



Nocturna

Maya Motayne

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To Finn Voy, magic is two things. The first: a knife to hold under the chin of anyone who crosses her. The second: a disguise she shrugs on as easily as others pull on cloaks. A talented shapeshifter, it's been years since Finn has seen her own face, and that's exactly how she likes it. But when Finn gets caught by a powerful mobster she's indebted to, she's forced into an impossible mission—steal a legendary treasure from the palace or lose her shapeshifting magic forever.

After the murder of his older brother, Prince Alfehr is first in line for the Castellan throne. But Alfie can't help but feel that he will never live up to his brother's legacy. Riddled with grief, Alfie is obsessed with finding a way to bring his brother back, even if it means dabbling in forbidden magic.

In a cruel twist of fate, Alfie's best friend is nearly killed in the crossfire of Finn's heist, and Alfie accidentally unlocks a terrible, ancient magic to save him—a magic, which, if not contained, will devour the world. Alfie and Finn race to vanquish what they have unleashed. But to do so, they each must contend with the darkness hiding in their pasts.

Set in a Latin-inspired kingdom based in part on the author's own Dominican heritage.

Nocturna Details

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From Reader Review Nocturna for online ebook

Julie says

DO. NOT. MISS. THIS.

“This searing, magical Latinx-inspired fantasy pulled me in from the first page and did not let me go. I loved adventuring with brave Alfie and brash Finn, and I held my breath until the end. NOCTURNA is a magnificent debut, powerful and true.”

- Julie C. Dao, author of FOREST OF A THOUSAND LANTERNS

Jackie says

It's always a good sign when finishing a book that your first thought is of getting your hands on the sequel!

“Nocturna” begins with a card game where a masked Prince works to win the books he needs to master dark magic and bring his brother back from the dead against a thief with the ability to shape shift who is looking for a thrill and a way to pay for her next move. When things go sideways the two find themselves paired up against an ancient evil looking for revenge and home for its darkness and will stop at nothing to bring the world to its knees.

I loved every second of this book!

The set up of the character foils isn't new but the chemistry between Alfie and Finn was something that made them stand apart from other duos of similar nature. Both were strong and damaged in their own rights with secrets from their past that made them terrified to open up to anyone which made their quiet moments endearing and their bickering moments entertaining as they are two sides of the same coin and I will follow them anywhere.

The plot itself is very much what I would expect if Harry Potter and A Darker Shade of Magic had a baby and it's just as great as you can imagine. We get powerful mythology and a face for it that is very human but underneath is so filled with cruelty and possession that the binding of the two is seamless.

I really enjoyed this story and I'm even more excited to see the little #1 next to the title meaning we'll probably be getting more!

special thanks to the publishers and edelweiss for providing an arc in exchange for a fair and honest review!

Thalia says

This book is an incredible debut full of awesome characters, adventure, and incredible world-building. It's also an important and engaging addition to the YA fantasy genre because of the way Motayne uses the genre itself and its tropes to explore intense but necessary themes like a country post-colonialism, complicated family relationships, and the connection between societal inequality and access to education.

I was lucky enough to read an early copy of this book and I am so excited for it to make its mark on the YA Fantasy scene. This book features all of the essential elements of a great YA Fantasy book - something mysterious, two people from vastly different backgrounds thrust together, an incredibly original and well thought out magic system and world, an impending doom that requires the main characters to team up to save the world, a thief with a heart of gold, a royal who wants more than just royal privileges and expectations, an enemies to friends to lovers plot, a smart mouthed best friend, a sage older magician, a truly evil villain hell-bent on ruining lives and destroying the world... you name it and this book's got it.

And to top it all off, the two main characters - Alfie and Finn - are fantastically well developed. They're interesting characters with their own motivations and baggage, but they'll also have you cheering for them and also incredibly frustrated with them. Basically, they'll become your new best friends. And don't even get me started on Luka (aka my favorite).

Beyond all that, Motayne does an incredible job of using the genre and tropes to not only weave a fun and engaging story, but also to talk about some deeper things. She relies on a deep understanding of these tropes to both use them and subvert them, making the reader comfortable but also keeping them on their toes - and forcing all of us to confront some uncomfortable truths that also exist in our own world.

Motayne's magic system, the brief history of her fictional country of Castellan, and Prince Alfie's struggles with what it means to be a good ruler - all these themes bring up the questions and struggles faced by a country post-colonialism. By connecting magic to language, and describing how the colonizing Englass stole magic from Castellan by disconnecting them from their language, Motayne at once allows you to understand something deep and crucial about her fictional world and also forces you to understand that these struggles are still facing many countries in our world today. As Prince Alfie wonders how a recently independent country whose slogan is "Magic for All" can actually mean that when poverty is still rampant in the capital city, readers can't help but connect that question to similar situations in our own world. These powerful allusions add an extra layer to this fantastical story, making it socially conscious and relevant. And Motayne is only able to do this through her masterful use and subversion of YA Fantasy tropes.

Motayne also makes a bold statement about gendered expectations in her complex portrayal of both main characters - Finn, the quick-talking, take no prisoners thief who is also dealing with an intense trauma from her past; and Alfie, the bookish yet rash prince whose grief dictates his actions to grave consequences. By introducing us to characters who are complicated and who do not fit neatly into the box of "roguish thief" or "love interest" or "sheltered royal" or any other expected characters, Motayne makes them all the more lovable and relatable.

This book is a wonderful addition to the YA fantasy genre and it will have so many readers eager to see where Finn and Alfie's adventures lead. I'm so excited for everyone to read it!

Rachel Strolle says

WOW I LOVED

Tina says

Thanks to Edelweiss for a copy of this book. RTC

Anissa says

THIS BOOK IS MY NEW OBSESSION! The writing is so lyrical and the magic in this book is so vivid — also Finn and Alfie are simply perfect. I never wanted this story to end; it was one of those books that made me want to read as slow as possible to savor every word. I NEED more!

Kalie says

NOCTURNA is an engrossing debut fantasy that feels like a slightly younger take on **A DARKER SHADE OF MAGIC** sans the portal magic but adding a Latinx influence. There's nothing really all that new here, but the charm and chemistry of the characters really elevates it. In short, I enjoyed this quite a bit and I'm looking forward to seeing where this series and these characters go from here (especially as this installment works well enough as a standalone).

Lisa says

Stopped at about 35 percent in. The set up for the story is great, although it definitely took all of that 35 percent to actually get kicked off.

However, at the crucial moments of action, the main motivations of two characters seemed to depart from what was previously established. Both seem to make quick snap decisions that didn't seem to align with decisions they'd already made and their stated motivations. It just totally threw me, and I continued to lose interest from there.

The whole purpose surrounding the main crux of action (view spoiler) felt easily avoidable and kind of purposeless.

However, I will say I LOVED the magic system (elemental magic + a person's unique abilities) and the history of Castellan, which is still recovering from English dominion. And the Latinx vibe is perfection.

Mixed bag overall.

Kristina Forest says

I've been lucky enough to read **NOCTURNA**, and let me tell you, you guys are not ready for this book! Although you definitely need to get ready because Maya Motayne has crafted a brand new and intriguing fantasy world. This story is filled with adventure, *secrets*, and complex and fully realized characters. She's included some spot-on humor too.

Finn is the tough, witty, and smart mouthed thief that I never knew I needed in my life. And Alfie is a vulnerable and grieving prince who just wants to make the right choices. They are total opposites, but I loved seeing them come together for the same cause. And just wait until you meet Alfie's cousin Luka. He

definitely will not disappoint.

I'm so happy that soon everyone will be able to read this wonderful book and see the amazing representation of LatinX culture in the fantasy genre. On May 7, 2019, don't walk, RUN, to your nearest book store. Or purchase it on your e-reader if that's what you prefer. :)

?????: **?:*?:? says

ARC provided by the publisher via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review. I'm so happy~

Cindy ☆? Savage Queen ? says

1/10/19

So looks like the book title got changed into the series title =\

On another note, cover reveal please!

7/6/18

We have a release date! Woo!

Latin-American setting and a face-changing thief? Yup, I am in!

Emily May says

ARC provided in exchange for honest review ?

Cassie James says

Nocturna is a lush book that is filled with magic and redemption.

The premise of this book is so darned amazing and it totally delivers.

Prince Alfehr of San Cristobal is a fraud, or at least he feels like one. Now the Crown Prince of the kingdom since his older brother Dez was lost and presumed dead in an assassination attack. Alfie has never been one to take on responsibility, he's always been more interested in conquering the intricacies of magic and learning as much as he can. But the loss of his brother drove him down a dark path to prove Dez is still alive. To the dark underbelly of the kingdom where the poor languish and the criminals thrive, he goes. His path leads him to Finn, a scrappy thief who has the power to change her face into anything she wishes. This makes her an expert at disappearing and thieving. But Alfie and Finn are linked when their paths collide due to unfortunate events that's unavoidable. The consequences of their action leading to an ancient evil being unleashed on San Cristobal with the intent of devouring and spreading darkness.

One thing I love about this book is the system of magic, I love refreshing ideas of portraying it and this book so does that. The Spanish element makes it so much better as it gives it a deeper meaning.

The world building of the kingdom is quite vast but very aptly detailed. Envisioning the story as it goes poses no problem at all, the pace makes for such an easy read.

The action is nonstop as they have to keep moving to stop so many disasters.

Another theme I love about this book is the battle between the darkness and light in everyone. Decisions we make and our perspectives of ourselves really matter especially how others sees us. Sometimes all you just need is one person seeing you for who you are and that belief getting you through tough times.

The main characters struggle with this ideal and it's very nicely set up.

The camaraderie is so superb it so makes up for the slow burn of their romance. The chemistry between Finn and Alfie is so hot and obvious they're magic together.

Nocturna is a diverse gem, I love the various number of characters with differing backgrounds and motives.

Maya Motayne has outdone herself with her debut and YA Fantasy fans will love it. I happily recommend it.

I see great things for this series.

P.S: It was so much fun seeing a Latinx kingdom in YA Fantasy, I'd so love more.

Elise (TheBookishActress) says

"Set in a Latin-American inspired kingdom based in part on the author's Dominican heritage, the first book follows a face-changing thief and a grief-stricken prince as they race to vanquish a dark magic they have accidentally unleashed." This looks so awesome.

Cinda says

Welcome to San Cristobal, a Latinx kingdom laced with magic and grappling with homegrown treachery and a colonial past. When the true heir to the throne is assassinated, reluctant Prince Alfehr joins forces with a chameleon of a street thief to save the kingdom from an ancient evil. In the process, they may find a way to save each other.

Fantasy fans will embrace the creative worldbuilding and welcome these flawed and multi-layered characters into their hearts.
