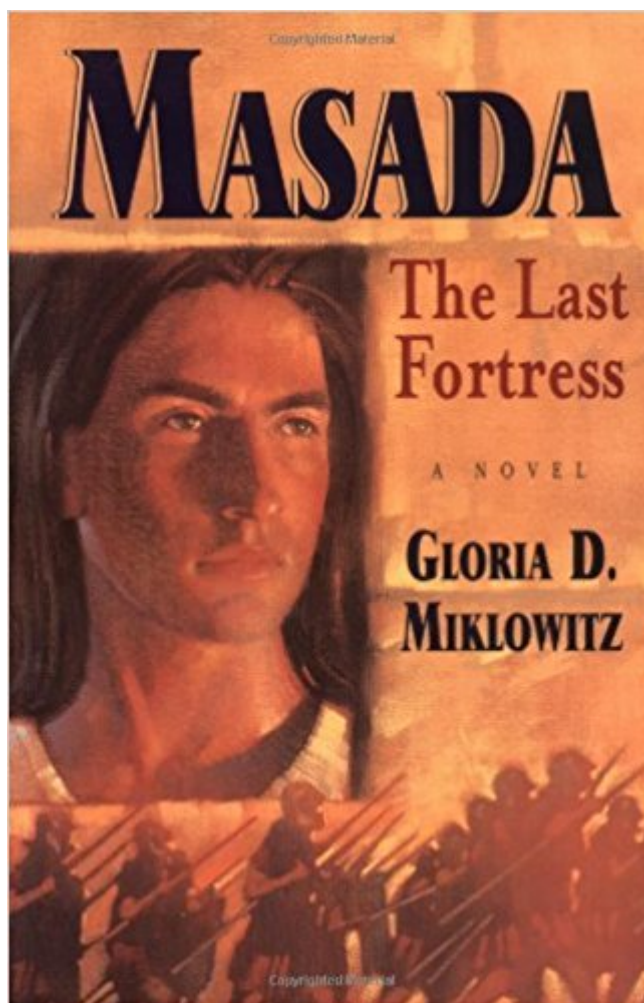


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Masada: The Last Fortress



Synopsis

In the year 72 C.E., after a four-year war between Rome and Judea, only one fortress remains to be taken: Masada, high above the Dead Sea in what is now Israel. Two years later, the commander of the famous Roman Tenth Legion, Flavius Silva, marches toward Masada to capture or kill the 960 Jewish zealots who hold it. In this eloquent and powerful novel, we meet 17-year-old Simon ben Eleazar, son of the Jewish leader of Masada. Apprenticed to Masada's only physician, Simon learns to help victims of the enemy's onslaught as he struggles with his love for Deborah, the intended of his best friend, and with the painful decision he must ultimately make.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 850L (What's this?)

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 23 customer reviews

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

In 73 C.E., Simon ben Eleazar, 17-year-old son of the leader of a group of Jewish refugees inside the fortress Masada, sits with his friends, John and Deborah, contemplating his future. Will he marry Deborah and follow his dream of becoming a doctor? After three years of living in the seclusion of Masada, Simon almost believes his dreams might come true. But he and his friends have not forgotten the horror of the Roman backlash in Jerusalem and the deaths of their family and friends. Soon, the Romans descend upon them with an army garrison numbering over 20,000 soldiers, Jewish slaves and mercenaries to take Masada from the 1000 Jews occupying it. Although the Jews devise ingenious defense plans to hold off the invaders, after seven months the Romans

break into the fortress and discover that Simon and the others have all committed suicide. In Miklowitz's (Camouflage) novel, readers will glimpse Simon's struggles and joys and the fall of Masada as he records the daily events of the last year of his life. Simon lives his final days with hope and trust in the faithfulness of God, and readers may well be inspired by his example to live their own lives with purpose in the face of all obstacles. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Digital edition.

Grade 5 Up-The siege of Masada in 72 C.E. is related through the first-person narrations of Simon, the 19-year-old son of Jewish leader Eleazar; and Flavius Silva, Commander in Chief of the Roman Tenth Legion. Through the young man's viewpoint, readers experience the full extent of life at the time, ranging from Simon's unrequited love for the girlfriend of his friend John, to training to become a doctor, and finally to the last hours at Masada. Flavius Silva's account details the life in the Roman camp complete with Jewish slave labor that ironically erects the apparatus that breaks through the protective wall of Masada. Flavius details his rivalry with Marius, the bloodthirsty second in command; dealing with Jewish captives; and finally the hollow conquest. The author fails to establish distinct voices for each person, resulting in shallow characterizations awash in a flood of historical detail and a lack of immediacy. However, readers are given the most historically accurate and explicit representation of the event than is found in any other juvenile book on the market. Malka Keck, *The Temple Tifereth Israel*, Beachwood, OH Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Digital edition.

This book helped me put names, faces, and personalities to the people of Masada. Nobody knows exactly what happened or how, of course. We can imagine that the people would have wanted us to know their story. The author takes the facts that we do know and weaves them into a story of the way it might have happened. That is helpful as we weigh those ideas with those of other sources before formulating our own ideas. Even for those of us who are Christians living in America, just hearing 'Masada' evokes strong thoughts and feelings. It stirs up questions about who these people were and what their lives must have been like during the Roman army's siege against them. How terrified they must have been! We wonder what we would have done. When I visited Masada last year, we sat outside looking at the view of the Dead Sea. I wondered how many times the people of Masada sat staring at that same view, hearing the noises of the soldiers camped out below them, maybe smelling the pots of food cooking, pondering the fate that awaited them, hoping that other options would save them, knowing that time was growing short and they would not be able to live

out the dreams they had for the future. Our tour guide handed us two items that had been found at Masada, a coin and a woman's ring. These were obviously copies, of course, but everyone got very quiet as we transitioned from viewing the 'place' and the 'event' into thoughts about the individual people who held a coin like that in their hands, who wore that delicate little ring. I tried to imagine the person who wore that ring. Was it her wedding ring? Was she young, or old? Did she have children? Did she agree with the decisions that were made? Did she have a voice? What were their lives like during those days? I looked over the landscape below. As I visited the various rooms and buildings, I tried to picture them bustling with people both before the Romans arrived, and after. I tried to picture them preparing for those last moments, trying to preserve valuable scrolls. I 'saw' them leaving stores of food rather than destroying it so the Romans wouldn't have it. This was evidence that they didn't make their decision because they were out of food or water, but because they chose death over slavery, abuse and mistreatment, and what was essentially a slow death, the only other option available to them and one that was unacceptable to them. I read Masada, The Last Fortress, to help me put personalities into the very sketchy historical records. In fact, I found a video here on [YouTube](#), but before viewing it, I wanted to read this and another book because the video can't describe thoughts and feelings the way a book can. I want to be able to process and compare the ideas from several sources, including Flavius Josephus' account before forming my own personal ideas about the people who experienced this event. There was much that I did not know about Masada, including what had happened before they arrived there and the amount of time they spent with the Roman army camped out at the base of that 'rock' called Masada. This book may have been designed for young people, but I found it to be appropriate for adults as well.

EXCELLENT!!!

I had the privilege of visiting Masada a year ago on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Masada is a powerful place and I could only imagine the story this fortress in the desert could tell -- until I read this book. While there, we saw the ramp the Romans built and their camps below the fortress. We saw the water cisterns, the piles of boulders that were used against the Romans. I enjoyed reading both sides of the story - Jewish and Roman - which tells the personal experiences of those involved in this historical account. If anyone has visited Masada or plans to do so, I highly recommend reading this book.

El libro me encanto, como novela histÃfÃ rica es excelente. Mantuvo mi intereses hasta el final,

con historias de amor, coraje, y valor. Recomiendo ampliamente este libro a niños de secundaria, como lectura en clase de Literatura Universal.

Great read, fictional account, but a good story. Been a while since I read anything about Masada. Mostly I have read historical accounts, so it was good to let the imagination go on this one.
Four Stars

Having been to Masada I was looking for a book that would give an idea of what must have happened on Masada. The book is easy reading and the story line good

I enjoyed reading this book even though it was written for a young adult. It was nice to see through the eyes of the young people of that time.

I loved the story about the last stand of the Zealots. Having visited Masada I could truly imagine the area as the author described it. Historical novels allow me to better understand history.

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