



To Weave a Web of Magic

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A romantic fantasy anthology with four novellas from renowned authors of romance and fantasy...

USA Today best-selling author Claire Delacroix gives readers a revisionist version of the medieval legend of Melusine. **USA Today** best-selling author Lynn Kurland's trademark style shines in this tale of the magic and medieval romance between two lovers.

World Fantasy Award-winner Patricia A. McKillip tells of an artist's model and the transforming power of beauty and inspiration.

National best-selling author Sharon Shinn offers a compelling romance set in a strange new off-world of angels and revolving around the pursuit of love.

The very thrill of love comes dazzlingly to life when these four shining stars of romance and fantasy weave their own web of magic for their legions of fans.

To Weave a Web of Magic Details

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From Reader Review To Weave a Web of Magic for online ebook

Nadia says

There are 4 stories in total. I detested one, liked two and found the other one to be okay.

The first story is "The Gorgon in the Cupboard" and I seriously don't know what this thing was about. There's a painter who thinks absurdly. There's his community and stuff and a talking mouth(!). This is the first story of the book and made me want to DNF it. But I had no other option at that time so had to continue. Anyway, 1 star.

The second one, "The Tale of the Two Swords" was a good read, but I can't fathom that they got married after knowing each other for two days. 3 stars anyway.

The third, "Fallen Angel" tried to put a lot of twists, but was predictable nonetheless. I felt the story dragged for no reason. 2 stars.

The last one, "An Elegy for Melusine" was pretty creepy in my opinion and I had fun while reading it. 3 stars.

Overall, an okay read.

The Window Seat says

Check out my reviews at <http://thewindowseat13.blogspot.com/>

The Tale of the Two Swords, which is found in the anthology To Weave a Web of Magic, is the second Nine Kingdoms novella. I absolutely love the opening to this story. The whole novella is a story within a story. The story opens with young Harold wishing for an adventure. Since he is young, it is snowing outside, and he is recovering from a cold, he settles for an adventurous tale told by his father. The tale his father tells is The Tale of the Two Swords. If you have read the other Nine Kingdoms books, The Tale of the Two Swords is mentioned a time or two. And this is where we hear the full tale.

Mehar is a young woman with the ability to weave magical cloth. Unfortunately, her father, Robert of Angesand, doesn't appreciate much about Mehar and has decided to marry her off to an unpleasant suitor. Mehar takes her fate into her own hands and decides to flee on one of her father's horses, determined to take her pleas to the king. When she arrives at the palace, however, she discovers that a disaster has happened and instead of finding the king, she finds two young men who she believes are servants, Gil and Alcuin.

What Mehar doesn't realize is that Gil is in fact Prince Gilraehen, who, with the death of his father, is now king. Gil has been through a lot and the peace that Mehar brings to him and his current situation is welcome. He is happy to keep Mehar in the dark about his true identity. As the two spend time together, their attraction grows. As they put together the clues of each other's true identity, they realize that out of the disaster, together they can forge a new future for the kingdom of Neroche.

As I said, I liked the story. Yes, it is a bit rushed in places. But that is the nature of the short story. What I like about it is the charming character of Harold, the writing that, despite being a shortened story, is all Kurland, the beauty of the world of the Nine Kingdoms, and the love story that grows between the two characters.

Erin says

I always thought I didn't like short stories very much, but to my surprise, I was able to get into these and enjoyed them. However, my favorites were Kurland's and Shinn's (4 stars), perhaps since I was already familiar with the worlds they were set in because of their other books. Delacroix's and McKillip's were not exactly my favorites, but still well written (2 stars).

Angela says

Only read "The Tale of Two Swords" (Nine Kingdoms, Book 0.5) by Lynn Kurland

Mehar of Angсанд is fleeing from home, running to the palace, looking for help deciphering her mother's book of spells from the king or his mage. Her abrupt departure, leaving her betrothed in the dust, ends up with her having a price on her head and men on her trail. When she finally does arrive at the palace it's to find it in ruins, with just two men, apparently servants, Gil and Alcuin, lingering.

Gil doesn't correct her belief, wanting to be simple Gil - perhaps named after his father's favorite hound - instead of Gilraehan the Fey, Prince of Neroche...King, in fact with his father recently dead. Gil's looking for a bit of peace to figure things out after the devastating defeat his family suffered against Lothar of Wychweald.

When Mehar shows up, Gil begins to wish that he could perhaps choose differently than has been planned for him - no more so than when his intended shows up at the palace after just a few short days of getting to know Mehar.

Having read *Star of the Morning* before this, I heard about *The Tale of the Two Swords* extensively, and was ecstatic to see the story (within a story) presented here. It's everything it is promised to be - full of romance, and intrigue, with danger lurking just *there*. The writing is typical of Lynn Kurland, strong men with courtly manners; women who have more power than they realize and the desire and ability to use it and fantastic banter that makes me grin.

"I suppose," she said pulling back, "that you'll need someone about you to remind you you're merely a man when you begin to take yourself too seriously."

"And you won't?" he asked, cocking his head to one side.

She shook her head. "I am your warp threads, my liege, ever fixed in my affections. Let someone else correct your pattern. My task is to wrap you in peace and comfort, not strip you of it."

sighs happily

"I need a sword, Gil. I'll need some way to guard your back. To guard my own if you're guarding our children. I could weave things into it."

He looked at her quietly for a moment or two, then nodded. "As you will, love."

Kathie (katmom) says

So far I've only read Lynn Kurland's story in this one.

Short...sweet, and full of details. And it left me wanting more...just like ALL of hers.

Harold wants his father to read an adventure for the umpteenth time. It's the story of a young woman who escapes her father on a magical horse. She meets a man who is more than he seems.

When the story is over, again, Harold, who is only 8, SEES the truth of the story and really SEES for the first time. He's in the MIDDLE of an adventure!

Would love to see more of this...truly! It does stand on it's own, but sure would like to SEE the downfall of the bad guy...

Kerri says

The first story, The Gorgon in the Cupboard, didn't really grab me. I felt like it was missing something, or it could have been better. The other three stories were great, my favorites being The Tale of Two Swords and Fallen Angel (I do have a soft spot for Samaria stories--I'm a big fan of Sharon Shinn). All things considered, I enjoyed these novellas far more than I believed I would, because this subgenre of fantasy isn't usually my thing. I'd recommend this to general fantasy enthusiasts, as long as you don't mind a hefty dose of romance.

Jazz Feylynn says

One of the four stories is by Lynn Kurland in the magical Nine Kingdoms. A background insight that makes the world so enjoyable.

Matthew Galloway says

I hate to give this book only three stars because the McKillip and Shinn stories were so good -- five star stories, for sure. The other two stories were not terrible, but they didn't really have that... spark.

I checked this book out from the library and now feel like I need to buy it so I can own McKillip's "the Gorgon in the Cupboard" -- I would lump this story in with her "Stepping From the Shadows" as far as style and type of story (they really need to re-release that book, come to think of it, because I actually had to interlibrary loan THAT one!). The level of magic is fairly low and of the type where the reader could believe that it's more psychology than mysticism.

The Shinn story was just full of that Shinn wonderfulness that I've come to expect of her. Well thought out story and culture and characters.

Lynn says

Today post is on The Tale of the Two Swords by Lynn Kurland. It is 103 pages long and is published by Berkley. It is a novella in Kurland's Nine Kingdoms series. The cover has a young woman sleeping on it. The intended reader is someone who likes fantasy, romance, and interesting characters. There is no language, no sex, and no violence in this novella. The story is told from the third person close of the two main characters. There Be Spoilers Ahead.

From the back of the book- Mehar of Angesand is looking for a mage to help her decipher a book of spells she found in her mother's belongings. She arrives at the palace of Chagailt to find it in ruins and the king and his mage dead. The stranger who offers to help her in spite of that turns out to be much more than he seems...

Review- Another wonderful addition to the Nine Kingdoms lore. This is about how Mehar become queen of Neroche and it hints about how she made her sword that Morgan destroys. It is a journey story and shows how the kings of Neroche has always been the same kind of guy. One with too much of a sense of humor for their own good. Like normal I really like the characters that you meet. I would like to read more about the side characters and I want to read more about Mehar and her king. Lothar is in the background and there is a new villain that I do not remember reading about before. I liked that Lothar was in the background, we do not really deal too much with him and his evil plans. He was just the reason for the story but no where near the point.

I give this novella a Five out of Five stars. I get nothing for my review and I borrowed this book from my local library.

Phoenixfalls says

This is a decent collection, pleasing throughout but not excellent and likely not terribly memorable. Needless to say, I come at it from the fantasy end of the spectrum, and I suspect that fantasy readers will be more pleased by it than romance readers, for only one of the stories properly delivers the happily ever after ending that the romance genre demands. Still, as mind candy it works admirably well, and I spent a very enjoyable afternoon reading it.

I picked the anthology up for the first story, Patricia McKillip's "The Gorgon in the Cupboard." It is also the best in the book -- so good, in fact, that it was later included in the Science Fiction Book Club's anthology *The Best Short Novels: 2005*. It is a story about Harry, a struggling painter desperately in love with his mentor's beautiful wife, and Jo, a girl destitute and forsaken on the streets after several hard turns of fortune. The fantasy element comes into play when Harry pulls out a painting he never finished because his model disappeared and paints his mentor's wife's mouth onto it in a fit of despondency that he will never be able to create a work worthy of her; he is understandably shocked when the mouth comes to life and begins to speak to him. That is the only fantasy element obvious in the story (though it is a rather glaring one); the setting is vague and paintings speaking are clearly not a common occurrence. The romance is also very slight. This is because what the story is really about is perception, the ways that we see what we want rather than what is. It's gossamer-light, yet far richer than it seems on the surface, wise and sensitive to the myriad ways life is fragile and bittersweet, particularly for women. It is stop-me-dead-in-my-tracks (reading-wise) beautiful.

The second story, Lynn Kurland's "The Tale of Two Swords," is the one I suspect romance readers will be happiest with, and it made me smile and roll my eyes in equal amounts (often at the same time). It made me roll my eyes for more reasons than I can count -- the self-conscious modern fairy tale narration (complete with "In which [blank happens:]" as the title of each chapter); the combination of hopelessly modern actions on the characters' part even as they speak in hopelessly archaic (and likely inaccurate) dialogue; the fact that the man has just lost his family and his kingdom in an epic battle, the woman has a price on her head, and all they do is frolic in the forest getting muddy. It also doesn't have time to even get to the two swords part of the title -- the story is entirely the romance component (and the true happily ever after ending). I believe the story is something of a prequel to one of Kurland's ongoing series, so perhaps the two swords part is dealt with in one of the novels. However, despite all those things that irked me, I still couldn't help liking the characters and liking their romance, so I suppose Kurland did her job well. (Should I hate myself a little for falling for it?)

The third story, Sharon Shinn's "Fallen Angel," is the one romance readers will have the most trouble with, and it may even be hard for fantasy readers that are unfamiliar with Shinn's Samaria series. It's set ten years after the end of *Archangel* (and even has a fairly toothless cameo by the Archangel Gabriel) and Shinn seems to assume that the reader has enough background knowledge of her books that she doesn't need to explain the slightly unusual way Samaria works. Unfortunately, this has led to some readers calling the story sacrilegious, because they have no context for this tale of angels behaving badly. For those who want to read the story and don't have that context, please keep in mind that the angels are nothing more than humans with wings -- they are not actually the angels of Christian mythology. Even more unfortunately, "Fallen Angel" just doesn't quite work as either fantasy or romance -- as I already mentioned, Shinn doesn't give enough grounding in the fantasy world-building to satisfy those fans, and the romance is decent (if of the "ooo, what a sexy bad boy" variety) only until the ending totally destroys suspension of disbelief with an out-of-left-field resolution that heaps all the evils in the world on one head. Still, I didn't hate the story, because it actually starts to address some of the thornier side of the world of Samaria -- the sort of chaos that can ensue when a ruling class with a free love worldview comes into conflict with a merchant class with very strict rules of propriety.

The fourth story, Claire Delacroix's "An Elegy for Melusine," is a retelling of the Melusine myth. It hews very closely to the story as described on Wikipedia (I wasn't overly familiar with the myth, so I looked it up, lol) and is rendered in serviceable enough prose that the myth's full power shines through. It has a totally unnecessary framing story, unfortunately, but other than that I quite liked it. However, romance readers should again be warned: the myth does not have a particularly happy ending.

Althea Ann says

Four separate stories in the “fantasy/romance” genre – two from successful fantasy authors and two from successful romance authors.

The Gorgon in the Cupboard – Patricia McKillip

The moral of the story is that men put women on pedestals, and the women don’t always appreciate it.

In this tale of a group of artists and their models, the “pedestals” are almost literal. The spirit of the gorgon Medusa speaks to one artist through one of his paintings, helping him to see a woman for who she is as a person, rather than one of the idealized mythological figures he paints women as.

It’s a bit heavy-handed, and the fantasy element is really not even particularly necessary to the story.

The Tale of the Two Swords – Lynn Kurland

You know how sometimes you watch a bad fantasy movie, and the actors look completely embarrassed to be wearing medieval-style costumes, and you can tell they’re barely holding back snickers as they say their “thee”s and “thous”s? Well, this story is kind of like those movies. A completely generic medieval-style setting, generic, unbelievable characters, anachronistic dialogue.... If it were just a bit more tongue-in-cheek, it might succeed as humor, but as it is, I found it to just fall flat. Framed as a story read to a child (which also didn’t work for me), our heroine runs from an arranged marriage, encounters magic, and finds love with a handsome prince. Blah.

Fallen Angel – Sharon Shinn

This one, I really liked. Shinn’s Samaria, setting of several of her novels (which are still sitting on my TBR shelf!), is a Middle Eastern-type land where human tribes and winged angels co-exist, and serves as a well-realized backdrop to her story of a young woman of a wealthy human family who is expected to marry for money and political advantage – but instead falls for a young angel of dubious reputation. A age-old tale – but done here with some original twists, and fascinating characters.

An Elegy for Melusine – Claire Delacroix

The cursed fairy Melusine tells her story to two human women who chance to enter the ruined castle where once she lived with her human lover. Although the character makes a fairly big deal about telling the story from her point of view rather than from the ‘mortal’ point of view that has come down to listeners through the years, the story, as written, is a fairly straight recounting of the basic French legend, right down to the details, without any major changes. Nice, but not exceptional.

Gundega (aka Rouzmary) says

After I read "A Whisper of Spring" by Lynn Kurland in *The Queen in Winter* and it had me captivated, went on to read the next tidbit from *Nine Kingdoms* - **The Tale of the Two Swords** - which is part of *To Weave a Web of Magic*

It was just as wonderful as the previous one. Truly. Lynn Kurland has a gift for weaving stories.

In *A Whisper of Spring* we were introduced to Symon & Iolaire's story, here, we got to meet their great - great-grandson (Gil) and his story with Mehar. Told by Gil himself as a story to his 8 year old son. A story within a story :D

Needless to say, I was thoroughly enchanted...again :D

Really, and these two were only short stories. Now my expectations for the full book, the first in Nine Kingdoms series *Star of the Morning* are set pretty high. But I have no doubt that if it'll keep in the same style, Kurland will have me just as delighted.

Erin says

Of the four novellas included in this volume, I enjoyed the middle two the best. The first novella, "The Gorgon in the Cupboard" by Patricia A. McKillip, was OK but felt a little odd--unfinished, maybe. I never really did feel I understood what was going on with the Gorgon and with the artists' wives/models. It took me a while to get through it.

On the other hand, I LOVED the second novella, "The Tale of the Two Swords" by Lynn Kurland. She hooked me from the beginning and brought her characters to life as though they were real, three-dimensional people. There was humor, adventure, romance. I will have to look up and see what else Kurland has written.

The third novella, "Fallen Angel" by Sharon Shinn, fits into her Samaria series. This story comes after *Archangel* and *Angel-Seeker*. I really enjoyed it, but I think someone who hadn't already read *Archangel* (and/or the rest of the series) might miss out on some of the nuances. It helps to know the back story about the Archangel Raphael's corruption, the battle to transfer power to the next archangel, Gabriel, and the cultures of the Manadaavi and angels (and Jansai, Edori, and even Semorran merchants).

The final novella, "An Elegy for Melusine" by Claire Delacroix, was my least favorite. It took me a long time to wade through, largely because I not only wasn't sure what the point was but also because I didn't really like the narrator much. I just found the story...odd and not quite believable (in the world of the story, that is, not because of the intersection of the realm of the fey).

Carien says

As this is an anthology I will tell what I thought of each of the four stories.

The Gorgon in the Cupboard by Patricia A. McKillip

I love this story. It's beautiful, powerful and original.

The Tale of the Two Swords by Lynn Kurland

Not my kind of story and writing. I felt myself skipping parts to get to the end of this one.

Fallen Angel by Sharon Shinn

The reason I bought this book! I love Shinn's Samaria books and this novella is a worthy addition to the series.

An Elegy for Melusine by Claire Delacroix

Certainly not a bad story, but I've read better and more original versions of this legend.

So all in all two stories I absolutely loved and two I didn't much care about. The two I loved more than made

up for the other two though.

Amanda says

Read the Kurland short story. Not great. No desire to continue reading this author/stories. Pretty juvenile.
