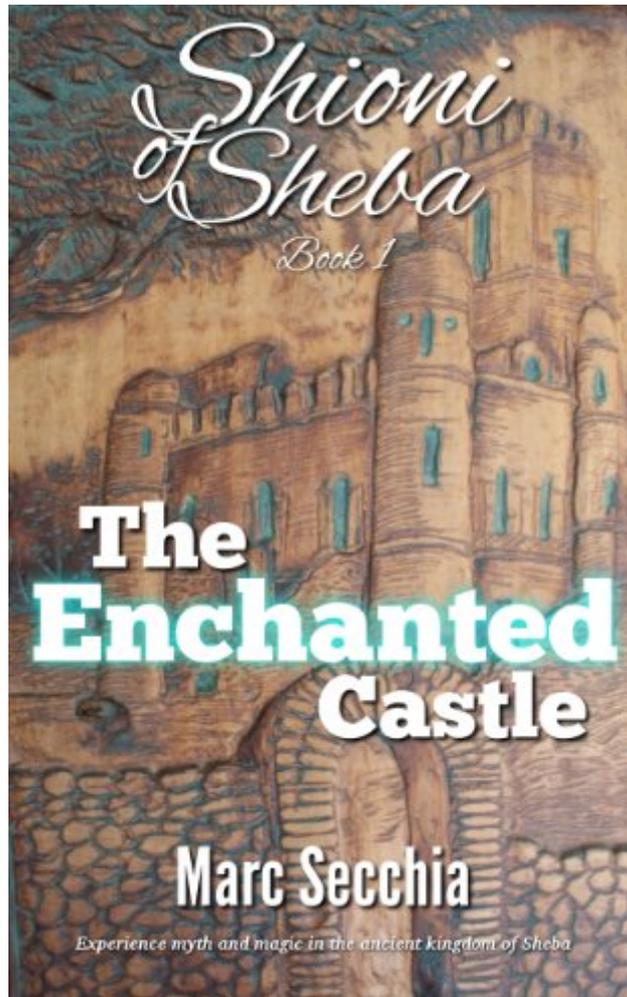


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# The Enchanted Castle (Shioni Of Sheba Book 1)



## Synopsis

A king bent on conquest. A murderous warrior tribe. And the slave-girl who dares to stand between them! When Shioni, slave to the Princess of Sheba, travels to the legendary Simien Mountains of Ethiopia, she encounters adventure beyond her wildest dreams. Little does she imagine the powerful forces lurking in this jagged volcanic wilderness; forces that could tear the Kingdom of Sheba apart. Kalcha, the Wasabi leader, has prepared a deadly trap, an evil sorcery rooted within the castle the King has chosen for his fortress. Kalcha is massing her warriors and her giant hyenas, intent on annihilating the Sheban forces. As the Wasabi attack it is left to Shioni to show the way with courage and the conviction of her heart. Can she overcome the wrath of a lion, outwit the treacherous Captain Dabir, and defuse General Getu's inexplicable hatred? With the help of her friends Mama Nomuula, Princess Annakiya, and the fiuri Azurelle, Shioni must uncover the hidden secrets of the Enchanted Castle before Kalcha destroys all she holds dear. *Shioni of Sheba: The Enchanted Castle* is the first book in a unique African fantasy series set in the ancient Kingdom of Sheba, for middle grades/secondary age readers. Experience the myth and magic of ancient Sheba in this truly African adventure. Includes original illustrations by the Ethiopian artist Senait Worku.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Enchanted Castle: Shioni of Sheba is the story of a young white girl named Shioni who has been sold into slavery to the king of West Sheba as an expensive play-thing and future protector for his motherless daughter. The novel takes place during West Sheba's conquest of an adjacent kingdom and while the warriors of the kingdom are in full battle dress and clinking their swords, young Shioni attempts to keep her life simple and focused around her training, being entertaining to her princess, cleaning, doing slave-type duties and learning who she can and cannot trust. Yet she continually finds herself dragged into events of much grander scope, events that may determine the fate of the entire kingdom, events that may hold the lives of all the people around her, including her own. One of the best aspects of this book is the concrete yet dramatic drawing of the gravity of Shioni's situations. Here is one example. As a slave girl, Shioni's movements and whereabouts are restricted so in order to do what she feels is vitally necessary she must continually break the rules and sneak out. This basically risks her life as she would be seen as a runaway slave if she were to be caught before she can sneak back in. I really liked that although what Shioni is doing is for the benefit of everyone she still has to pay the consequences for her disobedience. Too many middle school kid's books have main characters who flaunt the rules and everything turns out grand for them and I have always questioned that message. Here we have a character who certainly breaks rules but with dire consequences and she knows it and she has to answer for her actions.

Recently I have fallen out of love with Middle Grade Fantasy Books. I've lost interest in the obligatory paint-by-numbers format which often involves the typical Coming-of-Age, Ancient Prophecy and The Chosen One storylines. No doubt those are the main attractions to this genre. But there's something very wearisome about picking up a book and knowing exactly how it will turn out because you've read that story a thousand times already. I was a bit apprehensive when I accepted the chance to read this book and would probably have passed on it if not for the unique African setting which is practically never used in a children's fantasy book. Having now read this book from cover-to-cover, I am thankful that I didn't make that mistake. The Enchanted Castle, Book One of the Shioni of Sheba series, is a very magical and spellbinding tale. Every page is bursting with fun and excitement. The story moves quickly, but is richly narrated. I hadn't heard of or previously encountered the legends that inspire this book. But it wasn't hard to figure out that the story had roots in the folktales of the ancient peoples of sub-Saharan Africa. This authenticity lends

not only credibility to the story, but helps to give it its richness. I am impressed with the writing style of the author. The prose is very inviting and suitable for children and adults alike. Despite the exotic setting and ancient landscape, the characters feel very familiar. You can relate to the plight of Shioni, the young slave girl who is the central figure in this series. The supporting cast is equally delightful.

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