



Charmed Destinies

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Three masters of the fantasy genre present a collection of enchanting stories, filled with adventure, magic, and everlasting love, that includes Mercedes Lackey's Counting Crows, in which Lady Gwynhefar must choose between duty and love when she aligns herself with Sir Elloran, a legendary warrior, as well as Catherine Asaro's Moonglow and Rachel Lee's Drusila's Dream

Charmed Destinies Details

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Rosemarie says

This book is well worth the money solely for the last story, which is BY FAR the best. It's so good that I had to go out and immediately try something else by Catherine Asaro. That book was okay, but still not the stunning and mesmerizing story that is "Moonglow." This is also the story that is pictured on the gorgeous cover, by the way.

"Counting Crows," by Mercedes Lackey, is a mostly good read. I really enjoyed it right up until the end, which - while a "happy" ending - was not totally satisfying for me. Normally, I love everything Mercedes Lackey does and this was a bit of a surprise for me. There are also a few somewhat graphic sexual scenes that might not be to everyone's taste. But the overall story here is still pretty good.

The middle story, "Drusilla's Dream" by Rachel Lee, was just not my cup of tea. It was trying to be a romantic comedy - but in my opinion - just tried way too hard and seemed VERY corny. It also takes place, at least partly, in the "real world" and that was an annoying distraction for me. When I'm in a fantasy world, I like to stay there for as long as possible, and this story just keeps jolting you out of it. But, it's possible that some may enjoy this kind of tongue-in-cheek humor more than I did. I've never read anything else by this author so I have nothing to judge it against.

Once again, though, most of the 4-star rating I gave Charmed Destinies was for the last story, "Moonglow" by Catherine Asaro: a most unforgettable, and very colorful, tale of love and healing.

CleverBaggins says

This book contains three short stories (probably more novellas by the length but whatever) and I'm going to talk about them out of order because the last one in the book is one of my absolute favorite things.

So the third one in this book is by a Catherine Asaro who is one of my favorite science fiction writers, but this was her first little foray into fantasy. I adore it. The magic concept is (or was at the time) so unique and unusual and somehow simple that it fascinated me. Different types of magic are colored and different shapes focus it. It was fascinating and she wrote so visually that it was just wonderful. The story itself is a cute fantasy story of a lost prince gone deaf, blind and mute who is discovered again and because he's the last in the family line, crowned King. Iris is a country orphan who is training badly at magic and turns out to have the most powerful known magic in the land. So of course she has to marry the found prince and be Queen. Its such a sweet story and for its length a lot is going on. I adore both Iris and Jarid (the prince) and the whole world. Asaro wrote a series in this world after the story, but I remember little about it and I honestly think it followed characters I didn't like as well as Iris and Jarid. I might look it up again eventually.

Now the other two stories.

The first in the book is by Mercedes Lackey who is another favorite author but this story is very different. Its very detailed and historical about a woman getting married by glove and hopes that it'll turn out well. Its good, but definitely something you have to be in the mood for. There's a magical plot that comes out at the end and it ends well, but I don't want to spoil it. It's a good story and one I enjoy but not my favorite type of

thing.

The second story is by Rachel Lee who I don't know if I've ever read anywhere else. Its a fun little romp of a magic tale about a woman at a night job entering data. She day dreams to get through her shift but it's much more real than she realizes. I always enjoy this story even if it is a simple little silly thing just because it's something I'm sure we've all imagined and can relate to.

This book is excellent simply for the Asaro story and the other two are good as well. I'd definitely recommend it if you want something to pass the time between other books (which I am. Stupid postal service.)

Usako says

Mercedes Lackey continues to charm me with her ability to weave fantasy tales. But in the case of her story in Charmed Destinies, I felt that I've read this plot type before. Perhaps it was a bit too predictable initially, similar to historical romance. But then she twists the ending enough to make me love and adore her again.

The second story was disappointing. I couldn't wait to pile through to the end so I could get to the third story. Could have been the dialogue. Perhaps. Something about the story set me off to a ride on the disappointment train.

Loved the third story. For a moment, I had thought how in the world can characters develop if the main one was deaf, blind and mute? And yet, communication and development happened in the most charming way.

In the end, read the first and third stories but skip the second.

Kathy Davie says

An anthology of three short romantic stories, which end in a charmed life. Unfortunately, it's not so charming for the readers.

Series:

"Moonglow" (Lost Continent, 0.5)

The Stories

Mercedes Lackey's "Counting Crows" is the best of the bunch although it is a bit confusing at first. I kept thinking it was a Valdemar story. It's simply a peek into the life of an unfortunate young woman being used to protect her father's lands by allowing the king to use her as a bargaining chip to encourage a Border Lord to support and defend his royal realm. Naturally the Border Lord is a major asshole but Gwynn gets her own back beautifully!

Rachel Lee's "Drusilla's Dream" is so incredibly bad that for a bit I almost thought she was pulling a Xanth. Except, I then realized, Lee was so uneven in her bad writing that she wasn't really trying to be horrible. Which made it so much worse. On the whole, there are two stories occurring at the same time. In the Real World, Miles is a sysop for a corporation and refers to the computers under his care as Behemoths

while Drusilla is a data entry clerk. In Drusilla's Fantasy World, she is a princess who meets Miles, the Behemoth Tamer. All of which leads to the one cute bit in the fantasy side where Drusilla and Miles find the Behemoth and must force it to give up the key by feeding it crackers that have a hole in it. Miles decides he must feed Behemoth the boot so he "tickles" the Behemoth until it sticks its tongue out to accept the boot cracker. Hey, I told you it was bad...!

Catherine Asaro's "Moonglow" is simply bad. I don't even know how the title relates to this story of magic determined by shapes and showing as colors. A young prince is orphaned and left blind, deaf, and dumb in an attack that kills his parents leaving a doubly grieving grandfather behind for the prince is taken away and raised by one of his parents' murderers. Years later, the King dies and a cousin will be king. A cousin who does not want it and is weirdly happy when Iris finds the supposedly-dead Prince Jarid through her mind. Yeah, it goes on with all these issues and, I'm sorry, but the issues just don't make sense. It's like Asaro was on a deadline and didn't get past the synopsis stage.

The Cover and Title

The cover is very charming with its gradation of color from oranges to pinks. There's a huge circular stained glass window at the top with an intricately-draped woman posing with a sphere and a rock. She must be standing on a pedestal for the swirling Deco-ish floor is far beneath where her feet should be.

The title, *Charmed Destinies*, is indeed accurate for each story ends charmingly. Actually I think the title, the cover, and Lackey's story are the best of this particular collection. It's certainly the only reason I gave it a whopping "3".

Nora Jean says

I borrowed this book from a friend because I needed a quick read before my Steven Erikson Tale of the Malazan book came in. On the cover it states that it contains "Three new tales of fantasy-filled romance" so I thought, what the hey. I love fantasy and am not opposed to romance. The three stories within the book are very different (which makes sense because they are written by three different authors). Thus, I will take each story in turn.

Counting Crows by Mercedes Lackey

As most fantasy readers know, Mercedes Lackey is a phenomenal story teller. Her attention to detail and ability to flesh out characters is remarkable. These are two skills that are hard to fulfill in short stories; however, Lackey did not disappoint. The story never felt rushed. Everything that happened made sense and the characters were fleshed out which is very impressive given the brevity of the story. This was definitely the strongest of the three stories.

Drusilla's Dream by Rachel Lee

I am not familiar with the work of Rachel Lee and she may be a great storyteller when given more room to write; however, I felt that this story was the weakest out of all three. To call it a fantasy story is a bit of a stretch with so much of it happening in modern day. The fantasy elements of the story felt like an afterthought rather than a central theme to the story. Also, the story was never really tied up nicely at the end. I am still somewhat confused as to whether the characters were sharing a dream or just happen to be having the same daydream. If this story was taken out, the entire collection of stories would have been much

stronger.

Moonglow by Catherine Asaro

This is my second favorite story in the collection. One of the things that I enjoyed most about this story is that it had a compelling magical system. I am a sucker for authentic magical systems that are thoroughly explained and feel natural to the world. While I enjoyed this story, there was one big con; the story at times felt rushed and failed to explain a logical leap. For example, at one point the heroine finds the supposedly dead prince and automatically knows it is him, but they have never met before, and it is unclear how she knows it is him. Other than the rushed feel, the story is quite lovely and a good fit in this book.

Jennifer Innes says

I was pleasantly surprised to enjoy each story in this collection.

Kathryn Baron says

Counting Crows **

Drusilla's Dream *

Moonglow *

Eskana says

A collection of three short stories.

Counting Crows, by Mercedes Lackey: A young woman is sent to the castle belonging to her new husband (whom she's never met) and soon finds out the downside to arranged marriages with people you never meet. I thought this story was okay... I enjoyed the parts where Gwyn really came into her own and truly became the mistress of the castle. That was interesting, since most fantasies opt to get their characters out of the castle and such, so it was cool to see what the job entailed. However, I felt the ending was way, way too easy... a magical Deus ex machina and extremely good luck saved the day, and she got to live happily ever after with the man she loved. A little too easy, if you ask me. I give it 2.5/5.

Drusilla's Dream, by Rachel Lee: This tells the story of modern day Drusilla, who works midnights at her number-crunching job so she'll be able to fulfill her real passion, painting, by daylight. To get through the night, she imagines a fantasy story, with herself as the protagonist, which mirrors her daily life. Somehow, though, it connects to the guy upstairs that she has a crush on... and Drusilla soon wonders if somehow the borders between her dream and the real world really exist.

This story was okay as well, probably my least favorite of three. I just really didn't find it interesting. Drusilla seemed pretty cranky, although over the course of the story you find out what's driving her, but still, I thought the crossover between real life and the storyworld were kind of silly, a little too fantastic. Probably 2/5.

Moonglow, by Catharine Asaro: And finally the reason I read the book at all. Moonglow is the predecessor

to the "Charmed Sphere" series, which I've been meaning to read. This was probably the best of the bunch. Iris, the MC, had the power to heal and affect emotion, but can she heal the lost heir of the kingdom, who is blind, deaf, and dumb following a scarring and traumatic accident he witnessed when he was young? Really well organized and paced, and I really liked the characters and the idea as a whole. I found the "shape-magic" a little confusing, with its many different tiers of power (not just shape, but 2-d and 3-d shapes, and then COLOR as well). However, definitely a good story, and I look forward to reading the series. 4/5

Sara says

I'd say three and a half stars, really. And someone else might rate them more, but I've never been one for short stories. I know this, so I don't know why I keep trying to read and enjoy them.

The Mercedes Lackey short was the best of the three - quite good. The middle story was definitely the weakest of the bunch; I didn't like the main character and the shifting perspectives were hard to follow. The third story should really have been a full book - it was pretty good, but felt really rushed.

Short stories in anthologies always just feel like CliffNotes to me.

J.M. Robison says

3 short love stories in a fantasy setting. 2 out of the 3 were amazingly well done, with awesome romance that made sense, one that actually made me tear up. I didn't like the last story much at all. A lot of telling at the end.

Nicole says

I feel like it took me way to long to get through this book. Out of the three stories, I like the third one, *Moonglow* by Catherine Asaro, the best.

When reading this books I felt like I was dropped in the middle of a series. Like the mythology and characters were already established, but I missed the beginning.

Book one for #tomeinfinityandbeyond readathon

Ship C: a short jump to a neighboring planet, read a book of short stories.

Nozomi says

Lackey's *Counting Crows* was enjoyable, but not memorable. There is nothing special or original about the characters, the plot, the setting, etc. Fortunately, Lackey's writing isn't bad here; normally I feel like she "talks down" to the reader, and it's irritating. **2.5/5**.

Lee's *Drusilla's Dream* was lame. The writing is awful and is something you'd find typical of a Harlequin novel. The plot is the worst part. Basically the main character and the man she likes at her workplace day dream into the same dream. Ugh. I didn't even bother to finish. **1/5**.

Asaro's *Moonglow* is actually my favorite of the three. Though the romance was lame, the world Asaro created sounds interesting, and her characters are too. I liked Jarid as soon as he was introduced; though in real life, he'd only have the intelligence that of a feral child. **3/5.**

Doreen says

This book is divided into 3 novellas by, in order, Mercedes Lackey, Rachel Lee and Catherine Asano. Ms Lackey starts off with "Counting Crows", a tale set in the Age of Chivalry, and does a really good job. My only problem with it is that, on the back cover blurb, it tells of a Sir Elloran, who never shows up in the actual novella. Typos like that irritate me, but the story itself is well-written and interesting.

I wish I could say the same for Ms Lee's contribution, "Drusilla's Dream." It has a clever premise, but the characterization is thin, the plot devices silly and the sex scene entirely gratuitous. It read very much like the worst romantic novels, and is the main reason I'm rating this book at 3 stars instead of higher.

The third novella, Ms Asano's "Moonglow" was alright, but I got the distinct feeling that it would have been better served by a longer format. The amount of information packed into the novella begged for exploration, but in such a way that I didn't really want to read more, I just felt like I hadn't been given what I deserved.

An Odd1 says

[Robin is really male

Hanna says

I was drawn to this book because of Mercedes Lackey, and she delivered a great short novella that I highly enjoyed, with a strong female character and a happy ending, which I have an addiction to. The other two stories in this collection were good in their own right, but the second one didn't enthrall me quite as much as the first did, or the last one, "Moonglow" by Catharine Asaro. "Moonglow" was beautiful and I was very much happy with how the story turned out, and the path the author took to get there.

Overall, I highly enjoyed this book.
