



Fire in the Mist

Holly Lisle

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Faia, a shepherd girl, develops her magic powers until she is ready to seek revenge on those responsible for the destruction of her family., From the author whom Mercedes Lackey calls "one of the hottest writers I've come across in a long time", comes a mesmerizing, action-filled story. A simple shepherd girl discovers her wild mage powers after a murderous magician destroys her family. Now every mage in the world wants to train her. But Faia wants only to confront the madman who killed her loved ones.

Fire in the Mist Details


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Author : Holly Lisle

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From Reader Review Fire in the Mist for online ebook

YouKneeK says

Fire in the Mist by Holly Lisle isn't a particularly original story. In fact, it starts with a theme that is extremely common in fantasy books. A young person, in this case a 19-year-old female shepherd named Faia, experiences a tragedy which triggers a powerful display of magic, at which point mages seek her out to teach her how to handle her magic safely. There was more to the story, of course – that was only the beginning. There's something evil lurking around the mage school that Faia is taken to and most of the plot revolves around the discovery of that evil, learning what exactly it is and how it came to be, and dealing with the situation.

Even though the story wasn't terribly unique, it held my interest. There were a couple of things that kept me guessing so that I had trouble putting the book down. I also really liked the characters. Although Faia was the main character and most of the book took place from her perspective, we jumped around quite a bit to other characters for short periods. One of the instructors at the school was particularly interesting and I wanted to learn more about her.

However, there were some threads that never really played out in any way. For example, there's quite a bit going on with wolves in the beginning of the story and their inexplicable behavior is never explained. I can't explain why without spoiling the story, but there's no way their behavior had anything to do with what was going on at the school. Also, even though Faia was brought to the mage school to learn how to use her magic safely, we never really saw her actually being taught how to do that nor was there ever any clear sign that she had been taught how "off-page". Since this is the first book in a trilogy, perhaps some of that will be dealt with in the later books.

So this book had its flaws, and it wasn't very original, but my ratings are primarily based on how much I enjoy a book. I definitely got four stars' worth of enjoyment out of this book and I plan to read the next book in the trilogy. Maybe part of the reason I enjoyed it so much was because it was a huge change of pace from the longer and heavier things I've read recently. At just under 300 pages, it was a light, quick read. Although I should caution that, by "light", I just mean that there was no mental effort required to read the book. There were some dark and slightly gory descriptions in the book of things done to both animals and humans. I didn't think they were described in excessive detail, but people who are more sensitive to gore might not like it. I found the events themselves more disturbing than the actual descriptions of them, and there was more than one scene that made me go hug the closest animal I could find -- my cat. Since this usually led to belly rubs and neck scratches, my cat gives this book 5 stars.

Cindy says

Entertaining book, but I don't think I'll be reading any more in this series.

Mars says

[Yep, totally Conan. (hide spoiler)]

Lynda says

Faia is a shepherd girl who comes home to find her town dead from plague, travels with the one other survivor to her first city, gets whisked away from him on a flying horse, and helps save another city from war.

Lindsay Stares says

Premise: Faia's mother tells her she should learn to use her gift, that she needs to decide what she will do with her life. Faia just wants to continue to be a shepherd. But when tragedy strikes, Faia's gift for magic will manifest in a new way, and she'll be thrust into the power struggles of a city not her home.

This was a great book. Stuffed with great characters, an interesting world with a tangled history, interesting magic and cultures.

It had such a great tone, too. A predominance of complex, fabulous women live at the mage-school Faia comes to. The conflicts between the female and male mages bewilder Faia, and she tries to think well of others, all while defending herself from their assumptions about an untrained hill-girl. She's a wonderful character, just flawed enough, just well-meaning enough, just vulnerable enough.

I also really enjoyed her city-fied roommate, her 'barbarian' teacher Medwing... it's just a really fun cast of characters. The twists of the plot feel right, and the settings are interesting. Also there are giant otters.

Overall, a solid, highly enjoyable fantasy.

?Misericordia? ~ The Serendipity Aegis ~ ?????? ✨*♥💖 says

Society where female and male wizards have put discrimination backwards: mage and saje who distrust each other, have different interests and even managed to get the science dichotomized...

4,5 subjectively. Objectively I start at 5 stars:

- 1 star: my eyeballs got a real hard workout on this one: all the hype about mage and saje things, women who one can only wonder how they even got pregnant, society where one can only wonder how they managed not to lose all the female magic altogether...

+1 star: original world, yes, a real fantasy world (!), I love them when they are properly built!

-1 star: a bit uneven in writing and flow

+1 star: Medwind insta-husband, what was that?

-1 star: stupid issues this society displays: like 1 crazy gal insinuates that some guy killed her child and the society goes on into a full-blow war with a thousand year (or smth like that) rift following it? All the while sajes and mages have polar opposite views on pretty much anything? Then after that thousand-year rift the said crazy gal gets resurrected/invoked (or whatever, don't want to get into specifics) and she repeats the whole shebang? You kidding me? In this scholar-permeated society nobody (other than the barbarian Medwind) has bothered to learn to think for themselves? Though I must admit I see these very issues in the world of today: many supposedly democratic countries to a crack job appointing the enemies in the media... So, that's a +1 star as well!

Karen Field says

After the destruction of her village, Faia's powers are realised not only by herself but by every mage in the world. Suddenly, she is wanted by all and feared by them as well, however, as everyone agreed that it was important to train the wild magic before more destruction occurs something had to be done. She is taken to the city, where men occupy half and women occupy the other half. The division is long standing and the reasons behind it are debatable. Upon her arrival, mysterious things start to happen which turn the two halves of the city against each other.

I found the plot to be complex and a little confusing at times, but not enough to distract me from what was happening. I liked Faia and wanted to know what would become of her. Thinking about it now, I can't say she grew much throughout the story, but that also didn't put me off. She had a strong personality and I believe that was enough to hold my attention.

I enjoyed the way the story was written. It was done in such a way that made me read on, when I should have put the book aside and done something else. As a result, I got through the book quite fast (although personal circumstances made me put the book aside for more than three weeks when I was about 75% of my way through the book).

Although I know this is the first book of three, I don't have to read the other books, if I don't want to. I was satisfied with the ending. Yet I am willing to purchase the next book and continue on with Faia's story.

Simon Mcleish says

Originally published on my blog here in January 2002.

When shepherdess Faia returns to her home to find that the whole village has been wiped out by plague, she uses one of the spells taught her by her mother to turn it into a pool of lava as part of her response to her grief. This turns out to be a hugely powerful spell, and commands the attention of mages (female) and sages (male) from the town which houses the university in which magicians are trained. An untrained, strong talent is very dangerous, both to its owner and to those around them, so Faia is more or less forced to accompany them back to the Oxbridge style setting of Ariss. Unable to fit in with the generally aristocratic pupils, Faia is stunned when the age old war between the sexes - carefully segregated in the misty city - threatens to break out again.

Even in her early novels like this one, Lisle's concern to promote the role of women in the fantasy genre is apparent. (It is never allowed to affect the interest of her story, however.) Fire in the Mist is an excellent light fantasy novel, with more to it than most, an apprenticeship for the later and more challenging Secret Texts trilogy.

Amanda says

Another strong female lead. This time, a young girl is left village-less and strikes out to be on her own.

Before Harry Potter, there was Faia. Seriously, J.K. Rowling probably either read this or channeled this book.

An overwhelmingly comforting read for me, I enjoy reading it over and over and over again.

Michael Lucas says

Started off amazing, really great evocative writing, an interesting character in Faia, and a compelling fantasy world. I didn't mind what some people called cliches (a peasant with powerful magic, etc.) because that's the whole point of this book -- it's advertised that way and you pick it up if you want that kind of story. So it delivered on its promise in that regard.

The other characters in the book are great, notably Medwind Song but also Yaji, the Mottemage, and Flynn the cat. What's really interesting is that this book was published five years before the first Harry Potter book, and you can definitely see some strong similarities -- the magic university, the spookiness of missing students, etc. Makes you wonder if JK Rowling might have been inspired by it!

The last half of the book does have issues. I didn't understand how a city divided into a male half and female half, which only rarely consort, could work -- how are enough children born to continue the population? The villain is kind of weak until the end -- I think there needed to be more strong reminders of the antagonistic presence. Finally, the biggest problem is (view spoiler)

Still, the evocative quality of the writing is so strong that despite these problems I gave it four stars. It really did take me to another world and I enjoyed it immensely. There's something fun about these older fantasy books that modern ones seem to lack!

Songfire says

Hello, misogyny!

Though I have to admit, I did not see that coming. The *heroine* started out as a rather strong-willed interesting character (slightly suffering from the stronger-in-magic-than-everyone-else-and-perfect syndrome), but the character was fleshed out quite well through the first quarter of the book. She had to try and overcome trauma and adjust to a completely foreign environment. So far, ok. She ends up in a female-empowered society, where men hold no power at all. Because history teaches them that men are responsible for all evil. *rollseyes* *Seriously?!!*

So when female students turn up dead and tortured, the *reasonable* (cough) course of action for the women mages (according to the characterisation in the book, man-hating narrow minded bigots) was killing off everyone in the male side of the city, and of course, the poor oppressed men who were the real heroes all along had to go save the day (with the help of the token *barbarian female warrior mage*!) I'm so tired of that trope...!

And of course, it was the women mages messing with nature (changing creatures, performing child and virgin sacrifices). *And the whole nightmare was started by a power-hungry female mage who strongly advertised that killing virgins is a fabulous idea. At least before she found out that her students actually listened to her and sacrificed her daughter (who wasn't supposed to exist in the first place, since she also*

preached abstinence-only!).

*The male 'sajes' are wise scholars, just trying to understand life, of course. *headdesk**

*The only sympathetic, somewhat fleshed out character I found was Medwind (the *barbarian headhunter*).*

Tabitha says

Lovely book, fast paced.

Allisyn says

After the death and destruction of her country village, Faia is taken to city for learning to control her powerful and wild magical talent. The city is split into separate centers of learning for men and women, a division that an ancient evil returns and takes advantage of. Faia is a character that is very likable and easy to identify with. Her outsider and disenchanted viewpoint makes an interesting viewpoint on the magical city. I found the plot line for the ancient evil to be a bit confusing at the major revealing point so it took a bit to catch up from there. But that didn't really detract from my enjoyment of the book. The book stands alone quick nicely though I liked the characters enough to hope for a sequel and was pleasantly surprised to see at the used book store that there are two more books (though only book 3 was available).

Hubert Lange says

An average that turns really really bad somewhere in the middle. In the beginning the book seems quite ok. The story follows the main character which struggles with the personal tragedy. She seems strong willed and intelligent. We quickly find that she possesses a powerful magic talent. She is found by the mages from the magical university located in city practically devoted to magic, because she is too dangerous to remain in the world untrained.

And there the book seems to unravel. It looks that the heroine doesn't learn much, because it seems she already can do EVERYTHING, and can do it better than everyone. And this is in quite strong contradiction to the beginning of the book where we are told that while she has some strong talent, she is not interested in developing it.

At similar point the mysterious "evil" is introduced.

The further the plot goes the less believable it is, and more logical holes appear. It's hard to explain the logical holes without some major spoilers.

At some point after 50% of book the author apparently decided that the main character is too much of a Mary Sue, and swiftly in one maneuver practically makes her a passive back-seat observer, while the most action responsibility is carried out by new or so far third-plane characters.

At this point I practically lost any interest in the book, because so far I have lost most of my interest in the plot and unbelievable man/woman city setup, and continued just because of the likable main character.

I just forced myself to keep reading to finish, but can't say that It was worth my time.

I don't like when a plot is moved by people acting like complete idiots, or making sudden the out-of-character choices. I don't like it when the plot/setup has so many logical holes an elephant could get lost in them, but most of all I don't like it when something that has a lot of potential turns ugly.

Wish my first review on this site was a positive one, but I feel too disappointed by this book...

Kelley Ceccato says

Here's a treat I always appreciate: a traditional/epic fantasy led by women.

What I liked:

1. An awkward, angry heroine who isn't always easy to like, but who packs a lot of power;
 2. A mentor figure who is a heroine in her own right (and who turns out to be the most sympathetic figure in the novel), and who, like the younger woman whom she takes under her wing, is an outsider who must fight to be taken seriously;
 3. The two women offering each other both friendship and aid at crucial moments (always a satisfying thing to see);
 4. A conflict between the genders in which it's quite clear that women and men are both equally capable of good and evil;
 5. A villain who is absolutely and unambiguously loathsome;
 6. An intense, dark, violent climax in which a happy ending is not a foregone conclusion. I would not call this "grimdark fantasy," but it does have its share of grimness and darkness, which makes our heroines' triumph all the more satisfying.
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