

Title: The Captive Kingdom

Author: Jennifer A. Nielsen

Reviewed by: Ria Chhabra, 14

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Years after releasing the third book in the Ascendance series, Jennifer A. Nielsen has published her new novel, *The Captive Kingdom*. This captivating, unpredictable tale begins in Carthya, home to King Jaron. But restlessness and the heavy weariness of council meetings leads Jaron and his crew to embark on a sea journey to trade goods with an ally kingdom. But, his ship is soon hijacked by an unfamiliar captain of a country long thought to be extinct. Now captive on board Strick's ship, Jaron discovers items that link deeply to his family's past. As he works tirelessly to uncover the truth about his brother's death, the line between friend and enemy begins to blur and he must determine who to truly trust.

Whether it was a near-death situation or a challenge that seemed insurmountable, Jaron was determined to succeed. With intelligence and agility he crafted daring plans to escape and help lead other civilians to safety. His witty and sarcastic personality always brought a smile to the reader's face and his courage was truly inspiring. Furthermore, the author really developed his character throughout the book, focusing on the idea of trust. At first Jaron was secretive and hesitant to share his ideas, but he later realized that everyone was capable in their roles and they could all work together.

The setting was absolutely captivating! From spectacular ships across the rough sea to enchanting islands, the world around the characters was well-built. It was descriptive and enhanced the fast-paced plot. However, I would have loved to see more strong female characters play a larger role in the story line. Imogen, the teenage heroine simply supported or comforted Jaron at the beginning and end of the novel. She never developed any skills or displayed a talent to contribute to the adventures. Overall, *The Captive Kingdom* was an interesting, adventure novel and I would highly recommend it to anyone 9+.

Recommended Titles:

Shielded, KayLynn Flanders

Traitors Game, Jennifer A. Nielsen

Ash Princess, Laura Sebastian

Master of One, Jaida Jones and Danielle Bennett