

The book cover features a dramatic illustration of a woman with red hair, wearing a green dress with gold trim, casting a powerful lightning spell. She stands in a stormy landscape with a wooden windmill in the background. The sky is dark purple and blue, filled with lightning bolts. The title 'ICE MAGIC FIRE MAGIC' is written in large, stylized, metallic letters across the top. A small, glowing creature is visible near the 'I' in 'FIRE'.

ICE
MAGIC
FIRE
MAGIC

Signed by
Shauna
Roberts

Shauna Roberts

*Oh, I hope you enjoy the magical land of Veridia!
Shauna*

ICE MAGIC

FIRE MAGIC

Shauna Roberts

SHAUNA ROBERTS



ICE MAGIC, FIRE MAGIC

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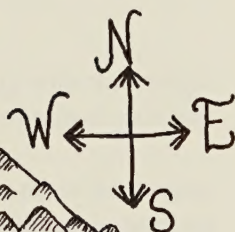
contact@hadleyrillebooks.com


Dedicated to my husband, David A. Malueg,
the rock under my feet and the sun who lights my days.



BORAGA'S HOUSE

VERIDIA





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Prologue

“**W**HAT DO YOU THINK the boys will blow up with their magic today?” Kassia bounced on her stool, her unusual pale hair fluttering.

Eight-year-old Fila mulled her cousin’s question, the tip of her tongue sticking out of her mouth as she stitched to the rhythm of the gentle pattering of rain. “Another cooking crock, I hope. Father was grateful when I gave the pieces to him. He uses such things in the bottom of flower pots.”

Someone in the circle of girls snickered.

Fila’s head flew up, ripping out the hairs she had accidentally embroidered into her sampler. “Ouch!” she cried.

Astilbe’s snickers turned into peals of laughter. Galium and Psoralea joined in, staring at Fila.

Heat climbed from Fila’s chest up her neck to her face and ears. She rubbed the sore spot on her head with her knuckles, wondering what she had done this time to make the other girls laugh and wishing Teacher Parthena would return from her errand.

Kassia leapt up from her stool. Flower buds and skeins of yarn flew off her lap and landed in piles on the ancient oak floor. Knitting needles clattered to rest beside them; beads bounced and rolled across the room.

“How dare you?” Kassia shouted, hands on hips, glaring at the laughing girls until the last one dropped her gaze. “You know Teacher Parthena says we must not laugh at Fila because she’s a Goodborn. She can’t help being a toady.”

Heat stung Fila’s cheeks. She didn’t know what a “toady” was, but it sounded warty and awful. She glanced toward the cloakroom. She longed to run inside, drop the bar on the door, and hide among the boots and long cloaks, imagining herself surrounded by the familiar, comforting smells of wool and herbs and oiled leather. Another girl might get away with it, but she was the daughter of the Servant of Enchantment. Everyone expected her to be brave.

She *was* brave. She had had lots of practice.

She stood, pulling at Kassia’s sleeve. “Cousin, please don’t scold them. They’re just little girls.”

“So are we, and we have good manners.” Kassia put her arm around Fila. “When we grow up and I am the Servant, I will take care of you. No one will ever take advantage of you or make fun of you again.”

Astilbe giggled.

Kassia scorched her with a scowl. “If someone does, I’ll have them put to death.”

The schoolroom fell into silence. Fila pulled away and knelt to collect her cousin’s spilled things, starting with the soft bundles of colors right in front of their stools. Kassia was so certain she would be Servant one day. Did the Land already talk to her as it did to Mother? Fila had heard the grownups gossip; her cousin was a Talent, the greatest magical talent in two generations. That was why she was already doing advanced sewing while Fila still struggled with her sampler. And like Fila, she was a great-granddaughter of Granite, one of the few men ever chosen by the Land as Its Servant.

Fila reached up to deposit flowers and yarn balls on the chair seat and crawled toward some others. Good thing her amma had dressed her in a practical gray cotton dress with matching pantaloons; Kassia’s mother would shriek if she came home from school with her pale pink silk dress filthy from crawling on the floor.

The door handle rattled, and the door flew open with such force that it hit the stone wall. Several older boys stomped in, smelling like wet dogs and snuffling like them too. Their wet boots squished. As they tromped by, drops of wetness splashed her face, and Fila scrambled to her feet.

Her brother, Urushi, five years older, shouted, “Look what we have!” The boys held up tiny balls of fur.

The girls jumped up from their stools and clustered in a half-circle around the boys.

Kassia pulled Fila’s arm. “I want to see. Come on!”

The boys all stared at Kassia, as usual. It was not only her exotic paleness that drew their attention. She was the only girl whose laughter tinkled, the only girl whose cheeks flushed beautifully, not blotchily. She was the prettiest, too, and always wore beautiful clothes. Only Kassia’s gangly brother, Celatu, did not stare at her, but instead studied the fuzzy creature in his hand.

Urushi stepped up to Kassia and opened his hands. “Which one do you want?” he shyly asked.

“Oooohhh!” Kassia bounced as she and Fila looked at the two baby rabbits. Both reached for the gray-brown one with fur as plush as a carpet and a twitching black nose.