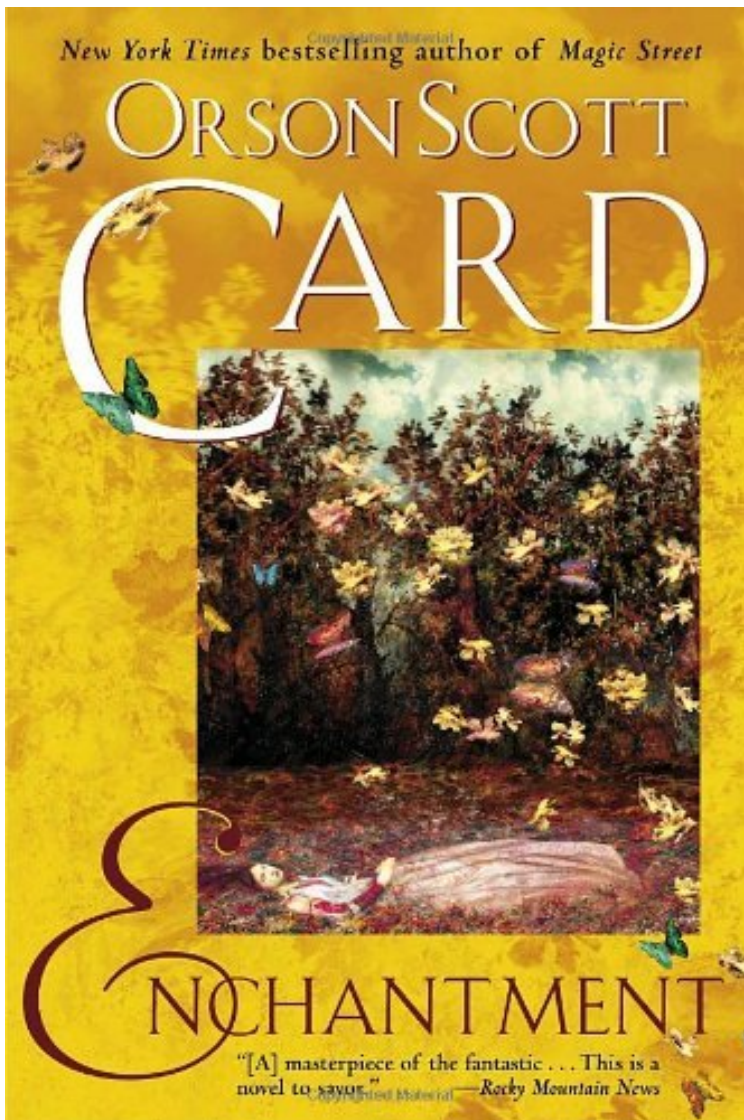


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Enchantment



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAs one of the most consistently exciting writers to emerge in the last twenty-five years, Orson Scott Card has been honored with numerous awards, immersing readers in dazzling worlds only he could create. Now, in *Enchantment*, Card works his magic as never before, transforming the timeless story of *Sleeping Beauty* into an original fantasy brimming with romance and adventure. The moment Ivan stumbled upon a clearing in the dense Carpathian forest, his life was forever changed. Atop a pedestal encircled by fallen leaves, the beautiful princess Katerina lay still as death. But beneath the foliage a malevolent presence stirred and sent the ten-year-old Ivan scrambling for the safety of Cousin Marek's farm. Now, years later, Ivan is an American graduate student, engaged to be married. Yet he cannot forget that long-ago day in the forest--or convince himself it was merely a frightened boy's fantasy. Compelled to

return to his native land, Ivan finds the clearing just as he left it. This time he does not run. This time he awakens the beauty with a kiss . . . and steps into a world that vanished a thousand years ago. A rich tapestry of clashing worlds and cultures, *Enchantment* is a powerfully original novel of a love and destiny that transcend centuries . . . and the dark force that stalks them across the ages. From the Hardcover edition. www.enchantment.com *Enchantment* is the story of a Ukraine-born, American grad student who finds himself transported to the ninth century to play the prince in a Russian version of *Sleeping Beauty*. Early in the story, he muses that in a French or English retelling of the tale, the prince and princess would live happily ever after. But, "only a fool would want to live through the Russian version of any fairy tale." Although his fears turn out to be warranted, as he and his cursed princess contend with the diabolical witch Baba Yaga--easily Russia's best pre-Khrushchev villain--to save the princess's kingdom, *Enchantment* is ultimately a sweet story. Mixing magic and modernity, the acclaimed Orson Scott Card (*Ender's Game*) has woven threads of history, religion, and myth together into a convincing, time-hopping tale that is part love story, part adventure. *Enchantment's* heroes, "Prince" Ivan and Princess Katerina, must deal with cross-cultural mores, ancient gods, treacherous kinsmen (and fiancés), and ultimately Baba Yaga herself. Card has a knack for coming across like your nerdy dad at times, when he runs on too long or makes some particularly wince-inducing observation or reference ("Daaad, Bruce Cockburn is not cool!"). But, as you might expect of a good dad, as uncool as he might be, Card still manages to tell a good bedtime story. --Paul

Hughes *Extrait* "I'm ten years old, my whole life you've called me Vanya. My name is on the school records, on government papers as Ivan Petrovich Smetski. Now you tell me I'm really Itzak Shlomo. What am I, a Jewish secret agent?" Vanya's father listened silently, his face as smooth, weathered, and blank as parchment. Vanya's mother, who was merely hovering near the conversation rather than taking part in it, seemed to be having a little trouble keeping herself from smiling. In amusement? If so, at what? At Vanya?

At her husband's sudden discovery of their intense commitment to Judaism? Whatever the cause of her almost-smile, Vanya did not want to be ridiculous. Even at the age of ten, dignity was important to him. He calmed himself, spoke in more measured tones. "We eat pork," he pointed out. "Rak. Caviar." "I think Jews can eat caviar," offered his mother helpfully. "I hear them whispering, calling me zhid, they say they only want to race with Russians, I can't even run with them," said Vanya. "I've always been the fastest runner, the best hurdler, and yesterday they wouldn't even let me keep time. And it's my stopwatch!" "Mine, actually," said Father. "The principal won't let me sit in class with the other children because I'm not a Russian or a

Ukrainian, I'm a disloyal foreigner, a Jew. So why don't I know how to speak Hebrew? You change everything else, why not that?" Father looked up toward the ceiling. "What is that look, Father? Prayer? All these years, whenever I talk too much, you look at the ceiling were you talking to God then?" Father turned his gaze to Vanya. His eyes were heavy scholar's eyes, baggy and soft from always peering through lenses at a thousand hectares of printed words. "I have listened to you," he said. "Ten years old, a boy who thinks he's so brilliant, he rails on and on, showing no respect for his father, no trust. I do it all for your sake." "And for God's," offered Mother. Was she being ironic? Vanya had never been able to guess about Mother. "For you I do this," said Father. "You think I did it for me? My work is here in Russia, the old manuscripts. What I need from other countries is sent to me because of the respect I've earned. I make a good living." "Made,"

said Mother. For the first time it occurred to Vanya that if he was cut out of school classes, Father's punishment might be even more dire. "You lost your place at the university?" Father shrugged. "My students will still come to me." "If they can find you," said Mother. Still that strange smile. "They'll find me! Or not!" cried Father. "We'll eat or not! But we will get Vanya out of this country so he grows up in a place

where this mouth of his, this disrespect for everyone that doesn't measure up to his lofty standards, where they will call it creativity or cleverness or rock and roll!" "Rock and roll is music," said Vanya. "Prokofiev is music, Stravinski is music, Tchaikovski and Borodin and Rimski-Korsakov and even Rachmaninov, they are music. Rock and roll is smart boys with no respect, you are rock and roll. All the trouble you get into at school, you will never get into university with this attitude. Why are you the only child in Russia who doesn't learn to bow his head to power?" Father had asked this question at least a dozen times before, and this time as always, Vanya knew that his father was saying it more in pride than in consternation. Father liked the fact that Vanya spoke his mind. He encouraged it. So how did this become the reason for the family to declare itself Jewish and apply for a visa to Israel? "You make a decision without asking me, and it's my fault?" "I have to get you out of here, let you grow up in a free land," said Father. "Israel is a land of war and terrorism," said Vanya. "They'll make me a soldier and I'll have to shoot down Palestinians and burn their houses." "None of that propaganda is true," said Father. "And besides, it won't matter. I can promise you that

you will never be a soldier of Israel." Vanya was scornful for a moment, until it dawned on him why Father was so certain he wouldn't be drafted into the Israeli military. "Once you get out of Russia, you aren't going to Israel at all." Father sighed. "What you don't know, you can't tell." There was a knock at the door. Mother went to answer. "Maybe here in Russia you aren't in class for a while," said Father. "And this nonsense of running, you'll never be world champion, that's for Africans. But your mind will be quick long after your legs slow down, and there are countries where you will be valued." "Which other countries?" asked Vanya.

Mother was letting somebody into the apartment. "Maybe Germany. Maybe England. Canada, maybe." "America," whispered Vanya. "How do I know? It depends where there's a university that wants an aging scholar of ancient Slavic literature." America. The enemy. The rival. The land of jeans and rock and roll, of crime and capitalism, of poverty and oppression. Of hope and freedom. All kinds of stories about America, from rumor, from the government press. It was 1975 and the Vietnam War had ended only a few years ago. America had bloody hands. But through all the propaganda, the rivalry, the envy, one message was constant: America was the most important country on earth. And that's where Father wanted him to grow up.

That's why Mother's Jewish relatives were suddenly the only ones who counted, they and Father's grandmother on his mother's side. To get them to America. For a moment, Vanya almost understood. Then Mother came back into the room. "He's here." "Who's here?" asked Vanya. Father and Mother looked at him blankly. "He's called a mohel," said Mother finally. Then they explained what this old Jewish man was going to do to Vanya's penis. Ten seconds later, Vanya was down the stairs, out on the street, running for his life, running in despair. He was not going to let a man take hold of his member and cut bits of it off just so he could get on a plane and fly to the land of cowboys. By the time he came home, the mohel was gone, and his parents said nothing about his abrupt departure. He took no false hope from this. In Vanya's family, silence had never meant surrender, only tactical retreat. Even without the mohel, though, Vanya continued to take solace in running. Isolated at school, resentful at home, cut off from romping with his friends, he took to the streets again and again, day after day, running, dodging, leaving behind him ever-grumpier mutters and shouts of Slow down! Watch your step! Show some respect! Crazy boy! To Vanya that was part of the music of the city. Running was the way he dreamed. Having never been in control of his own life, his idea of freedom was simply to break free. He dreamed of being at the mercy of the wind, carried aloft and blown here and there, a life of true randomness instead of always being part of someone else's purpose. Father's earnest, inconvenient plans for him. Mother's ironic vision of life as one prank after another, in the midst of which you did what was needed. What I need, Mother, is to kite myself up in the air and cut the string and fly untethered. What I need, Father, when you're setting out the pieces for your living chess game, is to be left in the box. Forget me! But running couldn't save him from anyone's plans, in the end. Nor did it bring him freedom, for his parents, as always, took his little idiosyncrasies in stride. In fact they made it part of their story; he overheard them telling some of their new Jewish friends that they had to be patient with Itzak, he was between realities, having had the old one stolen from him and not yet ready to enter the new one. How did they think of these glib little encapsulations of his life? Only when Father underwent the male ritual of obedience himself did Vanya realize that this Jewish business was not just something they were doing to their son. Father tried to go about his ordinary work but could not; though he said nothing, his pain and embarrassment at showing it made him almost silent. Mother, ever supportive, said nothing even to refer to what the mohel had done to her husband, but Vanya thought he detected a slight smirk on her face when Father asked her to fetch him something that ordinarily he would get up and find for himself. He wondered briefly if this meant that Mother thought the whole enterprise of believing in God was amusing, but as Father's wound healed and life returned to what passed for normal these days, Vanya began to suspect that, despite her irony, it was Mother who was a believer. Perhaps she had been a believer all along, despite slathering the tangy, bacony lard on her bread like any other Russian. Father's discovery of his Jewishness was part of an overall strategy; Mother simply knew who ran the universe. Father was forcing himself to act like a believer. Mother showed not a doubt that God really existed. She just wasn't on speaking terms with him. "Six million Jews died from the Fascists," she said to Father. "Your one voice, praying, is going to fill all that silence? When a child dies, do you comfort the parents by bringing them a puppy to take care of?" Mother apparently believed not only in the idea of God, but also that he was the very same God who chose the Jews back when it was just Abraham carting his barren wife around with him, pretending she was his sister whenever some powerful man lusted after her. That was a favorite story for Vanya, as Father insisted that they study Torah together, going over to the apartment of a rabbi and hearing him read the Hebrew and translate. As they walked home, they would talk about what they'd heard. "These guys are religious?" Vanya

kept asking. "Judah sleeps with a prostitute on the road, only it turns out to be his daughter-in-law so it's all right with God?" The story of the circumcision of Shechem was Vanya's turning point. Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, gets raped by the prince of Shechem. The prince wants to marry her and Jacob agrees that this would make everything all right, only Dinah's twelve brothers are more interested in repairing the family's wounded honor than in getting their sister married to a rich man with a throne in his future. So they tell the prince that he and all the men of his city have to be circumcised, and when the men are all lying there holding their handles and saying Ow, ow, ow, the sons of Jacob draw their swords and slaughter them all. At the end of that story, Vanya said to his father, "Maybe I'll let the mohel do it to me." Father looked at him in utter consternation. "That story makes you want to be circumcised?" Vanya shrugged. "Is there any hope that you can explain to me why this makes sense?" "I'm thinking about it, that's all," said Vanya. He would have explained it, if he could. Before the story he refused even to think about it; after the story, it became conceivable to him, and, once he could conceive of it, it soon became inevitable. Later, running, he thought maybe he understood why that story changed his mind. Circumcision was a foolish, barbaric thing to do. But having the story of Shechem in Torah showed that God himself knew this. It's barbaric, God seemed to be saying, and it hurts like hell, but I want you to do it. Make yourself weak, so somebody could come in and kill you and you'd just say, Thank you, I don't want to live anyway because somebody cut off part of my privates. He couldn't explain this to his father. He just knew that as long as God recognized that it was a ludicrous thing to do, he could do it. So for a few days Vanya didn't run. And it turned out that by the time the circumcision healed so he could run again, they took the city out from under him. The American Congress had antagonized the Russian government by tying most-favored-nation status to Russia's upping the number of Jews getting visas, and in reply the Russians cut the emigration of Jews down to nothing and started harassing them more. To Vanya's family, this had very practical consequences. They lost their apartment. For Father, it meant no more consultations with students, no more visits with his former colleagues at the university. It meant the shame of being utterly dependent on others for food and clothing for his family, for there was no job he could get. Mother took it all in stride. "So we make bricks without straw," she said. All his life Vanya remembered her making enigmatic comments like that. Only now he was reading Exodus and he got the reference and realized: Mother really is a Jew! She's been talking to us as if we were all Jews my whole life, only I didn't get it. And for the first time Vanya wondered if maybe this whole thing might not be her plan, only she was so good at it that she had gotten Father to think of it himself, for his own very logical, unreligious reasons. Don't become a practicing Jew because God commands it, become one so you can get your son a good life in America. Could she possibly be that sneaky? For a week, they camped in the homes of several Jews who had no room for them. It couldn't last for long, this life, partly because the crowding was so uncomfortable, and partly because it was so obvious that, compared to these lifelong followers of the Law, Vanya and his parents were dilettantes at Judaism. Father and Vanya hacked at Hebrew, struggled to keep up with the prayers, and looked blankly a hundred times a day when words and phrases were said that meant nothing to them. Mother seemed untroubled by such problems, since she had lived for a couple of years with her mother's parents, who kept all the holidays, the two kitchens, the prayers, the differentiation of women and men. Yet Vanya saw that she, too, seemed more amused than involved in the life of these homes, and the women of these households seemed even more wary of her than the men were of Father. Finally it wasn't a Jew at all, but a second cousin (grandson of Father's grandfather's brother, as they painstakingly explained to Vanya), who took them in for the potentially long wait for an exit visa. Cousin Marek had a dairy farm in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, in a region that had been part of Poland between the wars, and so escaped Stalin's savage collectivization of the freehold farmers of Ukraine. Because this hill country was remote, strategically unimportant, and thinly populated, Communism here was mostly window dressing. Technically Cousin Marek's dairy herd was merely a portion of the herd belonging to the farflung dairy collective; in actual practice, they were his cows, to be bred and cared for as he wished. A good portion of the milk and cheese they produced didn't quite make its way into the state-run dairy system. Instead, it was bartered here and there for goods and services, and now and then for hard Western currency. Cousin Marek had the room, the independent attitude, and enough surplus to take in a few hapless cousins who had decided to become Jews in order to get to the West.