



These Rebel Waves

Sara Raasch

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Adeluna is a soldier. Five years ago, she helped the magic-rich island of Grace Loray overthrow its oppressor, Argrid, a country ruled by religion. But adjusting to postwar life has not been easy. When an Argridian delegate vanishes during peace talks with Grace Loray's new Council, Argrid demands brutal justice—but Lu suspects something more dangerous is at work.

Devereux is a pirate. As one of the outlaws called stream raiders who run rampant on Grace Loray, he pirates the island's magic plants and sells them on the black market. But after Argrid accuses raiders of the diplomat's abduction, Vex becomes a target. An expert navigator, he agrees to help Lu find the Argridian—but the truth they uncover could be deadlier than any war.

Benat is a heretic. The crown prince of Argrid, he harbors a secret obsession with Grace Loray's forbidden magic. When Ben's father, the king, gives him the shocking task of reversing Argrid's fear of magic, Ben has to decide if one prince can change a devout country—or if he's building his own pyre.

As conspiracies arise, Lu, Vex, and Ben will have to decide who they really are . . . and what they are willing to become for peace.

These Rebel Waves Details

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From Reader Review These Rebel Waves for online ebook

? Sh3lly - Grumpy Book Grrrl ? says

DNF 28%. No rating.

I started this on May 4, 2018. It is now July 13, 2018. It's been over two months and I can't get past 28%. I'm throwing in the towel.

Who started this gay pirates thing? There are no gay pirates here.

I'm not even going to try and review what I did read. Just going to move on. I do thank you so very much Edelweiss and publisher for providing an eARC. I'm sorry it wasn't for me. I'm sure others will like it. The writing is fine; it's just me.

Original post:

28% pre-review... Still waiting for this to really get going... the religious, political vibes are overpowering and little adventure so far. Needs more pirates!

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

Beautiful Sprayed Edges!

LINK TO THE GOODIES

I'm on the fence so I'm leaving it at 3 stars for now ?

Melanie says

ARC provided by the publisher via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

Friends, this just was not the book for me. And you know I hate writing “negative” reviews, so I’m going to try to keep this on the shorter side. But this book and the writing was just equal parts boring and daunting for me. Plus, the magic system was not explained, the characters were hard to like or believe, and I never cared enough to root for any of them. But I think what ultimately made me not love this book was because I went in thinking that we were going to see a crew of queer pirates, on the open sea, fighting battles, slaying monsters, and doing pirate things. This is not the type of book *These Rebel Waves* is. But on a positive note, this is a book filled with colonization, oppression, magical medical experimentation, religious hierarchies,

political intrigue, betrayals, and what people are willing to do in the name of their God(s). And, it sort of has pirates.

And I don't think that this was a bad book. I mean, obviously many of those topics are super important, but I went into this book just expecting something completely different. And I will totally take responsibility for that. But this book was also super boring, and it felt like a chore to pick up each and every time. I had to constantly reward myself with treats while reading. If this wasn't an ARC, and if I wasn't buddy reading this with two of my friends, I would have 100% DNFed this story. And that has nothing to do with the expectations of gay pirates.

And, full disclosure, one of the first books I ever DNFed was Sara Raasch's *Ice Life Fire*, so maybe this author's writing just isn't for me. So, if you pick this one up, I hope you enjoy it more than I did. But I should probably give you some bare bones about the actual story and the three characters we follow!

- **Adeluna / Lu** - Soldier. Loyal to her family. Experiencing so much loss, and so much trauma, from childhood to present day.
- **Devereux / Vex** - Pirate. Master of disguise. Hinted that he's queer, maybe even pan, but never stated.
- **Benat / Ben** - Heretic. Crown Prince. Obsessed with the magic that is forbidden. Queer, in a hidden m/m relationship. Also, I don't know how I feel about the way Ben's relationship developed, but I kind of don't want to think about it or this book any longer.

And these characters are all on the same island and their three stories intertwine to maybe change the fate of the world as they know it. And each of these characters have to make choices that will truly decide what type of person they want to be.

In this world, magic is plant based and outlawed. But the thing is, the magic system is never explained. You just have to suspend your disbelief that it works some magical way for some people with the right reagents. I mean, I guess I'd say it's like magic herbology. I guess? I don't even know, because it's so not explained. But anyone who uses this magic will be punished in the name of the Pious God.

Trigger and content warnings for death, murder, loss of a loved one, torture, colonization, physical abuse, child abuse, captivity, medical experimentation, and violence.

And there is also a disease that is killing people rapidly, that needs to be addressed. It's called the Shaking Sickness, and Lu has felt the heartbreak from it many times. There is no treatment for it, it has no known cause, and it doesn't spread from person to person. Some people die from it instantly, and others suffer with it for a long while.

So, we have magical plants, and a disease that is killing a lot of people. We have a pirate who is a smooth talker. We have a soldier who has been a soldier all her life, even when forced as a child. And we have a prince, who is dealing with the ghosts from his past. All these things come into play and send Lu and Vex on an adventure, and leaves Ben discovering the hypocrisy of the religion on the island.

My favorite thing about this book was a plot twist. Obviously, I'm not going to give any spoilers, but a certain plot twist in this book was so well done. The author expertly wove it into the entire story, and it is the reason I'm giving this book two stars instead of one. Seriously, it was amazingly done. And the next favorite thing was a beautiful f/f relationship involving two main side characters.

I know that the copy I read was an ARC version, but this book ends so abruptly. I felt like after the amazing

plot twist, and finally seeing all the action form and start to take place, we are just cut off. Curtains drawn, lights out. I just sat with my iPad in my lap, blinking a few times, because I thought maybe I got an unfinished ARC. So, here is your warning that the ending is a little brutal.

Overall, this just wasn't for me. I went in expecting so much and was given so little. And even with so little, it was so different than what I was expecting. I do predict that the next book in this series will be better. I just don't think I'll be picking it up. And if you go into this expecting gay pirates, sailing the seas and fighting for injustice, like I did, you're going to be disappointed. Again, I hate feeling so negative, so I hope that if you give this one a try that you will enjoy it much more than me! Happy reading, loves.

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Buddy read with Hamad & Jules! ❤

Hamad says

Actual rating: 1.5 stars

You can find this review and other non-spoilery reviews @The Book Prescription

? Expectations is the keyword here, if you see the top reviews on GR, you will see that they are all readers excited for a “Gay Pirates” story, after seeing all those reviews I was pretty sure that was what we are getting. Obviously, apart from a minor focus on an LGBTQ character, this has nothing to do with the whole “Gay pirates” thing.

? So, this has nothing to do with pirates, this has no ships with a captain, no wooden leg, no parrot and no sea adventures! This mostly takes place on land so keep that in mind. And if an author wants to write a book about gay pirates then the opportunity is still there and I think it will be successful with all this hype!

? So what is this about? If I want to describe this vaguely and what it deals with, then:
Botanical magic and religion!!! you see there is a huge difference between expectations and the reality.

? I was always fascinated by “green magic” that has to do with plants and potions... etc so a story with this as the fantasy element must be interesting, unfortunately, I think the execution was not the best, there could have been many amazing ideas for this kind of magic! But in reality, it was so basic and bland!

? But the thing that mostly irked me is the writing style, I can't stand repetitions and this book was full of repeated words; for example:

- 9 is the number of times the word “Heresy” was used.
- 22 is the number of times the word “Eminence” was used.
- 115 is the number of times the word “Pious” was used.
- 164 is the number of times the word “God” was used.

I can't ignore these things and every time the word Pious was used, a small part of my soul was dying! -I know it was used for emphasis but a line was crossed in the number of times it was used- I even couldn't find anything to quote because it just put me in a bad mood ? ?

? The story was boring too and I wish I knew how to skim well because I just wanted to be done with it, There was a good and unexpected twists toward the end but other than that I was not intrigued by this! Same goes for the characters!

? In short: I recommend going into this without the whole LGBT expectations, this is more of a story with a religious story line, the story can be good only if you go into it with different mindset! I truly wanted to enjoy this but I simply couldn't.

Buddy reading this with GR sweetest soul ever!

ARC provided by the publisher via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

? **percy ↪ says**

i hated Snow Like Ashes but i hear this book is about

GAY!!!!!!!

FUCKING!!!!!!

PIRATES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

so i'm willing to give the author another chance. ;)

Sara Raasch says

The final pre-release contest for THESE REBEL WAVES is happening NOW through July 31!!

Amanda says

3.5*

I received this ARC in exchange for honest review

The story follows our 3 MCs as their lives intertwine in a Spanish Inquisition inspired post-War setting.

>Adeluna: Former rebel spy, magic expert, badass lady

>Devereux: Pirate/ Stream Raider, mischievous bugger, secretly a cinnamon roll

>Benat: Gay Prince of Argrid, science nerd, heretic

I really loved all of the MCs. That being said, I had a very difficult time connecting with them. This isn't your typical action packed pirate book, it focuses more on character development and politics. It is also quite religion heavy (not my fave.) The intense world building made the first half of the book a bit slow but the second half of the book was action packed and full of twist and turns.

Overall I enjoyed it and I'm interested to see where the sequel will take this story

Full review video: <https://youtu.be/jSKfVJAWIEc>

mar ? says

LGBT ROMANCE + PIRATES= A very excited Mar.

I mean, **pirates**, guys. Come on.

Sarah (thegirltheycalljones) says

Okay but how am I supposed to take the oppressor seriously when everytime I see his name I read "Hagrid" instead of "Argrid"?

Natalie Monroe says

"As much as I don't know you, raider, you don't know me. You have no idea what I am capable of."

Vex considered. 'You're right—I don't know you. But I know who you want to be, princesa, and that might be more dangerous to you.'"

Snow Like Ashes left me high and dry, but I had high hopes for this one because one, gay pirates and two, gay pirates. Honestly a more wonderful combination of words could not have been invented other than free pizza.

Sadly, as most of you have figured out by now, the **gay pirates thing is a rumor**. I don't remember where I read it, whether it was on the unofficial blurb when it was first announced, but I hope whoever decided to lift the collective reading community's hopes like that steps on a Lego on a foggy evening.

There is a gay romance inside, but it's **far from ship-worthy**. Unlike Jesper and Wylan from Six of Crows (which is now the bar I hold to all romances, hetereo or otherwise), it lacks that gradual development that makes readers invest and root for couples. Their identities aren't a huge spoiler since it's revealed in the first several chapters, but I'll hide it just in case: (view spoiler) Their relationship has already been established from the get-go, and there's no will-they, won't they tension to keep the stakes going. There are stakes, related to the main plot, but it doesn't change the fact that there were no sparks between them. They are cold soggy lunch bags cuddling together for warmth.

Plus, it's incredibly obvious that they're just second-tier to the **main romance between Lu and Vex**:

“He shrugged. ‘I’m not one to confess my secrets to crazed women who use manipulation and favors to ensnare me in their own plots.’”

I foresee many bottles of champagne smashed against the hull of their ship. Lu is a kickass politician's daughter who wants to help her country, Grace Loray. Vex is a wisecracking raider on the opposite side of the law. Put them together like potassium and sodium and you've got yourself a sexual power keg. They're also two out of the three POV characters, the last one being the Crown Prince Ben of Argrid. His country fears and despises Grace Loray's magic and wants to eradicate it. His are the chapters I longed to skip, so there's not much I can add about him.

Back to Lu and Vex, their relationship interested me more than the other one, but I wouldn't say I'm obsessed with it. From a scale of one to Swiftie, I'd say I'm a two—I'd hold open an elevator door for you, but not if I'm in a hurry. Their romance has been done a thousand times in YA and there wasn't enough to set it apart.

That's really how I'd describe my reading experience of These Rebel Waves on whole: **it's good, but largely unremarkable.** The plot is reminiscent of dystopian novels—fighting against a corrupt system only to discover there's more beneath the surface—except it's in a fantasy setting. I did enjoy the world-building. Magic comes from botanical plants and their usage is adequately explained. Also, the narrative focuses on particular countries, Grace Loray and Argrid, enabling readers to slowly absorb information rather than overwhelming us in a desperate attempt to demonstrate that their world is detailed and creative. Other countries are mentioned with clear room for expansion.

“Dirt and sand, all across the land; the currents are ours, you see. No god, no soldier, no emperor, no king, can take my current from me. Flow on, my friends, flow on with me; together we flow as one. No god, no soldier, no emperor, no king, can erode what we have done.”

The final reveal of the villain was lackluster. Though I didn't see it coming, it didn't knock the breath out of me with surprise. I just went “Oh” and took a sip of apple juice. Part of the reason is the character isn't very complex. He has somewhat good intentions that manifested into terrible actions. Typical villain fare with a world of unexplored depth.

I don't think I'm invested enough to read the sequel, but we'll see.

ARC provided by Edelweiss

Emily May says

I think perhaps Sara Raasch is just not for me. Though her books always sound compelling, I once again find myself distanced from the story by the writing, unattached to the characters, and generally apathetic towards whatever was going on.

Sorry to disappoint, but the rumours of gay pirates in These Rebel Waves are false. I guess this will continue to be where I get my gay pirate fix (CW: homophobia, mention of rape). It's not the author's fault; Raasch only ever promised gay romances - of which there are two, both m/m and f/f. The aforementioned pirate is straight.

The problem is **I just found These Rebel Waves rather dry**. There are three third-person perspectives and every single one left me cold; perhaps a first-person perspective would have generated some more emotion(?)

Adeluna "Lu" is a soldier on the island of Grace Loray; Benat "Ben" is the crown prince of Argrid, and queer; Devereux "Vex" is a pirate who deals in magic and finds himself assisting Lu in finding a missing diplomat (Also, why is he called "Vex"? Isn't it pronounced "dev-uh-roh"?).

It was really difficult for me to get on board and care about the story and politics. Despite what appearances might suggest, this is not a high seas pirating adventure, but a fairly standard dysto-fantasy novel. Many concepts are brought in and left vague, such as the religion and the Shaking Sickness. This society is heavily-defined by its religion and yet I felt like I never really understood what they believed outside of mutterings about the Pious God.

Similarly, it took me a long time to understand the magic system going on here. It is not explained very well, but it turns out to be a world where magic is botanical, existing only in magical plants and herbs.

But, really, I think it all comes down to the writing style not working for me. It was some combination of the **distant third-person narration**, the vagueness of the world and magic, and odd sentence choices like this:

The noxious tavern birthed Lu into the midnight streets of New Deza.

None of this made me care enough to want to go on the journey to find Miles, the missing Argridian delegate. I never felt strongly about the story's mission and would probably have put it aside if I wasn't reading an arc.

I was also a little disappointed by how the gay relationships were left bland and boring compared to the tension and flirtations between Lu and Vex. The gay couples got mentions but the only really shippable relationship was the main het romance. Though I did find it interesting that the author chose to have a deeply-religious society in which being queer was no issue at all. Men are betrothed to men, women are married to women, and no one bats an eyelid. I liked the idea of a world where religion and sexual orientation were in no way at odds with one another.

These Rebel Waves is not a terrible book, but there was nothing here that made me interested in reading on.

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Sabrina The Trash Queen says

Okay, so apparently this doesn't have a actually gay romance just a character that is gay/bi? Damn, that makes me way less excited to read it.

GAY PIRATES ! I don't need to know anything else.
I'm so excited to start reading this book.!!!!!..!

Kiki says

In the interest of not fanning the flames of rumours, I've removed my previous pre-review. I'm still excited to read this! But the source from which I heard that there were gay pirates in this book was clearly full of shite! The moral of the story? Don't believe everything that you read on the internet!

Cindy ☆? Savage Queen ? says

3/19/18

Ugh, I swear this was a July 3rd release and now it's been pushed back until August 7th

OMG look at this cover!!!

It is absolutely stunning! I am so freaking excited for this! Because honestly, I just need more pirate stories in my life.

Glad to see that the synopsis is finally up and happy to say I'm still super excited to see where this goes.

Kelly Brigid says

To my dismay, I thought that this book fell very flat. I had such high hopes for it, and loved so many of the individual elements within it. Unfortunately, all these bits and pieces mesh together in odd ways, and aren't descriptive or unique enough to stand out. I couldn't connect with any of the characters, and the romances felt forced. I also would've liked to have seen more privateering. Considering the title of this novel, I was expecting more swashbuckling and plundering, but it wasn't very evident at all. I did think that the plot twist towards the end of the book was fantastic. I hadn't predicted it at all, and thought it created an intriguing premise for the sequel.

A huge thanks to the publisher and Fantastic Flying Bookclub for providing me with an ARC!
