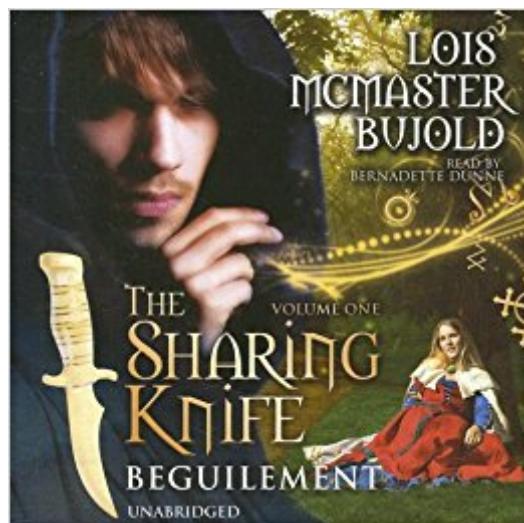


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The Sharing Knife, Vol. 1: Beguilement



Synopsis

[Audiobook CD Library Edition in vinyl case.] [Read by Bernadette Dunne] Young, pregnant Fawn Bluefield has just fled her family's farm to the city of Glassforge, where she encounters a patrol of the enigmatic soldier-sorcerers known as Lakewalkers. Fawn has heard stories about the Lakewalkers, wandering necromancers with no permanent homes and no possessions but the clothes they wear and the mysterious knives they carry. What she does not know is that the Lakewalkers are engaged in a perilous campaign against inhuman and immortal magical entities known as "malices." When Fawn is kidnapped by one of these creatures, it is up to Dag, an older Lakewalker heavy with sorrows and responsibilities, to rescue her. But in the ensuing struggle, it is not Dag but Fawn who kills the creature--at dire cost--and an uncanny accident befalls Dag's sharing knife, which unexpectedly binds their two fates together.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Compelling characters lift this first of a two-book romantic fantasy from Hugo-winner Bujold (The Hallowed Heart), set in a dangerous land without a name, though individual towns, villages and hamlets are specified. Dag, a Lakewalker patroller with a dry wit, is dedicated to destroying the evil "malices" that blight the countryside. Fawn, a runaway farm girl, helps him kill a malice and its zombie-like mud-men, but not before the malice destroys her unborn child by taking its "ground" or life force. Fawn slays the malice with Dag's sharing knife, a bone blade created to carry the spirit of

a dying patroller, but Dag's formerly empty knife now carries the baby's ground. Dag and Fawn fall in love while he helps her recover from her miscarriage. Bujold hints at an epic past of mighty kingdoms and ancient sorceries—^a a past that will hopefully be fully detailed in the sequel. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Adult/High School—^a Bujold's *The Curse of Chalion* (2001) and *The Hallowed Hunt* (2005, both Morrow/Avon) walked a fine line between fast-paced quest fantasy and character-driven romance. Here the fantasy is in the background, making the developing romance between the main characters, Dag and Fawn, the primary story. The two meet when the wandering adventurer Dag rescues the farmer's daughter Fawn from a Malice, a powerful demonic creature capable of bending the wills and flesh of others to itself. While there is action and drama, the end result is that the events seem built for the singular purpose of pushing Dag and Fawn together instead of moving along any other plot thread. This is a big shift for Bujold's fans, who might expect layers of political intrigue and thrilling action alongside the love story. Fortunately, the lovers are compelling characters, and Bujold delivers a novel that is a sweet, touching, and fast read. While it seems difficult to imagine how a love story can carry a whole fantasy series, teens will want to see how this tale continues in the next volume.—^a Matthew L. Moffett, Ford's Theatre Society, Washington, DC Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I felt torn between a four and five star rating for this book but decided to round upwards, since I didn't skim even a paragraph of this engaging novel. It was skillfully written, with likable well fleshed-out characters and some interesting world building. I found the aspects of the "malice" creatures and the way the lakewalkers dealt with them particularly intriguing, as were the differences between the two main cultures presented. On the flip side, I found the disparity in age, experience, and abilities between the hero and heroine to be problematic. The fact he referred to her as "child" at times, and her littleness and youth were referred to so often, made some moments in their relationship feel a bit creepy. Despite that, I mostly appreciated the thoughtful and mutually respectful nature of their bond. The book's plot proved to be satisfying overall, with only a place or two that seemed contrived. Even if it was predictable, I still loved Dag giving the young village hooligans their comeuppance, near the end. It was so well deserved! I will probably read the next in the series, though I do hope the heroine gains more of a sense of maturity. I'll definitely look for

other books by this author, as she is very good.

I love stories that not only have excellent plots and character development but that also examine current social issues. This book takes a good hard look at prejudices and the questions of clinging to traditions and superstitions despite evidence that those beliefs are dangerous. Fawn is a young 'farmer' (with no 'magic' and a desire to build and stay in one place) who has been ignored by her family and in her loneliness, finds herself in trouble. Day is a middle aged 'lakewalker' (with a nomadic lifestyle and a lot of 'ground sense') who lost his wife in a brutal battle that left him maimed in body and soul. They find each other in violent circumstances, fall hopelessly in love, and seek to convince their respective families that their union is a great idea. Needless to say, because of centuries of prejudice and superstition, no one is wishing them well. The dangers they face not only from their 'loving' families but from the evil, destructive 'Malices' are very daunting. The story of how they make their marriage work in the face of all this is heartwarming and thought provoking. This would be an awesome book for sci-fi/fantasy book club people who enjoy book club discussion. I found myself wishing for someone to talk about it with! I've now read/listened to several books by this author and looking forward to more

This series not perfect, but it is close. It isn't as exquisitely mastered as her Chalion novels, but it possess a unique charm and classically good story telling. There is a lot to love here but the things that stand out are the characters, the world building, and the very interesting topics it covers. Dag and Fawn are about the most enjoyable two characters you could get to know. They are likeable, genuine, and above all they are dynamic. Rather than your more commonplace world that gets shaped by the characters you have characters who are constantly evolving in response to the world around them. They grow together. The world itself is very absorbing. The story takes place in a world abandoned by the gods and plagued by dread creatures called Malices. The world is populated by two very different peoples, Lakewalkers and Farmers. Lakewalkers are mage-alike hunter gatherers whose lives are devoted to the eradication of the malices, monsters that their own mage lord ancestors unleashed upon the world and they do so by sacrificing their own. Farmers are agricultural people descended from common folk and without power. They are also completely vulnerable to the Malices. Because of the differences between the two societies and the mutually held distance between them, there is a great deal of suspicion towards the lakewalkers for their magic and a great deal of condescension towards farmers for their powerlessness. It all makes for a gripping and interesting plot with hidden complexity. Despite my five stars, it is not perfect. The

problem is that the four books are not written in such a way as to have a true climax where everything is neatly resolved by the end of the book. Usually you would want a plot arc per book which leaves you satisfied at the end of the book but leaves some stuff escalating for the next. The first three books have climaxes but not necessarily taking place in the same book. For example this first novel has quite a bit of action in the first third or so and the rest is world building and romance. This is not ideal and I am pretty sure the story just got too powerful and winding to wrap up nicely in an orderly way. Another issue is that there are a few parts so sappy it feels corrosive. Some lovey dovey stuff is best left between the couple even in a novel because it is hard to take it seriously after that. But there are only a few times and the rest of the romance is top shelf. Normally romance is only fun to read about in the chasing but Dag and Fawn manage to be romantically thrilling even after they have been together for some time. Its a very interesting and gripping story. It is the kind of story worth telling even if you can't be neat about it. You just really need to make sure you have all four of the books because by the end of book 4 everything is satisfactorily resolved. It is above all very enjoyable. To date I have read the series at least four times through and you don't come across something you love that much often.

Just read it. I'm going to add to this review because of some of the discussion about a romance novel genre or a fantasy genre or a fantasy romance genre. None of the above. All of the above. There is romance, people fall in love have problems and surmount problems. There is fantasy, in a world that is as real as the world around us with just a few fantasy elements added, like a touch of sage or garlic in a finely seasoned stew. Labeling these books does readers a disservice, they are tightly written, plotted like the engine in a steamship, with every part working with every other part to make a powerful whole. The language is perfect, you forget you are reading a work of literature, the authors "style" is completely transparent, not distracting from the story at all. I am certain that the author will not indulge us, but I would love to spend more time in this world, perhaps to see the beginning of it all. But I don't expect it, to take the last, gauzy veil off would spoil the effect.

I love this kind of romance. So sweet but also realistic, with the added bonus of adventure. Definite must read!!

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