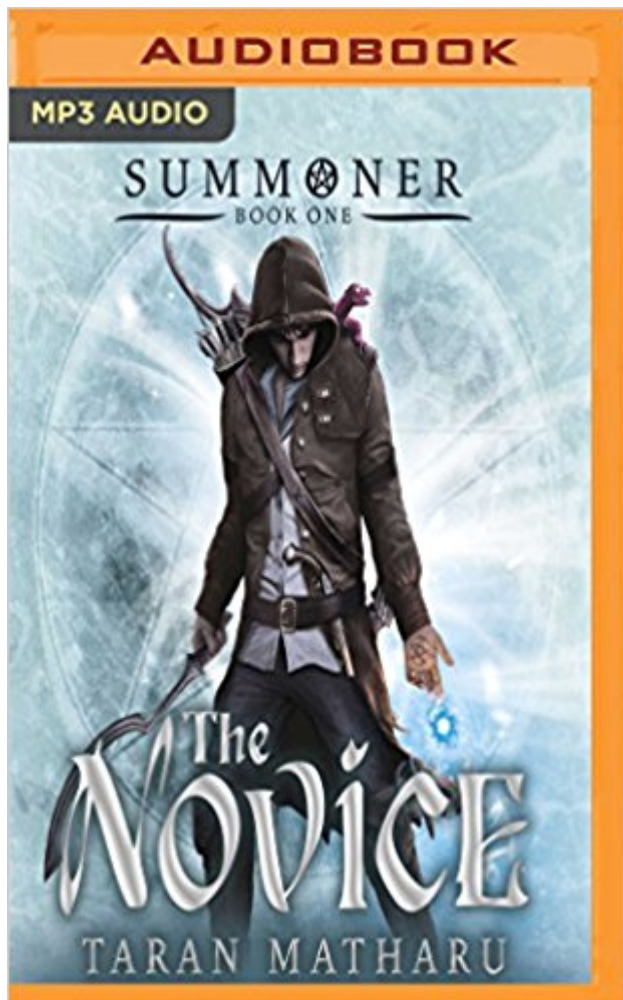


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The Novice (Summoner)



Synopsis

He can summon demons. But can he win a war? Fletcher is working as a blacksmith's apprentice when he discovers he has the rare ability to summon demons from another world. Chased from his village for a crime he did not commit, Fletcher must travel with his demon, Ignatius, to an academy for adepts, where the gifted are taught the art of summoning. Along with nobles and commoners, Fletcher endures grueling lessons that will prepare him to serve as a Battlemage in the Empire's war against the savage Orcs. But sinister forces infect new friendships and rivalries grow. With no one but Ignatius by his side, Fletcher must decide where his loyalties lie. The fate of the Empire is in his hands.

Book Information

Series: Summoner

Audio CD

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up—Fletcher, 15, an orphan raised by a blacksmith in the Hominum Empire's northern village of Pelt discovers he has the ability to summon demonic creatures in this exciting fantasy trilogy opener. After Fletcher and Ignatius, his ferretlike demon, attack the local bully, Fletcher is forced to flee his village. Through a chance encounter with a mage, Fletcher finds himself attending an academy for battle mages. Trained mages are needed in Hominum's ongoing war with the orcs and in the armed truce against the elves. At the Academy, Fletcher, a commoner, endures scorn from the more skilled second-year students of noble birth, especially a pair of snobbish twin siblings,

who are particularly cruel to Sylva, the elf chieftain's daughter, and the dwarf Othello. Dwarves are despised and treated as second-class citizens by many humans in Hominum. Their studies culminate in a year-end tournament that determines their student rankings and the opportunity for a senior military position. Fletcher and his small group of allies also become involved in a plot that threatens all of Hominum. This debut's similarities to J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" books, Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials" (Knopf), and J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" (Scholastic) (the novel even has a nasty professor with a prejudice against commoners and other races) are unmistakable, but readers won't mind. Fletcher's a sympathetic character whose impulsive behavior leads him to make understandable mistakes. VERDICT The appealing characters, fast-paced plot, focus on racial politics, and interesting demon varieties (demonology addendum included) make this an enjoyable read. —Sharon Rawlins, New Jersey State Library, Trenton --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

A New York Times Bestseller — "The appealing characters, fast-paced plot, focus on racial politics, and interesting demon varieties (demonology addendum included) make this an enjoyable read. — School Library Journal — "Fantasy readers should enjoy this entertaining, comfortably familiar-feeling adventure featuring an earnest soldier-schoolboy and his demonic sidekick. — Kirkus Reviews — "This plot-focused fantasy adventure will be a satisfying read for a wide age range of readers, especially fans of role-playing games and Christopher Paolini. — VOYA — "Taran Matharu . . . racked up more than a million reads for his first novel, 'Summoner,' in only four months. — NBCnews.com --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This book started out with the usual orphan who happens to be gifted with powers. Fletcher is a bit of a pariah in his home town of Pelt. A simple, yet plausible series of events leads him to discover his powers, and puts him on the run from the law. I like that this book has no prophecy. There's no destined hero, or looming apocalypse. The world is at war with the orcs, but the hero, Fletcher, is just a boy finding his way in the midst of it all. When he gets to the city of Coricillum, where Vocans, the summoned academy he is to train at is, he finds a city rife with corruption, racism, and the excesses of privilege that the noble class abuses. In the midst of this all, Fletcher finds himself making friends of misfits, fighting in scenes that are not overblown to unrealistic proportions, and fine tuning his craft, so he can excel. The good guys are well developed, while the villains are portrayed as arrogant, greedy, and treacherous. As a whole, the book does a good job not getting

ahead of itself, and developing at a pace that is enjoyable and relevant. The magic system is simple yet serviceable, and skillfully incorporates the familiar, or "demons" as the book calls them. This book would fit in the teen fantasy fiction genre, as it has no graphic rape or torture scenes, but this well seasoned fantasy lover of 35 years still enjoyed it thoroughly.

Interesting story about a boy with unknown origins brought up by the blacksmith of a village bordering the elf territory. The story takes off when an encounter with a soldier ends in tragedy and our protagonist, Fletcher, must flee. And although he leaves his old life behind, a new one begins by way of a gift from the soldier. This is a good story for anyone who likes high fantasy, likeable characters facing hard and sometimes unfair circumstances, and great world building. Overall I enjoyed this tale and will begin the next one.

First book in a long time where I could not put it down. In less than 24 hours of receiving I am a little over half way through the book, And to put it lightly this book is - easy. I mean this as in the writing is so fluid and following it and understanding the story, the emotions, and the details is easy. I love the character, Fletcher is a true delight to know. He sees the world as I would in the movies and stories I see. Fletcher is patient, understanding, unbiased, confident and modest. One could say he is Gary Stu (perfect) with him catching on to his powers quickly and just happening on a powerful creature. However I like the way Matharu handles this, I see it more as a reward for being kind, open and friendly to others and trying to be helpful. I feel this read is a very good balance between the Percy Jackson series and The Inheritance cycle (the Eragon books) Its not too playful like Percy Jackson and its not too over bearing and complicated like Eragon. I very much look forward to finishing the book and will be picking up the next two. Happy Reading!

This is a very different twist to the Mage/Wizard/Battlemage genre, especially the use of 'demons'. I was moderately interested from the beginning mainly because I absolutely detest 'bullies' and the arrogant rich. The story really is another rendition of whether or not a commoner or poor individual has a chance against the powerful, wealthy aristocrats. I did expect to see more out of Fletcher but then when you consider he had no knowledge of the world outside of his very small town of Pelt, he does very well. The basic premise is it is not how hard you fight but how smart you fight. The only negative I can find is another blasted cliffhanger. I do hate those in series books because it is so long between books that you almost have to re-read the last one to remember what happened by the time the next book is out. The writing is very good, the story line and presentation is appropriate

for all ages.

This novel is a lot of fun to read. It drew me in from page one, and I finished it in two days. As soon as I finished, I wanted to read the next book. Unfortunately that's not out yet, but I, for one, can't wait. Other reviewers have likened it to Pokemon (still fun for me as an adult) and I can see that, as well as a comparison to Harry Potter. Fletcher, the main character, learns he can summon demons (which aren't the traditional Christian demons we're all familiar with, but instead more like magical pets where the pokemon comparison comes in) a rare ability usually reserved for the nobility. So he gets sent to school for summoners, to learn how to control demons, and use their mana (energy) to cast spells, after which Fletcher and the cast of junior summoners will be deployed to fight for their country in the battle against orcs. I gave the book four stars because it was a whole lot of fun to read, but there were a few issues I had that, considering the entertainment level, were minor. Fletcher, while flawed, isn't as flawed as I like my main characters. (I'm a big fan of the anti-hero, and Fletcher doesn't fit the bill, but that's a personal preference.) The antagonists were mostly one dimensional, which was a bigger flaw, in my opinion, but not one that I couldn't overlook as a reader. Aside from the premise of learning to control demons and magic, there's also a wonderful subplot of Fletcher's journey from where he grew up to where he ends in the book, and what all of that means for him. I won't go into detail to avoid spoilers, but it's one of the reasons I am super excited for book two. "Novice" also touches on class issues and race issues (something that is unfortunately very relevant in today's world) in a way that is accessible for any younger readers (it is a YA book, after all) without being watered down or anything like that. All in all, it's a very enjoyable read that I have every intention of re-reading, and recommending to friends.

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