

*Palace of Stone*

Shannon Hale

Reviewed by: Hannah Yang, age 11

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After reading and enjoying the first book, “Princess Academy”, I wanted to read the second. Like the first book, this book has satisfied my hunger for a mix of fantasy, action, and romance. I have never felt so engaged in a book in a long time.

This book is about how after Miri’s friend, Britta, goes to Asland to be married to Prince Steffan, Miri, Peder and the other girls of the academy went to visit for a year. While Miri is at Asland, she attends school at Queen’s Castle, and learns subjects she hasn’t even heard of: Rhetorics, Ethics, Mathematics, Science, and more. But there is more drama than expected. The commoners want to start revolution, and several attempts are made to kill the “Robber Princess”. Miri supports the ideas of the revolution, but is torn between her new friends’ ideas, and her best friend- Britta. Not only that, Miri must decide between an old love- and a new crush. In her tangled up world, can Miri find her way out, and stop a revolution on the way?

I love the dramatic scene of when the assassin is trying to kill Britta, but everyone else is getting in the assassin’s way. I especially like the first part, when he did shoot at Britta, but Miri jumped in the way, and then Peder jumped in the way. It’s a drama-filled mix of action and romance. Then, Miri quarry-speaks and the whole room comes tumbling down. The ability to pull off that kind of story and not sound a bit... off, is admirable. The whole concept of quarry-speaking would sound crazy unless you pulled it off correctly. But Hale did it!

What I don’t really like is how there are so many different characters and conflicts happening all at once. This makes the book a little confusing, but it’s also one of the things that makes its story so meaningful and complex (in a good way). I love how the queen gets to stand up to her husband, and not always hide in the shadows.

Overall, this book is a good book for those who are 5-6th grade and higher, depending on reading level. If you are able to understand more difficult concepts, and like action mixed with romance, then this is the book for you!