



The Icemark Chronicles #1: The Cry of the Icemark

By Stuart Hill

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A brave girl must defy an empire to save her homeland in a sweeping fantasy that combines breathless action with richly-imagined characters.

After the death of her beloved father, headstrong princess Thirrin Freer Strong-In-The-Arm becomes warrior queen of her homeland, Icemark, defending it from a formidable invader. Despite Thirrin's bravery and the support of Oskan, the Witch's son, the task proves more difficult than Thirrin ever dreamed. She must assemble a force to rival her opponent. And, in the chill winter of Icemark, she only has until spring to unite the strange beasts and frightening creatures who live just outside her country. Ultimately, it is Thirrin's vision and determination that will see her through to victory.

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The Icemark Chronicles #1: The Cry of the Icemark By Stuart Hill Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8—This epic fantasy has at its center a spunky 13-year-old warrior princess. When her father dies in a heroic battle with a gigantic invading army, Thirrin becomes queen of her small but hardy country, the Icemark. Having already made allies of the werewolves and found a friend and advisor in a young warlock, Oskan, she sets off with him to forge new alliances. They journey to the land of the Vampire King and Queen and persuade them to join the alliance, and then go on to the dangerous talking snow leopards, the leader of whom becomes a most valuable friend. The final third of the book deals with the extended siege of the capital city and the bloody battles in and around it, leading to the eventual defeat of the invaders. Characters tend to be two-dimensional and conflicts within and between them do little to influence the plot. Thirrin's shyness in personal encounters, for example, quickly disappears. Oskan goes through experiences that should be transformative, especially in a young person, but he shows no evidence of inner change throughout the book. In general, the writing tends to be explanatory rather than descriptive, and this leads to a flatness in what should be an exciting story. Nancy Farmer's *The Sea of Trolls* (S & S, 2004) tackles a similar northern setting with far more realism and suspense. While lovers of Christopher Paolini's *Eragon* (Knopf, 2003) may take to this novel, and its courageous female protagonist is laudable, in the presently crowded field of fantasies, it will struggle to stand out.—*Sue Giffard, Ethical Culture Fieldston School, New York City*

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 8-11. Fourteen-year-old Thirrin Freer Strong-in-the-Arm Lindenshield, Wild Cat of the North, shoulders burdens as heavy as her name is long. She inherits the throne of Icemark just as the ruthless, as-yet-undefeated Polypontian Empire mobilizes for an invasion. Although Icemark's scrappy peoples resemble Vikings, and the Polypontians recall the conquering Romans, realism dissipates as Thirrin forges alliances with werewolves, vampires, and giant, talking snow leopards reminiscent of Philip Pullman's armored bears. The influences of Tolkien are likewise evident, particularly in the emphasis on the strategic maneuverings of underdogs, as well as the epic grandeur (not to mention grisliness) of battle, over character development. But for readers whose imaginations are stirred by clashes of pike and saber and lusty cries of "Blood! Blast! And Fire!" this extravagant first novel--especially its more swiftly paced latter half--offers ample rewards. For others, it is Hill's affection for his characters, especially the warrior-queen "who could make peace between night and day, between dark and light," that will prove infectious. *Jennifer Mattson*

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About the Author

The Cry of the Icemark, Stuart Hill's first novel is not only a remarkable debut but also a personal tribute. When he was a teenager, Stuart lost "the real Thirrin," his red-haired sister Kathleen, to leukemia. The story of the brave young warrior-queen who faces impossible dangers is dedicated to her. The Cry of the Icemark won the Ottakars Prize for the best new children's novel, an award given by one of Britain's leading book chains. Fox 2000 Pictures will turn the story into a major motion picture and foreign rights have been sold to over 14 countries.

Among his influences Stuart counts H. Rider Haggard, J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Margaret Abbey—his former grade school teacher and a writer of historical novels. Before beginning *The Cry of the Icemark*, he asked himself what had grabbed his interest as a young reader. The answer? Heroes, magic,

monsters, and talking beasts. From noble Snow Leopards to ancient Vampire royalty to ferocious Wolf-folk, the characters in Icemark are sure to spark the imagination of children everywhere, and Stuart is already at work on the sequel to Thirrin's epic tale.

Stuart was born in Leicester, in the East Midlands of England, where he still lives today. His family background includes English, Irish, Romany, and Jewish blood. Although, as a student, his grades were average at best, Stuart was fortunate to have a teacher who inspired in him a lifelong love of reading. Since leaving school, he has worked as a teacher and archaeologist, and now balances life as both a bookseller and an author.

Users Review

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Clarence Riley:

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