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Donnel's Promise by Anna Mackenzie

Publisher: Longacre / Random House

RRP \$19.99

The sequel to *Cattra's Legacy* is a complex tale peopled with a large cast of characters. Readers absorbed by the first book will be pleased to be reacquainted with many of the individuals who previously helped Risha to discover her heritage in the lands of Elgard.

The continuation of Risha's journey as a young ruler is fraught with intrigue, warfare, and uncertainty as to whom she can trust. She aims to secure peace in Elgard's five duchies which are frequently at odds and distrustful of each other. A few friends protect her with their lives, although she is a competent fighter herself. She has a gift to communicate with her old nanny who guides her thoughts at times and helps to determine her actions. There are others with evil intent who would like to harness Risha's gift for their own gain.

The novel is well-written with crisp dialogue and descriptive passages that evoke the vast countryside and its inhabitants. Fight scenes are fast, furious and bloody. The main characters are strong-minded and courageous with their own challenges to face.

Teenage readers will need to concentrate on the fast-moving story to follow the many twists and turns. In order to fully understand Risha's troubled past and her heritage, it is recommended to read *Cattra's Legacy* prior to reading *Donnel's Promise*.

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett

Author's blog:

<http://annamackenzie-writes.blogspot.co.nz/>

