



The Siege of Macindaw: Book Six (Ranger's Apprentice)

By John A. Flanagan

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The kingdom is in danger. Renegade knight Sir Keren has succeeded in overtaking Castle Macindaw and is now conspiring with the Scotti. The fate of Araluen rests in the hands of two young adventurers: the Ranger Will and his warrior friend, Horace. Yet for Will, the stakes are even higher. For inside the castle, someone he loves is being held hostage. And now the time has come for this onetime apprentice to grow up.

Perfect for fans of J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, T.H. White's The Sword in the Stone, Christopher Paolini's Eragon series, and George R. R. Martin's Game of Thrones/A Song of Ice and Fire series.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

In Book 6 of the popular Ranger's Apprentice series, Will, his friend Horace, and a sorcerer/healer join forces with a fierce but loyal troop of Skandians to recapture Castle Macindaw, rescue Alyss from its tower, and restore the castle to its rightful owner. Series fans will relish the familiar details of warfare and comradeship as well as the surprising fireworks in both war and love. While this satisfying novel could be enjoyed as a separate volume, it is best read in series order, as it concludes the story of Will's first mission as a Ranger, an adventure begun in Book 5. Grades 4-8. --Carolyn Phelan

About the Author

John Flanagan grew up in Sydney, Australia, hoping to be a writer. John began writing Ranger's Apprentice for his son, Michael, ten years ago, and is still hard at work on the series and its spinoff, Brotherband Chronicles. He currently lives in the suburb of Manly, Australia, with his wife. In addition to their son, they have two grown daughters and four grandsons.

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Gundar Hardstriker, captain and helmsman of the Skandian ship Wolfcloud, chewed disconsolately on a stringy piece of tough smoked beef.

His crew were huddled under rough shelters among the trees, talking quietly, eating and trying to stay warm around the small smoky fires that were all they could manage in this weather. This close to the coast, the snow usually turned to cold sleet in the middle of the day, refreezing as the afternoon wore on. He knew the crew

were looking to him for a way out of this. And he knew that soon he would have to tell them he had no answers for them. They were stranded in Araluen, with no hope of escape.

Fifty meters away, Wolfcloud lay beached on the riverbank, canted to one side. Even from this distance, his seaman's eye could make out the slight twist a third of the way along her hull, and the sight of it came close to breaking his heart. To a Skandian, his ship was almost a living thing, an extension of himself, an expression of his own being.

Now his ship was ruined, her keel irreparably broken, her hull twisted. She was good for nothing but turning into lumber and firewood as the winter weather wrapped its cold hands further around them. So far he had been able to avoid stripping the ship, but he knew he couldn't wait much longer. They would need the wood to build more substantial huts and to burn as firewood. But as long as she still looked like a ship, even with that damnable twist to her hull, he could retain some sense of his pride at being a skirl, or ship's captain.

The voyage had been a disaster from start to finish, he reflected gloomily. They had set out to raid Gallic and Iberian coastal villages,

staying well away from Araluen as they did so. Raids on the Araluen coast were few and far between these days, since the Skandian

Oberjarl had signed a treaty with the Araluen King. They weren't actually forbidden to raid. But they were discouraged by Oberjarl Erak, and only a very stupid or foolhardy skirl would be keen to face Erak's style of discouragement.

But Gundar and his men had been the last of the raiding fleet to reach the Narrow Sea, and they found the villages either empty—

ransacked by earlier ships—or prewarned and ready to take revenge on a single late raider. There had been hard fighting. He had lost

several men and was left with nothing to show for it. Finally, as a last resort, he had landed on an island off the southeast coast of Araluen,

desperate for provisions to see him and his men through the winter on the long journey back north.

He smiled sadly as he thought of it. If there had been a bright spot in the trip, that had been it. Prepared to fight and lose more

lives, desperate to feed themselves, the Skandian crew had been greeted by a young Ranger—the very one who had fought beside

Erak in the battle against the Temujai some years back.

Surprisingly, the Ranger had offered to feed them. He'd even invited them to a banquet that night in the castle, along with the local

dignitaries and their wives. Gundar's smile broadened at the memory of that evening as he recalled how his rough-and-tumble sailors had stayed on their best manners, humbly asking their table companions to pass the meat, please, or requesting just a little more ale in their drinking mugs. These were men who were accustomed to cursing heartily, tearing legs off roast boar with their bare hands and occasionally swilling their ale straight from the keg. Their attempts at mingling with polite society would have been the basis of some great stories back in Skandia.

His smile faded. Back in Skandia. He had no idea now how they would get back to Skandia. Or even if they would ever return home. They had left Seacliff Island well fed and provisioned for the long trip. The Ranger had even provided them with the means for a small profit from the trip, in the form of a slave.

The man's name was Buttle. John Buttle. He was a criminal—a thief and a murderer—and his presence in Araluen was a source of potential trouble for the Ranger. As a favor, the young man had asked Gundar to take him as a slave to Skandia. The skirl naturally agreed. The man was strong and fit, and he'd fetch a good price when they got home.

But would they ever see Hallasholm again? They'd sailed slap into a massive storm just short of Point Sentinel and were driven south and west before it.

As they came closer to the Araluen coast, Gundar had ordered Buttle's chains struck off. They were heading for a lee shore, a situation all sailors dread, and there was a good chance that the ship would not survive. The man should have a chance, Gundar thought.

He could still feel the sickening crunch as Wolfcloud had smashed down on a hidden rock. At the time, he felt it as if his own spine were breaking, and he could swear he had heard the ship cry out in agony. He knew instantly, from her sluggish response to the rudder and the way she sagged in the peaks and troughs of the waves, that her backbone was fractured. With each successive wave, the wound deepened, and it was only a

matter of time before she split in two and went under. But Wolfcloud was a tough ship, and she wasn't ready to lie down and die—not just yet.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jackie Sneller:

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