

**Title:** *Year Of The Reaper*  
**Author:** Makiia Lucier  
**Genre:** Historical Fantasy/Mystery

**Reviewer Name and Grade:** Anbang J., 8th

**Date Reviewed:** March 9, 2022

To settle a 50-year war, Princess Jehan of Brisa marries King Rayan of Oliveras. Around this time, a deadly pestilence brews across the kingdoms, killing a lot of people. The story focuses on Lord Cassiapeus of Oliveras, a young apprentice. While on a mission for the king, he was captured by Brisan soldiers and imprisoned. He stayed in a rotten cell for 3 years when finally, a pestilence outburst freed him, the only survivor. After regaining his freedom, Cassia travels back to his home, Palmerin. On his way there, he meets a girl named Lena who steals his horse. Cassia later rescues Lena from a wild Lynx and decides to let her go after getting his horseback. When Cassia arrives at Palmerin, he saves the baby of the royal family from an assassin. When King Rayan finds out that it was Lord Cassia that saved his son, he is welcomed back with open arms. Cassia also sees a lot of familiar people, including his brother Ventillas, the Lord of this city. Cassia also starts to catch up on things he had missed during his time at the prison. He meets Queen Jehan, who he doesn't like because she's from Brisa. He also finds out that Lena, the horse thief from before, was the king's sister and the two became friends. Cassia decides to try and find the assassin before she does any more harm to the queen. After a while of searching, lots of loose ends come up. Everything seems to point to Lady Mari, a friend of the queen who was left behind when Jehan came to Oliveras due to the pestilence, but Queen Jehan seems to be hiding something as well. Soon, the assassin strikes again, killing one of Queen Jehan's old nurses and injuring Cassia. Together with Lena and Bittor, a guard that he had met and sort of became friends with, they set out to investigate. When the group reaches a hospital, they find out a dark secret that could potentially set the two kingdoms back to war.

*Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?*

For the most part. There are some sections where I feel like it was a bit boring or was worded weirdly but the main story was very interesting.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pacing was just right. The story moved along pretty quickly, but it wasn't difficult to follow.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for? What type of reader would you recommend this book to?*

This story would be a bit wordy to younger readers, so I would recommend that readers should be in grades 7 and up. I would recommend this story to people who like fantasy, mystery, or just enjoy a good story.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?*

The story contains quite a bit of violence and death, as well as vivid descriptions of corpses. There are also descriptions of medical torture and prison violence.

*I would rate the book 4 stars.* I liked the story and the characters, but I think the author could have added more transitions. The story was also quite boring at the beginning and took a while to get me interested. The author does a great job at describing the setting and building up character development. There weren't too many side plots so the focus would be on the main plot. Romance also played a very small role in the story so that can be either a good thing or a bad thing, depending on the reader. Some of the moments in the story were written well, such as when Cassia meets his brother Ventillas again and had you feeling the emotions that were going on.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Michaila P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Date Reviewed: April 1, 2022**

Year if the Reaper takes place in a fantasy world in the two kingdoms, Oliveras and Brisa. Both kingdoms have decided to put their differences aside and end their war as a deadly plague hits both kingdoms, leaving thousands dead. The Princess of Brisa, Princess Jehan is to marry the new king of Oliveras, King Rayan. However, Princess Jehan is forced to leave her best friend Mari and the rest of her entourage behind, taking only herself and the Lord of Palmerin, an isolated mountain city, Ventillas. His younger brother, Cas is the novel's protagonist. Cas is returning from his imprisonment in Brisa as a prisoner of war, building a bridge as the only survivor as everyone else has died of the plague. He has become bitter, and deeply traumatized by his time working and has gained many scars as he was badly beaten and mistreated by the guards and prisoners for being from Oliveras. Cas has gained the ability to see and communicate with the dead, and helps bury a dead toll man on his request, as he has been dead for a while and his body has been defiled by the animals and time. Well burying him, he encounters a young lady named Lena who steals his horse. He catches up with her, and they both agree to ride to Palmerin together as they both have to be there urgently. Once they get there, an assassin strikes, attempting to kill the newly born prince. Cas rescues the prince from drowning and announces his return. However, they are too late to save others as the assassin kills two others, the only other people who were with the Princess on her trip to Oliveras. As Cas attempts to readjust himself into society, he, Lena, Ventillas, King Rayan and Princess Jehan attempt to track down the assassin before they strike again.

*Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?*

The plot is definitely engaging, though it can be a bit confusing at times. Despite being a very straightforward plot, sometimes the characters do things or go places that leave you

wondering why they did that. However, this only happens once or twice and otherwise, the plot is very engaging.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace was very clean and polished. It was just right, with everything happening right after the other and the plot never stopping. It never felt too slow or too fast, and the climax especially was very well paced.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?*

I would recommend this to 13+ year olds because it does discuss some mature themes.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?*

I would recommend this book to anyone who likes reading either young adult fiction, romance or fantasy. I wouldn't recommend this book to anyone hit hard by the coronavirus however, as a lot of it centers on their world's plague and it could be possibly upsetting to some.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?*

Year of the Reaper is a stand-alone book, meaning this is the only one you have to read if you want to complete the story.

*3 stars: It was okay; I had hoped for better*

Overall, this book was pretty good. I loved its writing style and the way it builds upon itself. Cas is a very good protagonist and the world definitely felt real. However, the main problem with the book is that the mystery is very obvious. The plot-twist isn't very surprising and anyone could have seen it coming from a mile away. Also, sometimes there are plot points that have nothing to do with the rest of the book, and you know they aren't setting anything else up because this is a stand alone. This leaves the reader wondering why certain things happened.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Joon-Gi K., 7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Date Reviewed: July 18, 2022**

*Year of the Reaper* begins with a short description of the miserable journey Jehan, Mari, Ventillas, and other members of royalty trailed on. This journey's purpose was to resolve a war-conflict that had been going on for fifty years. Throughout this span however, a plague arose, and many died and inflicted others with the same illness. A year later, Cassia – a supposed dead lord and brother of Ventillas – encountered Lena, a girl who had to “borrow” his horse, in which she was in a hurrying need. The girl, otherwise known as Lady Alalena in Palmerin, was an “apprentice” historian hoping to follow her grandfather's legacy. “Cas” being presumed as dead on a mission three years ago, was an astonishing view to many of the citizens and royal members in the city. Before anyone recognized him however, a mysterious archer attempted to shoot at the King's son from the top of an attic. Due to Cas' early shout and warning, the baby got off lucky; the arrow plunging into the nurse who was holding him instead. After worrying about his son and closing off the premises, the King congratulated Cas for his great return, and sent him to the keep, where both the Queen and Cas were escorted there in a carriage. Cassia meets many old faces, with emotions of delight, old remorse, and happiness. However, not long after this does Cas meet the real danger lying before him. A peculiar coin is discovered left behind at the scene of the attempted murderer of the King's son. With papers that Alalena discovered from trails of

her grandfather, they find out that the archer is Lady Mari, a dear friend of the Queen. The problem was that Mari had been presumed dead when she was inflicted with the deadly plague, and officially known as dead. Cassia faces many similar dangers throughout the book, learning the secrets of the *actual* journey.

*Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?* Yes, the main plot and story was very interesting, and it kept me hooked all the way.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?* The pace of the book was just right, and it kept me interested throughout the whole book. However, in the beginning, it was slow and I had some trouble understanding what the story was about. Along with that, the beginning had started out a bit dull.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for? What type of reader would you recommend this book to?* I think any grades above 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> and up would be appropriate because the story and word diction gets a bit complicated to understand. I would recommend this book to readers who like to read fantasy fiction, action, or historical fiction.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?* The book takes place in an imaginative world of the Black Plague and Joan of Arc, so readers should keep in mind that the story takes a medieval age story.

*I would rate this book 4 stars.* The book had lots of action and mystery that kept me interested and hooked throughout the whole book. It also gave a brief overview of the medieval age in a fun and enjoyable way. However, the beginning of the book was a bit hard to follow as it was too vague and hard to visualize. Also, the main story was not visible until the climax of the book. All in all, the author used many techniques to make the book enjoyable to readers of any kind.