



# The Taken

*Inbali Iserles*

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## **The Taken** Inbali Iserles

The first book in a thrilling fantasy trilogy starring one of the animal kingdom's most hunted heroes. Foxcraft is full of excitement and heart, and a touch of magic.

Isla and her brother are two young foxes living just outside the lands of the furless -- humans. The life of a fox is filled with dangers, but Isla has begun to learn mysterious skills meant to help her survive.

Then the unthinkable happens. Returning to her den, Isla finds it set ablaze and surrounded by strange foxes, and her family is nowhere in sight. Forced to flee, she escapes into the cold, gray world of the furless.

Now Isla must navigate this bewildering and deadly terrain, all while being hunted by a ruthless enemy. In order to survive, she will need to master the ancient arts of her kind -- magical gifts of cunning known only to foxes. She must unravel the secrets of foxcraft.

## **The Taken Details**

Date : Published September 29th 2015 by Scholastic Press (first published September 24th 2015)

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Author : Inbali Iserles

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# From Reader Review The Taken for online ebook

karen says

**fulfilling book riot's 2018 read harder challenge task #16: the first book in a new-to-you YA or middle grade series**

extra points given to me, by me, for choosing a book that i have owned for more than a year.

i am an adult who decided to read this book because the cover demanded my attention, because i like foxes, and because books about animals having adventures still own a piece of my heart. everything i write after this introduction is my own, personal opinion of a middle-grade book i chose as a leisure read, with no professional angle attached, so if you find yourself tempted to come on here and tell me that “kids like it,” or “i should review this in terms of how well it appeals to its target audience,” or whatever other scoldings people have directed my way when i haven’t been wowed by a book that “their students” or “their children” love, please fight that urge. i’m thrilled that kids are finding books to love, and there have certainly been times when my tastes and the tastes of a 7-12 year old reader have overlapped, but sometimes they don’t, and that’s okay.

this one wasn’t a fall-in-love book for me. i wish it had been, because that cover is magic:

and the endpapers are divine:

but the story itself didn’t grab me. it was actually kind of boring. i understand it’s the first book in a trilogy and the table-setting needs to be done, but there’s not much *to* this one apart from laying out the geography, the key players, and the mythology. there’s a plot, and there are dangers and conflicts, but many of the conflicts are just variations of the same theme, and except for one “big” scene that’s pretty fun, it’s a pretty low-key book of walking and talking *around* most of the interesting stuff. there’s also a very distancing quality to the prose, which is the opposite of what i expected in a book for such young readers. i never felt immersed or transported; i felt like i was watching a TED talk given by animals. and oddly enough given that criticism, the *only* page i bookmarked to quote in this review was probably the most didactic part of all:

”Here’s what you should have been told, and told again, from the day you were born: of all Canista’s cubs, Fox has suffered the most from the cruelty of the furless. Dog longs, more than anything, to fit in. He thrived in the Graylands, digging a comfortable place for himself as a servant to the furless. He was fed and cared for, but there were terms to his acceptance. He would live as a prisoner, tethered at the end of a rope. Soon he was so well fed on the spoils of then furless that he forgot all memory of his time in the wild, and he lacked the desire to free himself. He lived in a pack with the furless as his leader. His own will withered like a plant without water.

“Wolf was an ancient and noble creature, the largest and fiercest cub of Canista. He would not be controlled by the furless. He ran to the Snowlands, the frozen realms beyond their reach,

where he howled to his ancestors to save him. But in his eagerness to be free, he found himself in a land so brutal that he needed the help of his enemies to stay alive, for a lone wolf cannot feed his cubs. In time, fights emerged between the wolves, battles for the best of the kill, for the warmest place to sleep. The strongest claimed that they were kings and that weaker wolves were their slaves. A system of control emerged, more brutal and no less binding than the furless's imprisonment of Dog. In the end, despite his size and power, Wolf cowered before the spirits and bowed to the rule of the pack. Confused and superstitious, he forgot how to survive alone."

[...]

Siffrin went on. "Only Fox had the courage to live without rules, without the hierarchies of others - to hunt and survive in freedom and peace. For while Wolf and Dog are so brutalized that they will gladly kill their own kind, Fox avoids conflict at all cost. She does not yearn to control others - only to live by her own wits. She does not scare or torture her prey, like a cat - she does not gain pleasure from the chase. For that, she is distrusted by her brutish cousins, the other sons and daughters of Canista. For her independence, she is tormented by the furless. The Graylands are haunted by snatchers, who round up foxes and take them away. Even in the Wildlands the furless hunt us, using dogs and poison to kill us. They shoot us with metal sticks and gas our dens. They give us no peace."

that passage was more interesting to me than any of the magical aspects, visions, prophecies or action sequences, except for the one i already admitted was "fun."

i dunno - i will probably eventually read the other two books in the trilogy, since i already bought them because of coverlove,

but i don't feel a lot of urgency about getting around to them. this one ends in a weird place - neither cliffhanger nor revelation. a thing happens, the journey continues, but it doesn't feel like there has been any closure nor any attempt to stoke the "can't miss book two!" fever that most series try to provoke. but perhaps your children or students love it, which is great.

in other pretty visual details, the cover beneath the dust jacket has a little embossed fox:

and there are illustrations at the start of every chapter. here are some of them:

a very pretty book, but i need more to hook me.

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## **Nicole Hewitt says**

3.5/5 Stars

This review and many more can be found on my blog: [Feed Your Fiction Addiction](#)

My daughter is a huge fan of the Warriors series, but we never realized until recently that Erin Hunter is actually six people! Of course, we wanted to find out more about these authors, and we discovered that one of them, Inbali Iserles, was going to be releasing a new series about magical foxes. My daughter was instantly sold and we picked up the book for review. It took me awhile to get her to read it because she's not a big fan of ebooks, but once she picked it up, I read it right along with her, which was fun!

This was a cute story that sets up the series well – it did remind me a lot of Warriors with the way that the foxes think about the human world. The book follows Isla, who is trying to find her family after their den has been invaded by a strange and violent group of foxes. On her journey, she starts to realize that the foxes may not have randomly showed up at her den – they're looking for her family for a reason – now she just has to discover that reason and learn about the magical secrets of foxcraft in time to save herself.

### **What fed my addiction:**

Foxes!

Like I said, this story was really cute. I liked seeing the world from the foxes' perspective – they're an animal I haven't seen much about – I've seen stories about wolves and bears and, of course, dogs and cats, but foxes were new for me!

The magic.

I was really intrigued by the foxes' magic and how it all worked. At first the abilities just seemed like normal fox traits or hunting abilities, but then you started to realize there was something supernatural about some of the things they could do. And as the book went on, Isla discovered more and more magical abilities that were increasingly impressive!

Discoveries.

The more discoveries that Isla made about the foxes that were on the hunt for her family, the more interesting the book got. I'm eager to find out where it all leads!

### **What left me wanting more:**

Little slow in the middle.

There were some parts of the middle of the book that were a little slow and some that seemed slightly confusing, but it all made sense by the end for the most part.

Very open ending.

You don't really get many answers at the end of this book, and I felt like it ended right in the middle of the story arc. I would have liked a little bit more closure while still leading us into the next book in the series. This ending just felt sort of unsatisfying, but I'm sure we'll be reading the next book in the series, so we'll get more of the story!

I thought this was a cute middle grade book. Both my daughter and I enjoyed it, and we'll read the next

installment when it comes out. I give this one 3.5/5 stars.

*\*\*\*Disclosure: This book was provided to me by Edelweiss and the publisher in exchange for an honest review. No other compensation was given and all opinions are my own.\*\*\**

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## **Online Eccentric Librarian says**

The above summary is from my 11 year old who read and enjoyed the book. She heartily recommends it.

The Taken is written by one of the 6 writers who write under the name "Erin Hunter" of the Warrior Cats series. It is an exciting adventure of a fox trying to find her family after they mysteriously disappeared one night. Author Iserles has created a nuanced world around the foxes and their bit of magic, "foxcraft". And heroine Isla is resourceful and strong. Several plot twists and turns make for an exciting read in this first in the series.

Story: Isla's family is missing; in their place she finds a skulk of evil foxes lead by an especially mean vixen. With a dream as a reference, Isla journeys into the City to follow clues and hopefully find her parents and missing brother. For Isla and her brother are special: they were born in the Spring rather than the Summer and the foxcraft magic runs especially strong in them. Strong enough to make them a target for those who would steal their will and turn them into dull eyed "taken." As Isla faces the perils of the city – cars, animal control, dogs, and more – she will find a friend in a mysterious fox who may or may not have her best interest at heart. But her greatest danger is with the vixen who wants to steal Isla's special foxcraft.

The magic system is quite intriguing. Skills include karakking (imitating the call of other creatures), slimmering (create the illusion of invisibility), wa'akkir (shapeshifting to other animals), Ma a-sharm (healing), and gerr a-sharm (sharing between foxes). Some foxes are better at some skills than others so it is interesting to see how these were used in the book. There are also classes and structures – from an historical leader Black Fox to a secret society of elders. The book straddles the line between life in the wilds for the foxes and then the struggle against the 'hairless' humans and the city. Both the mythology and the magic make for an engrossing read. The setting is contemporary.

The story is told in the first person from Isla's perspective. Unlike series such as the Warrior Cats or Guardian Herd, this is the story of one fox independent of a group or clan. Although some foxes do band together in skulks, for the most part this is the story of one independent fox trying to solve the mystery of her family's sudden and heartbreaking disappearance.

There are hints about what will happen in later books; most especially that Isla and her brother Pirie have very special foxcraft abilities that will make them a constant target. Isla will not only have to find her brother but also protect him from those of her own kind that will prey upon him.

In all - well loved book that my daughter talked about quite a bit after. She can't wait for the next book!  
Reviewed from an advance reader copy provided by the publisher.

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## Naomi O'Higgins says

Foxcraft The Taken is a fantastic read.

I couldn't put it down - from the dramatic beginning onwards. Without giving too much away, the world of Isla and her search for her family is totally compelling as she navigates the world of the furless learning to harness the skills of foxcraft with danger never far behind.

This book really gets the reader into the head of the fox characters and Inbali Iserles' amazing descriptions really make the reader feel part of their world.

I would agree with some of the other reviewers that the book is perfect for its targeted readership of 8 - 12 year olds and for anyone who has a sense of wonder. I can't wait to continue on Isla's journey with her.

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## Susan Griffin says

5 stars from my 10 Year Old son. He loved it.

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## Julia says

Inhalt: Tief verborgen in den Wäldern leben die Füchse wild und ungezähmt. Sie hüten ihre Geheimnisse und pflegen ihre uralte Magie. Doch eine dunkle Gefahr bedroht ihre Welt! Von all dem ahnt die junge Füchsin Isla nichts. Sie lebt in Frieden und Sicherheit. Doch dann verliert sie ihre Familie – und gerät mitten hinein in den Kampf um das Reich der Füchse. Wem kann Isla noch trauen? Wer ist Freund, wer Feind? (Quelle: Klappentext)

Meine Meinung: Foxcraft liegt schon sehr lange bei mir herum. Ich habe es im Spätsommer überraschenderweise vom Fischer zugesendet bekommen. Wie es bei unangefragten Rezensionsexemplaren oft ist, hat es leider gar nicht in meinen Zeitplan gepasst und dann habe ich es immer weiter aufgeschoben. Foxcraft handelt zwar von Füchen und, wie ihr euch denken könnt, liebe ich Füchse aber dennoch war ich mir immer darüber bewusst, dass Foxcraft ein Kinderbuch ist und das ist ja normal nicht mein Genre. Im Januar habe ich sehr viel gelesen und ich hatte auch Lust auf sanfte und verträumte Geschichten. So habe ich dann doch zu Foxcraft gegriffen und es schnell durchgelesen, denn das zwar 350 Seiten lange Buch hat, wie es bei Kinderbüchern üblich ist, schon eine relativ große Schrift.

Letztendlich ist und bleibt Foxcraft ein Kinderbuch. Aber aus dieser Sicht ein sehr schönes. Das Cover ist schon der Wahnsinn und auch Innen ist es sehr süß gestaltet. So erwarten uns zu Beginn jedes Kapitels Zeichnungen von Inbali Iserles höchstpersönlich. Die Autorin ist eine der Frauen, die hinter dem Pseudonym Erin Hunter steht. Sprich: Eine der Autorinnen der Warrior Cats Reihe. Die ist vielen ein Begriff und mir ebenfalls, obwohl ich die Reihe nie gelesen habe. Was für Warror Cats charakteristisch ist, das gilt auch für Foxcraft. Wir erfahren die Geschichte aus der Sicht eines Tieres. Dieses Mal aus Sicht der jungen Füchsin Isla. Das war anfangs sehr gewöhnungsbedürftig. Sie benutzt für manche Dinge merkwürdige Wörter. So sind zum Beispiel Menschen Pelzlose und eine Straße ein Todesweg. Nach einem Drittel etwa hat man sich allerdings daran gewöhnt und nimmt diese Begriffe ganz nebenbei wahr.

Die Geschichte hat ihren ganz eigenen Zauber. Inbali Iserles vermischt die Lebensweise und Gewohnheiten der Füchse und verknüpft diese mit einem Hauch von Magie. Diese Magie ist der kleinen Füchsin selbst noch unbekannt und der Leser entdeckt sie zusammen mit ihr. Durch das Verschwinden von Islas Familie

kommt noch einmal Spannung in das Geschehen und fesselt den Leser so auf eine eigene, magische Art. In diesem Auftakt entwickelt sich noch vieles und die Geschichte dreht sich hauptsächlich darum, dass Isla ihren Platz in der Welt finden muss und auf der Suche nach ihrer Familie an sich wächst. Dabei lernt sie viele wichtige Charaktere kennen, die für den weiteren Verlauf der Trilogie sicher noch wichtig sind und während dieses Geschehens bekommen wir schon einen kleinen Ausblick auf den weiteren Verlauf der Trilogie, die sich im zweiten Band noch einmal sehr an Spannung zunimmt.

Obwohl mir Foxcraft doch sehr gut gefallen hat, werde ich die Reihe mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit nicht weiter verfolgen. Für mich war es ein schöner Ausflug hin zu meinem kindlicheren Ich aber gerade bei dieser Lektüre habe ich stark gemerkt, dass ich ihr entwachsen bin. So kann ich dieses Buch auch nicht jedem von euch empfehlen. Für die Jüngeren oder die Warrior Cats-Liebenden unter euch mit Sicherheit. Ebenso, wenn ihr immer noch gerne Kinderbücher lest oder eines sucht, das ihr verschenken wollt. Alle anderen müssen bedenken, dass Foxcraft eine ganze Menge kindlichen Charme besitzt, dem ich zumindest entwachsen bin.

Bewertung: Obwohl Foxcraft als Kinderbuch nicht mehr in mein Genre fällt, bin ich sehr gerne mit Isla in die Welt der Füchse abgetaucht. Ein sehr vielversprechender Auftakt zu einer Trilogie. Foxcraft empfehle ich allen, die gerne Kinderbücher lesen und gebe dem Buch 4 von 5 Füchschen.

Vielen herzlichen Dank an Fischer für das schöne \*Rezensionsexemplar.

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## Rashika (is tired) says

*\*\*\*This review has also been posted on **The Social Potato***

I have a very complicated relationship with this book. It's not that I hate this book or even think it's badly written. I think the characters and the plot are well developed. **My problem is that this is a book told from the POV of a fox. A fox that is humanized but one readers are reminded is not in fact human.** This was problematic for me because it made it harder for me to connect with the book and become invested in the story.

Isla is a young fox that gets separated from her family and then starts a quest to find her brother. She meets a somewhat fishy fox on the way that opens her eyes to the world around her. This book is a coming of age tale that features a fox and one I am sure won't fail to melt several hearts.

In the end though, I just couldn't be swayed over by the innocent charm of Isla and the richness of her world.

*Note that I received an ARC of the book in exchange for an honest review.*

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## Rachel says

3.5 stars

I enjoyed reading about Isla and her adventures as she tried to find her family again. I loved that the story was from the perspective of the fox! The author succeeded in showing us a world from a fox's eyes; I loved



the descriptions of the humans ("furless") and Isla's interactions with other, scary animals. It's fast-paced, with Isla constantly encountering a new conflict and getting herself out of tough situations. The book blends magical elements (the foxcraft) and real life behaviors of foxes. I think this book shows, without laying it on too thick, how cruel the furless can be towards animals. Since this book is obviously meant for young people/children, I think it will help children understand how we can treat animals better.

My only major complaint is that some of the descriptions were repetitive and overused, such as constantly mentioning the foxes licking their muzzles.

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### **Gabriel L. Hart says**

#### **Where is book 2?!?!?!?!?!?**

OMG I loved this book it is SO good. To me, the storyline is great, no, terrific, and Inbali Iserles has done a great job on characters, setting, events, everything! So seriously, where is book 2? I MUST READ IT NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

P.S. Inbali Iserles and Erin Hunter are my top fave writers  
Love U Guys!

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### **Diana says**

Dieses Buch ist wirklich klasse..!

Es geht um die junge Füchsin Isla, die am Anfang der Geschichte von ihrer Familie getrennt wird und auf der Suche nach ihnen durch die Stadt streift, verfolgt von einer Fuchsmeute.... und sie weiß nicht warum. Warum haben die ihren Bau angezündet und wie findet sie ihre Familie die auf einmal vom Erdboden verschluckt ist....

Sie trifft auf Siffrin, der eigentlich ihren Bruder sucht und erfährt durch ihn über die Füchse außerhalb der Stadt und von der uralten Fuchsmagie, die die auch Isla inne wohnt.

Eine sehr schöne Geschichte, die mich von Anfang an mitgenommen hat. Man kann sich sofort in Isla hineinversetzen und leidet mit ihr. Besonders toll fand ich den Erzählstil. Es wird aus der Perspektive von Isla erzählt und es gibt ein Fuchsvokabular. Die Stadt heißt das große Knurren, die Straße Todesweg oder so... Und Siffrin hat für einige Dinge andere Begriffe, was sehr authentisch rüberkam schließlich kommt er aus dem Wildland, das außerhalb der Stadt liegt.

Also ich finde keinen Grund hier Punkte abzuziehen und freue mich schon auf den nächsten Band

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### **#1 Warriors Fan says**

Awesome! Loved the names of the foxcraft like wa'akkir. I liked the names Pirie and Isla. How did you think of calling dad Fa, mom Ma, and grandma Greatma! I've gotta say. I tried this because i thought it was sorta like Warriors, Seekers and Survivors. It needs a more catching start but other than that it's perfect. I would

put this in my ratings with Warriors and Guardians of Ga'hoole. Awesome job Inbali Iserles!

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### **Ian says**

Entertaining book about a fox searching for her family while trying to evade an evil assassin who is hunting her.

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### **Carolyn Gonzalez says**

Isla, a young fox, has been seperated from her family. She is being hunted by a ruthless enemy. In order to survive, she must learn the magical secrets of her kind. She was not intrested and questioned herself a lot. She learns how to use her talents and she learns how survive by most of her worst enemy's.

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### **Susannah says**

Very Lovely Story about a sweet little foxling that lost her family, and set out to find them again! A very interesting read, can't wait for the next book to come out!

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### **Adriana says**

Foxcraft - The Taken, is not only well written, it is intriguing and grabs your attention from the very beginning.

Written in the eyes of Isla, the main fox cub character, it allows you to be engrossed in to the world of foxes. You grow right along side of her as she learns about her life as a fox and the ancient teachings of Foxcraft. Iserles is able to make you feel like a fox, think like a fox and take you on a complete journey.

Perfectly written for the age group it is intended to target, I would high recommend it anyone 10 + to read. As an older reader, it was great to experience a fantasy side of such a beautiful animal.

Cannot wait for the 2nd novel in the series to see what happens next to Isla.

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