outside of her palace, and her confidence wavers as even her allies seem to conspire against her. After a failed attempt on her life, Elisa decides to embark on a journey to redeem herself and revitalize her country - before it is too late.

Elisa has earned her spot amongst my favorite female protagonists. She's not a Mary Sue reincarnate, but she's not an unrealistically kick-butt heroine either. She learns from her mistakes and possesses a patriotism alongside her personal compassion that pushes her forward. As a seventeen-year-old, Elisa manages to act her age and exceed what's expected of her as well.

The plot entranced me enough to keep me reading for three hours straight instead of doing my government homework. *The Crown of Embers* blends political intrigue, palace politics, and good old high fantasy action and adventure to create a winning combination. Everything worked effectively and the cliffhanger made me internally scream in frustration.

I give the romance in this book 6/5 stars - I ship Hector and Elisa so hard. Finally, a young-adult romance that's not, "okay, we just met twenty pages ago, but I am already irrevocably in love with you." Elisa and Hector's relationship is built on respect, trust, and companionship. They didn't rush their feelings, which made it much more rewarding because every time they acted on their emotions I squealed. The cliffhanger only exacerbated my affection for them and I am almost dying to see whether they will make it or not.

Overall, I cannot wait for *The Bitter Kingdom*. This series has become an unexpected and unappreciated favorite. I hope more people decide to pick it up, because it is definitely worth it.

*cross-posted on my blog, the quiet voice.

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

What a difference the introduction makes. I'll admit that the first time around, I abandoned this book because I could not get past the beginning. Ok, Elisa almost dies several times, her country is in chaos, but they are

the most boring murder attempts/civil unrest possible. I don't think it's the writing, it's just tossing events after events at us with little character development that made the beginning intolerable for me, however action-packed it was.

However, past page 90 is where the book picked up. We see some actual, meaningful character interactions. The beauty of these books is that Elisa grows. She is so weak as Book 2 starts, and I'd venture to say that whatever self-confidence she has gained in book 1 has been lost. I can't blame her. Her husband died, her country is in turmoil, everyone is out to kill her, it seems, and she is afraid of making the wrong move, and of seeming like a weak and ineffective ruler when that is the last thing her country needs right now. She finally grows a backbone, sets aside her heartbreak (one of many, poor girl), and goes in search of the key that might save her country.

I loved the adventure as her band of followers set off to their destination. The danger, the intrigue, all written very well. And oh my, Hector. Their relationship, slow and simmering, the sexual tension is just bursting off the page, or rather, my Nook. Her feelings and her confusion between what is best for Elisa the girl versus Elisa the queen are so well-depicted. Duty is the word of the day, and she tries her best to follow it, however heartrending the choice is.

My only regret for giving this book a second chance is that now I'm bursting at the seams waiting for the third book.

Robin (Bridge Four) says

On sale \$3.99 5/13/16 Here

Pardon me while I pick my heart up off the floor. This was such a great follow up to Girl of Fire and Thorns.

The book starts off shortly after GoFaT ended. Elisa is trying to run the country, but it has been difficult she has been met with riots, new attacks on her life and threats from both inside and out. She has to build her country again and to do that she needs to find a husband to be allied with to help build support. She is having trouble being strong, or seeming strong. She hasn't quite grown into the role she is meant to play. She questions her decisions constantly which got a little tiresome at times but it was truthful no one becomes a great leader overnight. Hector is now the head of her Queens Guard, best friend and strongest supporter. After a failed attempt on Elisa's life she finds out about the Zafira and constructs a reason to go south to search for it.

On her journey is the Elisa we love, the strong confident brilliant one back in her element she comes to life again. While she is so sure in some areas it was refreshing that even as a powerful woman she was so unsure of herself and love. Elisa wants to be loved for herself, not her kingdom or the godstone. I love love love swoon over the romance built between Hector and Elisa. It is by far one of my most loved romances in any novel. The speech that Hector gave to Elisa on the log after they kissed, I fell in love with him too. The ending was so beautifully brought to fruition. It was equal parts heartbreak and hope. (view spoiler) I was so excited I can't wait to see what happens in A Bitter Kingdom. (view spoiler)

The supporting characters were great. I liked how Mara shared with Elise stories of her past with her two lovers and was more like a supporting older sister or friend who was needed since Ximena was more like a mother than nurse or friend. Belén has earned his way back to hero status after his betrayal in GoFaT. Storm gave interesting insight into the Invierno and I was surprised by his role on the isle, Elisa proved how great

she could be when she made her choice there.

A Bitter Kingdom can't come soon enough

Jodi Meadows says

I've now read THE CROWN OF EMBERS twice. If I could give it another five stars, I would. Being on my "books I love beyond reason" shelf will have to suffice.

Because I do love it beyond reason.

Sana says

DNF

i simply do not care enough to continue

Nastassja says

Actual rating: 4.5 stars

A few tips how to write an excellent sequel:

- more characters' development
- more romance
- more political intrigue
- more romance
- more humor
- more romance
- more magic
- more romance

I loved this book. It was a whirlwind of emotions. I honestly did not expect it to be THAT good. I liked the first book, I liked Elisa, but now I admire the girl - what a wonderful character development indeed! She came a way from one of the most annoying heroines to one of my favorite heroines. Just WOW. Elisa was left with the kingdom on her fragile young shoulders and in *The crown of embers* we see how really hard it is to be a queen. More dangerous intrigues are plotted behind Elise's back and hard decisions must be made. I thought Elisa was strong in the end of *The girl of fire and thorns*, but I was wrong: in this book she is vulnerable and strong at the same time and that makes her one of the best characters ever. **She hesitates, she suffers, she loves, she rules and she becomes more mature - not an innocent girl anymore, but a woman.** Elisa awakens sexually and all her previous loves seem like a child's play compared to what she feels now.

I loved how intrinsic the plot was. We have **palace intrigues and assassination attempts**. The enemy is so

close and Elise can trust only the closest friends. And decisions she must make - oh it's so hard to be queen:

“Remember this moment and treasure it, my sky. No sovereign remains popular forever.”

“But you have difficult decisions coming up, like raising taxes to support rebuilding efforts. You will find that when people are tightening their belts, your heroics won't matter. They will blame you, Your Majesty, and you alone. They'll demand we hand you over to our enemy.”

Is it really worth it, to destroy someone's life to save my own? Even if I am the queen?

This book has **more romance. It's slow-burning but so sensual and intense.** Hector surprised me in this book. I liked him from the first part, but he was just a friend and I didn't think much of him, and here we have him as one of the MCs and oh my, he is hot. Every moment they spent together, every touch - everything is oh-so-sensual. Hector is my new favorite book boyfriend.

This time, when his arm slides around me, it feels slower, more deliberate. “The trick,” he says in my ear, “is to be wholly committed to your action. No hesitation.” His arm tightens in a little jerk, and I catch my breath. “Do you understand, Elisa?”

But something in the air has changed. I am too deeply aware of the warmth of his nearness, the scents of mink oil and aloe shaving gel, the touch of his callused but gentle fingers. And I am forced to conclude that doing the slow, dancelike warm-up exercises of the Royal Guard with Hector as my partner is not calming at all.

With a swift motion, he cups the back of my head and presses his warm lips to mine. The pit of my stomach drops away as I open my mouth to his. He groans, wrapping his other arm around my waist, pulling me toward him until I am almost in his lap. I arch against him; my breath comes fast as he explores my mouth. Before, his kisses were patient and sweet. But there is nothing of sweetness in him now, just heat and desperate need.

Do you see what I mean? It is so intense and sensual and... I want more of these two.

There was another male character who surprised me not once and he is my number two favorite male in this book. It's Storm. Well, it's a short version of his name, the longer one is... well, longer. Storm is mysterious and arrogant and I am sure we'll see more of his past in the next book and will learn a few of his secrets.

And **the ending**... well, I am so happy I read this book after the last one is already out and waiting for me.

More action, more intrigue, more magic, more humor and love. **I understand now all the hype about this series.** It is THAT good. If you haven't read this series yet, read it as soon as possible. You won't be disappointed.

Queen Keely Tubbs of Salt "the Last of the Moral, Conservative Catholics on the Internet" (aka *Keelskilo*) says

Oh no. Here I am again. The odd one out. The one person who just didn't like this book.

Sigh.

More of a review to come...

WARNING! SARCASM AND MILD HUMOR TO COME!! STEER CLEAR IF YOU ARE ALLERGIC!! Sorry about that. I've learned that sometimes you have to set up these little disclaimers for the "die-hard-fans-of-books" who will attack you for giving a book a bad review. Am I not allowed to have opinions here anymore? Are we suddenly living in "dystopian fiction" world? Because I threw that world in the TRASH BIN for the moment, people. I am sick and tired of dystopic fiction for the moment.

Hence....why I tried this series out when suggested. But then I ran into more problems....

(One last thing, here. Apparently I should also write a warning for spoilers. Cuz I'm not hiding this whole review under "spoiler alert" thing, 'kay? Just use your own judgement. If you want to read the book. THEN DON'T SPOIL IT FOR YOURSELF. Besides, there aren't MAJOR spoilers. If there are, I'll hide those under those mini-spoiler alert things. And if you've already read the book and liked it, then I'm hardly going to ban you from reading this review, but please try to keep the smoke from boiling out of your ears, okay? Go into this knowing that you probably won't agree with me if you liked the book. I'm not trying to CONVINCe YOU not to like it, your opinions are your own, okay? Now let's all be friends!! Happily skipping in flowery meadows!!!

Wow...that was a big intro. Maybe I'll actually end up writing this review at some later date...

Okay! It is now a later date! Time to (start, at least) write a real review down. Yes. Okay. Here we go. Actually, pause, hold on right there: before we get into this I should probably explain the one star. Yes, yes that is a one star you see up there. But let me explain myself. This review will not be quite as scathing as some of my other one star review books. I. Just. Didn't. Like. It. M'kay? Kay. *Now* let's go.

Firstly of all: the titles of the books. Okay, so it sounds sorta cool. But...what in the world does it have to do with the story, I'd like to know? It's a little...out there for a title to plot connection. And that's not a big deal, it's okay. Fine. Cool. Whatever. But...it *bothers* me. A lot. So. Thought I'd get that one out of the way.

Number two: Elisa. Ai, ai, ai, *Elisa*. Now (from the first book) she was a little interesting because (and God forgive me for saying this) she was fat. Yes. She was more interesting when she was fat and therefore people sort of despised her. And the turn around in the first book was nice, okay. I'll admit it. It was an interesting side plot to see her overcome that problem. But as a character....I just....can't....Ugh.

I don't like her, okay? Is that so much of a problem? Her obsession especially with those coconut scones was so bad I thought I'd blow my head off. Okay, I get it, the girl loves her some scones. Fine. But do you have to go on and mention it *every darn time she eats one???* I'm not sure how that's particularly essential to the plot. You are driving me INSANE, Elisa. **MORE INSANE THAN I ALREADY AM!!!! I CAN'T TAKE**

IT ANY MORE!! I JUST CAN'T!!

Three: Our little love....er....thing...Not a triangle, which was sort of good, but. Ya know how I feel about these things. Rarely are they done well. The problem here was that I knew she was going to fall for El Capitan of the guard on, like, page *five* when she first mentions him. Maybe I'm just a genius, I dunno. But it was the *tone*. It was just explosively obvious. Ah! I know! I know just the reason why I predicted this. (Oh, I feel so smart now!)

See, in all the books that I read, I *learned* something here, dear children. Something very important about men and women and teenage love stories and it all has to do with facial hair. Yes, that's right, facial hair. Because it happened in the second *Birthmarked* book, *Prized*, and it's happening again here. And here's the moral of the story: When a man randomly shaves and therefore you learn how much closer to your age (and available) he is, it's cuz he's falling in love with you.

There you have it. I've just changed a million lives out there with that one. Girls, if you're on a date and your boyfriend has suddenly shaved, expect a proposal that night.

I'm jus' saying.

Four: And this wasn't actually a problem for me, but I think it's a problem for the series when my favorite character was *Storm*. And it wasn't really because I liked him THAT much, it was just because he was willing to give Elisa some sass. And because he was a traitor. I like me some traitors. And he's a sorta-bad-guy, but not really, so...you know. He at least gives the bad guys a little bit of a face other than just their ominous "existence"....BUM BUM BUM!!!

And....**Five:** The most important....the plot. I felt like a flippin' ping-pong ball in this one.

We have a life-threatening event...and then a meeting. And then another life-threatening event....and another meeting. And then another....well, you get the picture. I felt like my brain was getting whip-lash here. It was all talk-the-talk and not walk-the-walk. It was as if I was talking to someone who was thinking about putting all these ideas in a book and hadn't actually thought it out yet. I was disappointed cuz Cosme wasn't in it AT ALL and that traitor pig from the first one comes back and WHATEVER. I just got beyond the point of caring and stopped.

Six: The characters. Elisa was starting to *really* get on my nerves and I sometimes just wanted to slap her in the face. I mean, sure, it's important for you to appear all powerful and whatever so you're not overthrown...but the whipping the kitchen staff? ALL OF THEM?? **REALLY ELISA? REALLY?** Because this was an isolated incidence. No one outside the castle knew about it except, obviously, the poisoner. You could have just threatened and made an example out of ONE PERSON! Jeez, the tester's already dead, don't you think that's pretty bad enough without making more potential enemies out of the folks who serve your food?

Jus sayin', Elisa...I'm jus sayin'...

And you, Hector! Encouraging her to do these dumb things because you LOVE her? Am I supposed to be surprised/accepting/okay with this? Sheesh. And I already WENT on a rant about the new love interest. My brain sort of hurts because I always say Hector as someone older (as in the not-a-match way not super old)

than Elisa. Like a protector. Ya know. Because it's nice to have some non-cliche guy characters in a novel from a girl's point of view. But...turns out Hector's like, 20, or something! Yay! More love interests!

Jeez. I feel like Po from Kung Fu Panda 2 when he's getting all confused about goat genders and how big "the weapon" is supposed to be. Anyone know what I'm talking about here?

Yeah. You should.

Ximena? Really? Just....really?

And that kid whose name I can't remember (her...son? Technically? I guess? I mean, he was her husband's son, so I guess that makes him her kid now. Huh. Weird.) Anywho....I'm not sure what sort of kid he's supposed to be. A small angel or a vicious brat. He was better in the first book. Ya know. When he had more face time.

That's the problem with introducing random love-thingys, people. It shoves the other characters in a closet.

Actually, hold on. Not about that previous statement, just hold on in general about characters: I did like Mara. Cuz she good person. Ya. A nice person without an alternate agenda...We need more of those.

And finally....!! **Seven:** Hmm. Wonder what this could be??? If anyone's read some of my other reviews, you already know that I always save the "biggest" problem for last. This problem, ironically enough, is usually the same in all of these amazing one star books that are flying off the shelves as if they're, I dunno, the Bible, or something like that.

Still don't know? My tag-line: a book is only ever as good as its villain? Yep. Here we are! And think about it, it's totally true. (Even if the supposed villain is abstract! Would you rather read about an abstract villain that's a disease that kills thousands of people or a cold that a main character has for the duration of the book? Yeah. I thought so.) And that's the problem here. The Invierno, though obviously dastardly and, ya know, willing to burn themselves alive and stuff....well, they just weren't formidable enough for me. If they had a better LEADER, ya know, so I could give a face to them...well. That would be lovely. But quite frankly, I didn't care for them. Whenever I read about them, they just appeared as this huge mass of evil people all living together in...evilness? I dunno. I'm a complex person, who likes complex villains. I can't have one sided villains or my BRAIN explodes.

Ask my sister. *She'll* testify...

Yep. Okay. So, that's it for this review. And I think I was actually pretty nice about it! Yay!!!

Yeah? Improvements (on the nice scale)? High fives all around, people.

Yeah? Click [HERE](http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/...). <http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/...> Yes. I gave the first one a THREE. Ha. I was nice....

Wow. Okay. The internet is being stupid right now. I will finish this review later...with GIFS! Cuz I love 'em. Kay? Yep. Bye. Or *Ciao* actually.

Alienor ✕ French Frowner ✕ says

Warning : This is not a review for the book, because I didn't reach further than 7% (Hector did shave his moustache, though, so : woot! #LittleVictory). This is only an extended *status* because ~~I ramble too much for those~~ the space there is ridiculously short, right? Who thought 420 characters were enough, I wonder. You guessed right, I don't do twitter. To-the-point is not my friend.

Anyway. Stop rambling Anna damn it.

All of that is to say that I'm taking a little time off Goodreads so I apologize in advance if I don't answer your comments right away. I am not ignoring you. Truth is, I love reading and reviewing books as much as I love ~~obsessing over characters~~ talking to you fellow readers, but lately it's been more and more difficult for me to balance my schedule and well, I'm just so fucking **tired**.

Coupled with the semi-slump that I've been dragging for months now (don't be fooled by my 5 stars ratings, I have to start almost 10 books every fucking time before finding a book I actually like enough to finish), tons of work to do and millions hours of sleep to catch up to (I need to start following my time-zone and stop thinking that time is extensible, for real. *3 hours of sleep is not a night, Anna* is my new mantra), and here I am, flirting with burn-out.

Oh my *Gosh*. I do whine like a pro, don't I?

ashamed face

To sum-up : **Happy reading everyone, and see you for The Raven King <3** (or sooner, I have no idea, actually)

SEE? No one can tell me that I don't listen to my friends.

Indeed I read The Girl of Fire and Thorns recently and ehhe there's no nice way to put it so : **I hated it**. Too much religion, flat characters, uninteresting plot, nonsensical world-building.

BUT.

I have too many friends who told me that, well, IT GETS WAY BETTER in The Crown of Embers (and that a certain guy loses his moustache, hehe) so here we go.

Also, I'm craving for fantasy for some reason and I cannot read any of the new releases because they're all from series I never read or, you know, SANITY so.

I trust you on this, guys.

Pressure much, I know :P

Keertana says

Rating: 4.5 Stars

I have to admit, I am a little upset. Not because of the cliffhanger ending, but because I was expecting one and it never came. Seriously. I pre-ordered this book and have been staring at it longingly on my shelves for MONTHS, refusing to be subject to a terrible, heart-wrenching cliffhanger, only to have an ending that leaves me jumping up and down for joy, completely satisfied and happy. Needless to say, we all need to re-affirm our definition of a cliffhanger ending.

Does *Crown of Embers* leave you wanting *The Bitter Kingdom* as soon as you can possibly get your hands on it? Yes. Actually, ALL good books should leave you wanting to continue the series. So, really, Rae Carson was only doing her job. NOT writing a gut-wrenching cliffhanger that left me sobbing on the floor. (Yes, I am looking at YOU Sarah Rees Brennan. Will I ever forgive you? Only if Kami and Jared make out like crazy in *Untold*.)

Nevertheless, I suppose that the ending of *Crown of Embers* can be construed as a cliffhanger. It does, after all, end in the middle of plans for an epic journey. BUT, more than anything else, I ended this book elated.

With *The Crown of Embers*, Rae Carson writes a sequel that is far stronger than its predecessor - a feat only few other authors have managed to do so far while writing a trilogy. Although I must admit that I am sure Carson has lost faithful fans with this installment, for it is far more introspective, character-driven, and political than the whirlwind adventure her first book was, it was the perfect piece for this story arc and made me fall in love with her writing, characters, and settings even more than before.

Crown of Embers excels simply because of its politics. It details the many assassination attempts on Elisa and her growth to becoming the queen she is meant to be, all while dealing with backstabbers in her court, is a slow and steady climb, rewarding in every step of the way. Furthermore, Elisa is no longer the simple princess we knew from *The Girl of Fire and Thorns*. Seeing her become politically savvy was a journey of its own and while she'll never have the cunning it takes to run a country the way Irene and Gen from *The Queen's Thief* Series do, she's pretty darn close.

What *Crown of Embers* lacks in adventure, though, it makes up for with its romance. *The Girl of Fire and Thorns* told the sweet, blooming story of first love, but *Crown of Embers* chronicles the passionate, burning love of a woman. One of my favorite things about this novel is that Carson isn't afraid to talk about sex. We do have sex in YA Literature, but do we ever really have discussions about it? No. Rae Carson, however, makes it normal for her characters to discuss sex, their passion and lust for another, all in a way that makes it seem *right* and *natural* and *loving*. Why can't more authors do this? Why is it seen as wrong or disgusting or dirty to want to have sex with a man? Why is it seen as embarrassing to talk about sex with your friends? If you can't talk about sex with them, if you can't tell the person you love that you want to have sex with them, then who can you tell?

Crown of Embers isn't all about sex, but considering this is one of the ONLY novels I've come across that incorporates this aspect of growing up so seamlessly into its text, it stood out to me. Needless to say, Rae Carson really does cover every aspect of Elisa's growth as a woman, as a monarch, and as a person. Stunning.

Nevertheless, what makes *Crown of Embers* a novel that really does not have a cliffhanger ending is the fact that the entire book is a whirlwind journey of emotion. Rae Carson, you have thoroughly messed my heart. For the first half of this novel, I was quite literally dying of anticipation because the sexual tension in this book is notched up like nothing else is. It is sweet, slow-to-burn, and oh-so-genuine. It is actual, tender,

caring love, but mixed into that, is an immense amount of longing that simmers in your heart.

Well, if you thought the sexual tension is bad, wait until the romantic couple in this novel - Hector and Eliza - finally kiss because then the million reasons why they can't be together pops up. For once, this isn't simply an issue that exists for the sake of drama. Instead, it is a very real problem. You see, a romance isn't built upon power - it is built upon mutual understanding, love, and respect. If you are in love with a queen, though, power is nearly always at play. I admire Carson for bringing up such a prevalent issue with her love story because power imbalances exist in relationships even today and even in nations that aren't ruled by a monarch. Furthermore, though, Hector is just such a swoon-worthy hero. We know he'd give up his life to save Elisa, but as we learn, he's given up so much more than that too. Moreover, he understands Elisa like a best friend, knows her at her strongest and weakest times, and appreciates her for who she is inside, not the position of power she holds.

Finally, though, Rae Carson ends this book perfectly. We finally see the light at the end of the tunnel, the way for our romantic couple to finally be together and granted, they are separated at the end, but we finish this novel knowing that they will find a way to be together, that Elisa has finally become the queen she was meant to be, and that this is going to go down in history as one of the best trilogies ever.

Unless, of course, Carson kills off Hector, which would make her lose all her fans and everyone would hate her.

So, you know, she won't do that.

Or if she does, she'll write an alternate ending novella where Hector and Elisa will make out all day in the sand.

If you haven't already picked up this series, then, please, don't wait. It's amazing. It has rich world-building, incredible characters, astounding growth, simmering romance, and truly makes you think and question everything you know about faith, inner-belief and self-growth.

Rae Carson, just write an amazing third novel, okay? We'll be best friends after that. I promise.

You can read this review and more on my blog, [Ivy Book Bindings](#).
