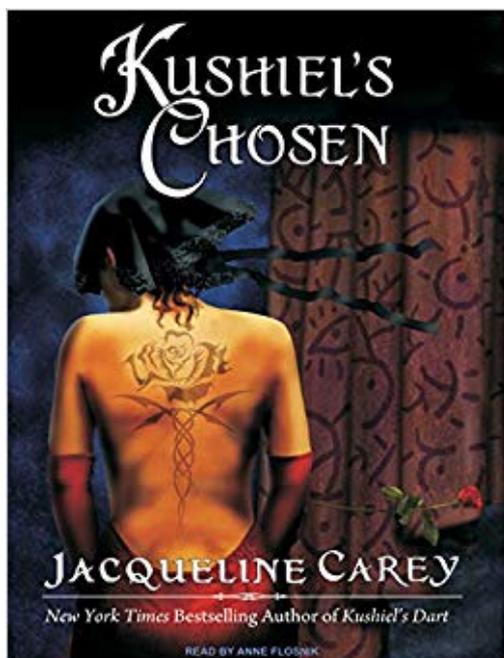


Kushiel's Chosen (Kushiel's Legacy) by Anne Flosnik, Jacqueline Carey



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Mighty Kushiel, of rod and wealLate of the brazen portalsWith blood-tipp'd dart a wound unhealedPricks the eyen of chosen mortals.The land of Terre d'Ange is a place of unsurpassed beauty and grace. The inhabiting race rose from the seed of angels and men, and they live by one simple rule: Love as thou wilt.Phèdre nó Delaunay was sold into indentured servitude as a child. Her bond was purchased by a nobleman, the first to recognize that she is one pricked by Kushiel's Dart, chosen to forever experience pain and pleasure as one. He trained Phèdre in the courtly arts and the talents of the bedchamber-and, above all, the ability to observe, remember, and analyze.When she stumbled upon a plot that threatened the very foundations of her homeland, she gave up almost everything she held dear to save it. She survived, and lived to have others tell her story, and if they embellished the tale with fabric of mythical splendor, they weren't far off the mark.The hands of the gods weigh heavily upon Phèdre's brow, and they are not finished with her. While the young queen who sits upon the throne is well loved by the people, there are those who believe another should wear the crown...and those who escaped the wrath of the mighty are not yet done with their schemes for power and revenge.



Reviews of the **Kushiel's Chosen (Kushiel's Legacy)** by Anne Flosnik, Jacqueline Carey

luisRED

In "Kushiel's Chosen," the second book in the Phedre trilogy, Phedre continues her transformation from a courtesan-spy to a powerful noblewoman and a legend, as the action moves out of Terre d'Ange and new countries and city-states are introduced, most importantly La Serenissima, the series' version of Venice.

At the beginning of the book everything seems to be going swimmingly for Phedre and her consort Joscelyn, aka Fantasy's Hottest Hero. (No, seriously. I will challenge you to a duel in the name of Cassiel if you disagree). But trouble, of course, is always looming, especially when you have such a complicated love life. Joscelyn, who does not share or mirror Phedre's anguissette proclivities, is racked with jealousy and guilt over the fact that she takes the occasional assignation, for pleasure as well as business. Meanwhile, Phedre's former patron Melisandre is up to no good, and Phedre is dispatched by the queen to sort things out. Many, many adventures later, the two former lovers finally confront each other.

Like the other books in the series, "Kushiel's Chosen" is a giant, sprawling, epic adventure story, full of twists and turns and impossible escapes from and infiltrations into seemingly secure locations. If you don't enjoy that sort of thing, then you'd probably best just keep on moving. But if you do enjoy massive fantasy tales with intricate worldbuilding and elaborate plotting, then dive right in. Like the previous book, "Kushiel's Chosen" is for the 18+ crowd, although it's less deliberately shocking than "Kushiel's Dart"--Phedre is beyond her original sexual infatuation with the world, and spends a lot more time thinking about politics and morality. We also discover more about the different religious systems of the world Carey has created, which adds a pleasing depth to the story. A worthy follow-up to "Kushiel's Dart," and an exciting read in its own right.

Ziena

Note: It is possible to read this book as a stand alone as relevant events from Book 1 are reflected upon in enough detail for a reader of Book 2 to grasp the point. However, I highly recommend reading Book 1 as it is just so damn good!

We return once again to the alternate history of Terre D'Ange (France) and the surrounding lands. Book 2 picks up several months after Book 1 ended. Melisande Sharhizai is still at large. However, very early in Book 2 our heroine Phedre receives a challenge of sorts from Melisande - her sangoire cloak is returned to her via a carrier from Caerdicca Unitas (Italy) and more specifically La Serenissima (Venice). Phedre truly believes that Terre D'Ange and the queen (Ysandre) are in danger so long as Melisande is free. The challenge sets in motion events that will change Phedre's life forever.

Here we have another masterfully crafted book from Jacqueline Carey. Sometimes sequels aren't near as good as the first in the series but this series holds its own weight as it progresses. I have read this book several times now and this is my second time listening to it. First, I love how the characters continue to grow and how the world continues to expand as Phedre's travels take her further afield. Second, Melisande continues to make a most worthy opponent. Phedre definitely has her work cut out for her in this book!

Once again, we are told the story through Phedre's eyes. She was raised in the Court of the Night Blooming flowers and being subservient and unseen (except maybe as a pretty plaything) comes easily to her. She polished off her training in Anafiel Delaunay's house where she learned history, politics, languages, and how to think in a rational manner. Both served her well in Book 1 and they do so again in Book 2. Yet this journey she comes to understand her powers a bit more - her will power to live, her ability to forgive, her strength to deny Melisande. That which yields, is not always weak (a quote from Kushiel's Dart).

There were two interesting themes that twined throughout the novel: loyalty and grief. Again and again, we see Phedre and other characters having to figure out where their loyalties really lie - with queen and country? To the deities they serve? To family? I think Joscelin struggled the most with this one. Grief made an interesting thread throughout the book. What is a mortal's grief compared to the grief of a goddess? How do you mourn the passing of something not of a physical nature, such as friendship or love? These were some big ideas to contemplate even as my mind was fully engaged in the day to day decisions of the characters.

This time through, I listened to the book as part of a read along. It was a great experience and let me see things about the book I had not seen before. For instance, I had not really noticed before that Phedre is, on occasion, a little bit of a snob. Now I see it in small things and I see how it ties to her upbringing and culture. This in turn let's me see it in other Terre D'Ange characters. And this leads to a nuanced part of the plot of this book - how Terre D'Ange has been a bit xenophobic towards other cultures for too long and it has cost them in the larger arena of politics. This book (and the entire series) is awesome because you can reread it and take something new away each time.

As with Kushiel's Dart, there is also plenty of sex and it is told in just as much detail as the rest of the story. You may blush a bit. The sex scenes serve to show certain aspects of the characters involved or to move the plot forward. I never feel that space is wasted on these scenes. Plus, some of them are rather educational in and of themselves. ;)

As with Book 1, I was completely swept up into Phedre's world once again. Jacqueline Carey makes great use of languages to round out a culture. If you're a bit of a linguistics geek, you will love this aspect of the series. It's a rich world, a devilishly intriguing plot, and characters you will never forget. Reading it the 7th time was just as good as reading it the first time.

The Narration: Anne Flosnik is once again the voice of Phedre, and a great fit she is too! Phedre's voice is how we experience the story and, hence, Phedre's emotions come through the loudest. Flosnik did a great job imbuing the characters with emotions, but especially, Phedre. My heart broke and soared for her multiple times throughout the tale! The linguistics keep piling up in this series and Flosnik met the challenge magnificently.

Zargelynd

Kushiel's chosen takes the reader on an imaginary journey through a fictional world where god's came to earth, created spawn and bend humans to their will. There is a fine line between the magical and the world created so that the book does not end up becoming about magic. All the gods are respected equally which shows the hand of a modern writer. There is great skill in how she separates the one God from the other gods and even though people know about the one God, they prefer to worship his children. The heroine herself respects the deities found in these stories making them coming to life when they answer her prayers. In all Jacqueline Carey has a plot so fine and sticks with it. You won't want to put this book down once started.

Uttegirazu

I started reading "Kushiel's Dart" earlier this week, with the expectation that I would let it go after a few chapters. Instead, I read it through, just finished "Chosen," and "Avatar" is downloading as I write this. I really hope the further novels are more ignorable, because I'm my life has gone on 'hold' for the sake of, "just one more chapter."

Ms. Carey has creating a world very much like our own, but also very different. The characters populating her world are thoroughly recognizable from our own, and the central characters, at least, are enjoyably complex.

Terre D'Ange's guiding principle, Love How Thou Wilt, gives rise to new and obviously still evolving social and sexual roles - at once post-modern and archaic - which play out in the lives of the characters, and are among some of the fascinating and original ideas appearing in this series. BUT, above all else, these are high fantasy adventure books with convoluted plots, plenty of action, and a very special take on sex! Give your assumptions the night off, settle into a comfy chair, and lose yourself in another existence.

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