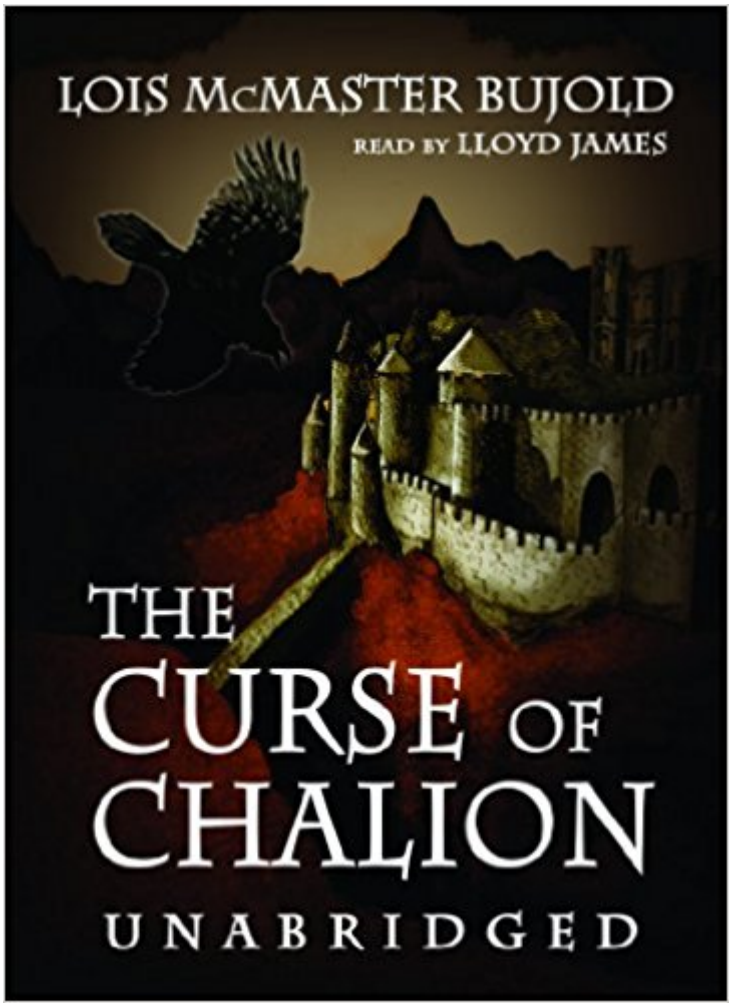
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The Curse Of Chalion



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Synopsis

Lord Cazaril has been, in turn, courtier, castle-warder, and captain; now he is but a crippled ex-galley slave seeking nothing more than a menial job in the kitchens of the Dowager Provincara, the noble patroness of his youth. But Cazaril finds himself promoted to the exalted and dangerous position of tutor to Iselle, the beautiful, fiery sister of the heir to Chalion's throne. Amidst the decaying splendor and poisonous intrigue of Chalion's ancient capital, Cazaril is forced to confront not only powerful enemies but also the malignant curse that clings to the royal household, trapping him, flesh and soul, in a maze of demonic paradox, damnation, and death for as long as he dares walk the five-fold pathway of the gods.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #1,943,065 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 inÃ Â Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > (B) > Bujold, Lois McMaster #568 inÃ Â Books > Books on CD > Children's Fiction > Fantasy #3059 inÃ Â Books > Books on CD > General

Customer Reviews

Adult/High School-Iselle, the royesse (princess) of Chalion, and her lady-in-waiting, Bertriz, need a new tutor. Cazaril, the man chosen for the job, has been scarred, physically and mentally, from secret betrayals by the very people who now rule Chalion through Iselle's uncle, and who seek to control her younger brother, the heir, as well. To rescue the royesse, and save Chalion, Cazaril must play matchmaker between Iselle and the prince of another realm, fight off assassins, lift a century-old curse, and risk everything-learning not to run from his own love for Bertriz-along the way. Bujold weaves a convincing and captivating fantasy world, well researched, with magic that works and gods that live without destroying the balance of this medieval society. Cazaril's life is rich with detail, and plays a part in the conclusion. The villains are believably motivated. The young

heroines are deeply sympathetic characters as well. Readers will find themselves rooting for the good guys, while still uncertain that all can end without at least one of them suffering a dire fate. A finely balanced mixture of adventure, swordplay, court intrigue, romance, magic, and religion makes this book a delightful read.Paul Brink, Fairfax County Public Library System, VACopyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Betrayed by an unknown enemy into slavery, former soldier and courtier Lupe dy Cazaril escapes his bondage and returns to the royal household he once served. Entrusted with the teaching of the sister to the heir to the throne of Chalion, Cazaril finds himself drawn into a tangled web of politics and dark magic as he battles a curse that threatens the lives and souls of a family he has come to love. The author of the "Vorkosigan" series of dynastic sf turns her hand as competently and engagingly to the fantasy genre in a tale of quiet heroism and self-sacrifice. Compelling characters and richly detailed world building make this a strong addition to fantasy collections. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

If you have read a lot of mainstream major fantasy over the last ten years, the work of people like Duncan, Jordan, Hobb, Brooks, you will likely enjoy this one very much. I have read two other books by this author, and this one is the best I have read so far.The tale begins with a grimy old man making his way along the road. Eventually, you realize he is neither an old man nor the average person. The story takes the "special person who does not know he is special" trope and gives it a bit of a twist by making the hero, Caz, a thirty something man who has had lots of experience in the royal court but ends up in a battle which results in his being sold to a slaver. He is treated horribly on the ship and goes through what we later understand through bits and pieces of revelations is a sort of religious experience.I am trying not to spoil anything; that is why I am being vague.Anyway, as the story progresses we see the effects Caz has on the lives of the people in the kingdom he comes into contact with, especially two people he ends up assigned to oversee.As a hero, Caz is likable and heroic but so totally unassuming you just can’t help but like him. It will soon be discovered he has a dark and dangerous mission assigned to him by the Gods!!OK, first of all, the writing is good in this book. No clunky sentences or terrible dialogue. The main characters are types in the sense we find them repeatedly in this kind of fantasy. Examples: the inexperience royal who is mislead by his fawning followers who have terrible motives; the young woman who is smarter and stronger than she should be given the social roles of her gender; the old woman who is wise but judged crazy; the aging ruler who was once good but now is old and a bit crazy and weak. You get

the picture. But the main characters are psychologically distinct and we see them develop and change.Unlike The Game of Thrones where every character is psychologically developed and there are over a dozen main story lines all going at once, in this book we have the traditional focus on a limited few characters and there are none of the lengthy sections where chapter after chapter shifts to a totally new time and country. There are a few jumps where you start a new chapter to find that the trip they started out on at the end of the previous chapter is over and suddenly they are riding into a courtyard after a two day ride, and I remember at least one place where there was the old "winter gave way to dripping eaves and warm winds" time shift.However, generally things move along without major jumps. The plot all focuses around the major group of characters and so while there are two separate orders of soldiers and a few religious orders, there is no real detail about them or the people in them or the political intrigues going on behind the scene. There is enough background here that if the author had wanted this could have been a ten volume series. The bad guys plot, of course, but mainly we see the results of this rather than read about the plotting or the psychology of the plotters, which is actually good here because the plotters are meant to cause problems not provide us with in-depth characters.If the author had wanted, I easily saw a place about 3/4 of the way through where she could have ended "Book one" and then gone on to "Book Two" and fleshed out the characters and motivations and such a bit more rather than end the book. Things do move a bit quickly in the final fifth of the book and a few things resolve rather quicker than they might! (I wish the last fifty pages had taken more like one hundred pages.) But if anything you will only wish things had slowed down a hair because you realize you are about to end the reading experience!!There is a little bit of tear jerking sacrifice toward the end that may make you sniffle a bit or bring a drop to your eye. But that is good. :) Lots of devious plots. Not much in the way of sword play, but it is not totally lacking in this, especially toward the end. The magic is more personal religious experience rather than fire ball throwing and mountain tumbling down stuff. No dragons. Sorry. There are some very interesting crows!If you are looking for one of those series where things go on and on and every character is gone into in depth so that you fear the series will not be done before you shuffle off your mortal coil, this will not fully satisfy.But if you want a stand alone, one volume, traditional high fantasy novel with interesting characters if not totally unexpected circumstances and themes, this will satisfy you. I very much recommend this book.Just a quick note: if you like this you might enjoy the old Barbara Hambly series The Darwath Series: The Time of the Dark, The Walls of Air, and The Armies of Daylight. There are lots of one volume fantasies published twenty or thirty years ago that are excellent and have been forgotten.I will try other of her books, though the one I am reading now by her, "Penric and the shaman," seems a bit light.

A fine fantasy tale! This is a book of the older and, in my estimation, better fantasy fiction writing style. There is no graphic violence, no detailed sex scenes. There is both, but done properly - no torture porn or... porn porn. There are villains, and they are villainous - but they are of the more common, believable kind. Some are even slightly sympathetic. The protagonists display virtues - certainly a refreshing change from too much 'modern' fiction that may give us casual murderers as our hero. They are people to admire for their virtues, not shock with unrealistic swings between horrific vice and decency. You will definitely find at least one, and probably more, character(s) who is well fleshed out, understandable, admirable and, most importantly, one to root for. For the most part they face the grave challenges Ms. Bujold throws in their way with realistic aplomb. Needless to say, I highly recommend this book.

The character of god-ridden Cazaril is believable, sympathetic, and grows more complex from beginning to end. There are many engaging players, both male and female, woven into the story as their lives intersect with our protagonist's. Bujold's world-building is solid, and although her semi-feudal pre-industrial society seems familiar, she provides enough cultural and behavioral details to keep it interesting and support the characters' decisions. She doesn't give us all the answers, but unfolds them in the natural course of events. Readers of Game of Thrones will find this story at least as enjoyable, and perhaps less frustrating, because Bujold wraps up this smaller canvas with a satisfying conclusion.

Bujold has crafted a very richly-developed fantasy world and a main character who seeks no wealth or fame, but winds up saving the kingdom. The tale is inspired by Ferdinand and Isabelle of Spain, but only barely.The main character is Lupe dy Cazaril, a minor and impoverished nobleman whose family lands have been lost during the years he spent as a soldier, captive and slave. In the beginning of the book, he is returning to his native land after a year spent in the galleys, hoping to find a menial position at a castle where he had served as a page in his youth. Instead, he is given a position of great influence and responsibility and thrust into court intrigues and dealings with the five gods of the land - who are very palpably present in the lives of the inhabitants.Ultimately, his actions prove to be the results of years of the gods' influence, and lead to lifting the curse that has haunted Chalion's royal family for generations.For those who are familiar with Bujold's rollicking Vorkosigan tales:Caz and Miles have a lot in common of course - they're heroes written by the same author. They both have inner strengths and inner despair developed over years of suffering. Both manage

to remain composed in the most trying of circumstances. However, Caz most definltely is NOT Miles. He is not manic. He speaks well but not with the almost superhuman persuasiveness Miles exhibits. You don’t see Caz walking naked into the place and winding up the ruler of it all (OK, he walks in wearing rags and winds up as a highly-placed advisor, but that’s more luck / recognition / godly influence than his own verbal skills). He’s not a b---s--- artist (Miles is, but always manages to turn his own BS into a lush bed of roses).Nor, obviously, is Chalion (or more broadly, the World of the Five Gods) the Vorkosiverse. Over the decades of the Vorkosigan series, you gain a pretty solid basic feel for the various planets and cultures - but you barely scratch the surface even of Barrayar and Beta Colony. They focus more on the characters (not that I’m complaining!). With just the Curse of Chalion - one book - Bujold paints a stunningly rich culture in enormous depth. I recently re-read the book, after reading it when it was first published, and was amazed at how many details I’d missed or misunderstood the first time.

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