



The King's Guard

Rae Carson

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At fifteen years old, Hector is the youngest squire in the most elite military force in the country. And his first day is disastrous. Everyone assumes the only reason he was recruited is his close personal association with King Alejandro, not because he's really earned it.

But Alejandro needs Hector for a secret mission, one that gives him the chance to prove to everyone—including himself—that he is worthy to be a Royal Guard. Hector must break into the ancient Fortress of Wind to retrieve something so important that the kingdom's future depends on it. What Hector finds in the fortress will stretch his bond of friendship with his king near to breaking. And it will prepare him to become the fearsome warrior and lord commander Elisa will never let go.

A riveting prequel to Rae Carson's epic and acclaimed Fire and Thorns series.

The King's Guard Details

Date : Published July 30th 2013 by Greenwillow Books

ISBN :

Author : Rae Carson

Format : Kindle Edition 84 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Novella, Short Stories

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From Reader Review The King's Guard for online ebook

Katerina Kondrenko says

6 out of 10

This bonus was slow at the start and seemed rather unnecessary, but the story's ending did save it for me.

We see Hector being young (around 15, if my memory serves me right) and eager to join the Royal Guard, but his first day as a new recruit becomes a disaster which ends with a strange errand from the King. Hector would have to find and bring to the court the King's ex, 'cause the Queen is very ill and may not survive her labour. Isadora (the girl Alejandro was courting before Rosaura) might be a quick and suitable replacement. So Hector goes with this task.

I was bored while reading this short story, but then I got a crazy idea about what was going on in the story and got curious how it would end. And you know what? I was right! Have to admit the twist is awesome, not fantastic or extraordinary, but it adds to the series even more depth and complexity. So overall, yes, I liked it.

Fire and Thorns (???? ? ?????):

- The Shadow Cats (?????????? ?????) #0.5/3
- The Shattered Mountain (?????????? ????) #0.6/3
- The King's Guard (???????????? ????????) #0.7/3
- The Girl of Fire and Thorns (????? ????? ? ????) #1/3
- The Crown of Embers (?????? ?? ?????) #2/3
- The Bitter Kingdom (????????? ????????) #3/3

Jessica says

Ok getting baby Hector being a bamf and seeing Rosarios birth? This ties for first spot in my favorite of the three stories.

Ferdy says

Spoilers

I was expecting to love this one, Hector was a great character in the main series - unfortunately, I didn't like him as much in his own novella, probably because he was only fifteen and just beginning to learn about life and things. He was still a decent character though and unlike other YA heroes he actually had morals and a sense of duty.

I liked the Isadora/Rosaru/Alejandro twist even though it was rather predictable - it really made me hate Alejandro though, he was a disgusting-low-life prick. It was mind boggling why Rosaura would love him after he impregnated and shagged around with her cousin a few days before their wedding. Also, what he did to Isadora was unforgivable, I'm glad the wanker ended up dying young.

Kimberley doruyter says

hector is one of my fav characters, i like that he got his own story.

Alaina Meserole says

So I would've given *The King's Guard* 5 stars but I feel like 4 was more necessary due to my confusion throughout this entire novella. Now don't get me wrong it was still a really awesome, interesting, and well-written but I was just confused in a lot of parts. I hope I get more of these characters in the series because I'm kind of hooked on to their super messy lives. I can't wait to dive into these books now - these novellas really hyped me up.

Maggie ? (Reader in Wonderland) says

4.5/5 stars

"My brother Felix used to say that my knives would never be as sharp as my tongue, which was a shame."

THIS SHORT STORY + HECTOR = LOVE

But honestly, I didn't expect to enjoy this story quite as much! So many secrets and all the intrigue! Fifteen year old Hector is just as capable, loyal and noble as the one we know (and love) from *Fire and Thorns*, and yet we can see his growth later on in the series.

Recommended for all fans of the trilogy.

Quotes:

"That is a lovely quilt, recruit," he says.

"Thank you, sir."

"It's the envy of every little girl in Brisadulce. I saw them sitting on the wall today, staring at that blanket and asking their mothers if they could join the Guard so they could have one just like it. Is that what you want, recruit? You want a Guard full of little girls?"

"If they can fight well enough to defend the King, sir."

He's looking over my shoulder at the sketches. "Those drawings aren't that bad."

"The author made these." I flip the pages and start showing him the sketches in the margins and in back.
"These are mine."
Lucio winces. "Are you sure that's a room?" he says. "It looks like a wagon."
"From this angle," Fernando says, cocking his head. "It's kind of pretty. Like a flower."

Perla The IB Teen Book Blogger says

In the beginning, when all us GOF&T fans knew was that the last short story was going to be about Hector, I let my imagination run wild. In my crazier, fangirlier moments I let myself wish that this short story was going to be a blow by blow accounting of every minute that Hector has been in captivity. Then my fevered brain wanted, and I am ashamed to admit it, Hector's side of everything. Please understand that my craziness is such that I have read the two novels upwards of five times each, and they are heavily highlighted. This weekend I was re-reading the series thanks to the phenomenal short story "The King's Guard", when suddenly all my progress was gone, all my beloved passages where UN-HIGHLIGHTED!

NOOO!!!

Yes, there was a mini meltdown, and no I am not proud- but I digress. I know (thanks to twitter) that I was not the only one willing to trade someones first born for this story to be all about Hector, and Rae Carson herself assured my desperate tweet that it was:

It IS Hector! @ibteen I am having a major freak out over @raecarson's 3rd novella: The King's Guard. I'm hoping it's HECTOR!

— Rae Carson (@raecarson) April 22, 2013

Needless to say I was in heaven. I was worried when I read the synopsis, a 15 year old Hector? Would I feel especially inappropriate for loving an underage imaginary character? The answer is: I Do Not Care. Lord Commander Hector is imaginary, and in "The King's Guard" he lives up to everything I could have ever wished him to be, in the novels you never know what is going on inside his mind, but you hoped it would be everything that is revealed in King's Guard.

Setting aside my personal bias for Hector, the story is the strongest of the three novellas. Sooo much is revealed, about Alejandro, Hector, and the awesome supporting cast, even mysterious characters who were a tiny blip in Girl of Fire & Thorns are explained. "The Kings Guard" feels exactly like what a novella should be, complete, and not at all feeling like an aside adventure that takes place away from all the main action. Even if my feelings weren't what they are for Hector, I would have wanted this one to keep going into novel length. It is a true testament to the strength of the whole body of the series that you can take one part of the whole and it feel complete in an of itself.

Jess at Such a Novel Idea says

I have a love/hate relationship with novellas. Sometimes they are SO great and really add back story that is far to complicated to be in the main books. And sometimes they seem unnecessary and rather dull -- something I have to work to get through.

But THIS my friends is how you write a novella. It's now my favorite novella story of all time. Why? A) You get to see life from Hector's perspective -- when he is 15 and trying to enter (you guessed it) The King's Guard. B) We get some AMAZING back story -- some great information that is really critical to understanding not only Hector, but Alejandro, the Queen, and the world Elisa will one day be walking into. And some jaw droppers that you wouldn't have seen coming prior to this book. AND C) It made me REALLY want to re-read the entire series. And start The Bitter Kingdom.

So, to sum up, if you are A Girl of Fire & Thorns fan and you skipped this novella, GO BUY IT NOW! And if you aren't a fan, then obviously it is because you haven't read it yet. So, again I say... GO BUY IT NOW!

Beautiful, revealing, and reminded me just why I love this series so much.

5/5 stars

Nadine Jones says

This was twice as long as the other The Girl of Fire and Thorns prequel, The Shadow Cats, and five times as fulfilling. (Although it's still in first person present tense, which I really do not care for - if it wasn't for this hideousness, I would have given it five stars.) Although this is listed as the third prequel, I believe it is first chronologically. In the old days they liked to give books long rambling titles in the form of "Named name or the verbing of the other noun." The King's Guard could be titled "*The King's Guard, or how Hector learned to stay quiet.*"

This is from Hector's POV, when he was just fifteen, King Alejandro's friend and former squire, and a potential recruit for the King's Guard. Interestingly, being the king's close friend is seen as a DETRIMENT to joining the King's Guard, since the other recruits assume Hector is there solely as a favor to the king, and not on his own merits. Alejandro, bumbling fool that he is, does little to help the situation.

Ms Carson does a fine job of letting us see Hector as young, inexperienced, and unsure here, but he is still capable and not afraid of taking the lead and making quick decisions. This adds interesting nuances to the characters of King Alejandro, Hector, Queen Rosaura, Fernando, and others. I did not see the plot reveal coming, and it added a lot of depth to the series storyline. This prequel is best read after GFT; it could be read as a stand alone, but it would not feel as meaningful.

Prince Rosario is born at the end of this novella, and he is six when Elisa meets him in GFT, so that makes Hector 21 when Elisa is 16. Which makes me feel a *little* better about a romance forming between them; I had thought he was older than the King, and the suggestion of a romance between Hector and Elisa felt kind of squicky due to the perceived age difference. (I had wondered if there was going to be a sort of Arthur/Lancelot/Guinevere triangle, but the ending of GFT put paid to that.)

One thing that annoyed me, not so much about the story as about the characters' decisions: Hector uses all of his savings in the course of his mission, and his brother loses quite a bit of money when he helps him. Since Hector basically saves the kingdom, it would not have seemed untoward for him to ask Alejandro to reimburse him (or at the very least, let Alejandro and Rosauro know how much money was needed, hint, hint). But he doesn't say anything.

Jessica (Books: A true story) says

Best short story ever. We get to see the background of the romantic hero Hector. Great conflict for a short story. We get to see Hector sacrifice his three prized possessions to save his kingdom even though he thinks he will lose everything doing it. At the end he's completely changed and is left with no possessions to serve as a guard except "Love for my kingdom, love for my king, and love for my queen." It makes you love Hector even more. Must read story of you liked the girl of fire and thorns series. (Ps his three items are irreplaceable and valuable though that is not obvious to everyone else. They are a quilt made by the queen, money hidden as art on a board from his brother, and a priceless book from his mother)

Jen (The Starry-Eyed Revue) says

HECTOR!!!!!! *Hectorhectorhectorhectorhector!!!!* Okay, I'm done.

Admittedly, I was hesitant to read this novel because I knew the Elisa/Hector swoons would be non-existent since this is Hector's POV *prior* to Elisa's reign in Joya d'Arena. But then all I had to remember was how I love Hector and that he's quite possibly one of my favorite love interests ever, and I was convinced this novella needed to be read, despite the fact that I've already finished reading the full-length novels in the series.

And I'm really glad I did. Not only do you get a peak at Hector as a young man, vying for his spot as a member of the Royal Guard, but you get to see Alejandro with his first wife, Rosaura. Oh, and how Hector is instrumental in Rosario's birth. It's quite priceless. I never would have guessed...

Also, Fernando. I had to double-check the name, but as soon as he was described as a superior archer, I knew it had to be *that* Fernando. Not that he was given much mention in the books, but the fact that I remember him is significant. But I do have a fondness for archery. =)

I've loved all of the novellas in this series, but I think this is my favorite because even though we know Hector as the honorable man he is now, it was nice to see that he was the same at the tender age of 15.

****You don't have to read *any* of the prequel novellas, but you totally should.****

This review can also be found at The Starry-Eyed Revue.

Ash Wednesday says

4 STARS

"Harsh winds, rough seas, still hearts."

Somebody's a Friday Night Lights fan.

Ah a novella centered on Hector and his training before he got into the Royal Guard.

Except its not.

Because while this further highlights Hector as a loyal and faithful friend and squire to Alejandro (who may just have pushed his reading in the douchemeter here) it also echoes Rae Carson's trademark feminist wink with the characters of Rosaura and Isadora in a more subtle manner than with Elisa. Who may have been absent from this novella, but seems to loom prominently Hector's future. So subtly you may miss it if you blink.

"Is that what you want, recruit? You want a Guard full of little girls?"

"If they can fight well enough to defend the king, sir."

A definite must for Hector fans out there.

Kelley says

I love the way this book added on to the actual Fire and Thorns series. The familiar characters at a younger age were interesting to read, as they were so different in comparison to their later appearances in the series. One example of that was Lucio. He seemed pretty obedient and hardworking in the series, but in this book he was portrayed as a troublemaker. I also was really intrigued by the fact that Rosario was actually not Queen Rosaura's son. Wouldn't that mean he wasn't the actual heir to the throne? I'm curious if an heir to a throne has not actually been the child of royalty but was said to be.

Deborah says

3.5*

Hector was one of my favourite characters from the series, well once he'd shaved his moustache off of course.

This takes us back to when he was fifteen years old and trying to get into the Royal Guard. It's hard enough anyway especially when some people feel he doesn't deserve to be there. Then he gets called away before he's even had a chance to prove himself.

We've seen Hector as a man but here we discover that even as a boy he was brilliant, loyal and hardworking.

This is my favourite of these novellas.

Sydney says

I love Hector. I love Hector. I am obsessed with Hector. He may become my new book boyfriend...

And BTW..this was my face when I finished and found out there was an excerpt from The Bitter Kingdom at the end.

#soobsessed

Read all my reviews at www.rattlethestars.com
