



## Godslayer

*Jacqueline Carey*

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IF ALL THAT IS GOOD CONSIDERS YOU EVIL, ARE YOU?

Once human but now immortal, Supreme Commander Lord Tanaros fled the realm of Men and chose darkness when he killed his adulterous wife and his liege king who cuckholded him. A thousand years have passed in service to his master, the dark god Satoris. The world view Satoris as Evil Prime and the name of Tanaros is the byword for treachery.

The races have united in their quest to rid the world of the Dark God and his minions. The key to the prophecy is the beautiful Elvish princess Cerelinde—and Satoris has captured her.

Yet not all tales told are true and evil may have another face. Satoris refuses to act like the monster that he is made out to be for he recognizes in Cerelinde a spark of the love that he once bore for his fellow gods. But this spark of light might prove to be a danger to Satoris...and a greater danger for Tanaros and all that he holds dear. For Cerelinde might remind him that the heart that he willed to iron an eon ago is still very much mortal.

## **Godslayer Details**

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Author : Jacqueline Carey

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## From Reader Review Godslayer for online ebook

### Aster says

Lord of The Rings, but with Character Development and Moral Ambiguity! What's not to love?

If you're interested in knowing more than surface level about what makes evil so evil, why heroes persist in their quests, and what's really in it for the wizard, this series should be your thing. It's high fantasy with believable people and realistic, human-scale (and dragon-scale) motivations and conflicts. (If you like Jacqueline Carey for the eroticism and romance, look elsewhere, that's not what's going on here.)

Look, I like hobbits as much as the next giant dork, and Tolkien gets giant props for, well, launching fantasy as a genre, but there were some *issues* with those books. I'm not going to launch into a whole thing about it, but it's relevant because these books are, in addition to good fiction in their own right, kind of a brilliant takedown of Tolkien. It's an homage as well as a critique, and it keeps a great high fantasy tone, even while having lady characters who think and feel and act. Crazy.

I wish I could give it more stars, because I love the concept and I love the writing. The pacing, however, is an impediment to reading. I had a hard time getting through the second book. She jumps from character to character across a large cast so quickly it's difficult to follow the plot - five page here, five pages here, ten pages here, two pages with that guy, and then back around! Especially as a subway reader it's not an easy book to put down and then pick up again. Even after a 20 minute break from being totally immersed, it took a lot of work and a lot of flipping around to figure out where I was and what was going on. But, hey, if you have a long flight, or more patience than I, it's well worth it.

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### Kristobelle says

I don't know how to rate this really, 3 & 1/2 maybe? Essentially, reading this series was futile - I was looking for something that wasn't there. I wanted something to change the structure, but it boiled down to a reminder of life itself, tragic and blinkered. You know the ending, even though you rally against it. You rally, then you lose. And you knew you would lose, but damn, of course you were stupid enough to rally.

Which sounds much graver than it really is, it's just the whole thing has made me fleetingly maudlin. Probably a tad more than fleetingly.

I can't deny it was essentially a good series. All the markings of decent writing etc etc. But as I said, I was wanting something that wasn't there, so I don't know what to do with it...

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### Lisa Tollefson says

It's been at least 2, maybe 3 years since I read Banewreaker, and I'd forgotten many of the details, yet I found myself comfortable in the Sundered world soon after starting Godslayer.

I love how Carey tells the story from a viewpoint others than the light., and this series is told from the dark,

those we would consider the bad guys normally. But it turns out that they're not evil, they're not cruel...or no more so than the "good" guys. It's a rare and treasured thing, to read the other side of a conflict fairly told.

I won't say anything about the plot. Other reviews have laid that out better than I can. What I want you to know is that this book made me think. It asks questions not often asked, and although they are answered in part, the questions are too large for simple answers.

In short (I know, it's too late for short), I recommend this one. But best to read Banewreaker first.

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## Conor says

3.5 Stars

This was a powerful, tragic conclusion to Jacqueline Carey's strange, clever re-imagining of the Lord of The Rings in which the forces of evil are the protagonists and cast in a more sympathetic light. The first 2/3 or so of this book was very slow which made it a slog at times but the last 1/3 was action-packed and emotionally charged and provided a great ending to this series.

Review of the first book here: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

First of all I want to give Carey credit for crafting one of the most elaborate love triangle (square? hexagon?) plots in history. Fianna the archer (who I would have liked to see more of in this book btw) is in love with Blaise the Borderguardsman who is in love with Lilius the sorceress who is in love with Altorus the King who is in love with Cerelinde (the Lady of the Ellylon/Elves) who is kind of in love with Tanaros (the general of the forces of evil). YA authors take notes, this is how a master does it.

The first part of this book was pretty slow which is the main factor driving down my rating. It seemed that half the pages were devoted to the Yarru's journey in the mountains trying to avoid the Sunderer's minions pursuing them (this series' counterpoint to Sam and Frodo's journey to Mordor). While there were some cool sequences in these sections I thought most of these parts could have been dropped as the Yarru were just way too dull to take up half the book on their own. When they finally got to Darkhaven at the end their sections became pretty interesting but by then they were overshadowed by the battle.

Lilius' parts were also a grind although for the opposite reason. While Lilius herself was an interesting character she spent the entire novel in captivity not doing anything interesting. Her interactions with Blaise and Altorus made for some really interesting verbal sparring sessions but these parts were outnumbered by her internal, philosophical monologues. Her part at the end was both surprising and moving however.

The best parts of this book throughout were the schemes, machinations and preparations for the final battle being done at Darkhaven as well as by the forces of good and the final stretch of this book payed off those preparations in epic fashion. Tanaros the general, Vorax the glutton and quartermaster, Speros the young man who found his place among the forces of "evil" where Tanaros treated him as a son, Cerelinde the conflicted Lady of the Ellylon and Ushahin the bitter mage who was crippled by the cruelty of men were all great characters and their interactions as well as their schemes and plots were the best parts of this book. The forces of good seemed to have less screen time in this book than in the last which made them less sympathetic as they came across more arrogant and self-righteous.

The last stretch of this book featured an exciting back and forth battle with lots of interesting sub-plots surrounding it. As much as I liked the ending it also bummed me out as Carey made good on her promises to deliver a tragedy (view spoiler)

This was a relatively short series by one of the best fantasy authors working today that despite some pacing issues had a strong cast of characters, a very strong ending down the stretch and an interesting plot-line that uniquely re-imagined some of fantasy most familiar tropes.

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### **Wise\_owl says**

I'll start this review by saying this book made me Hate Gandalf. If that isn't a recommendation I don't know what is.

The sequel to *Banewrecker*, this book continues the tale of an epic fantasy-esque land, at once different yet familiar, in which the forces of Santoris, the Sunderer, the Dark God among the Seven who led to the present world, and his 'minions' are in constant fight against the forces of 'Light'. The thing is of course, we are getting the story from the 'minions' point of view.

The Story is an amazing tradegdy. I once read that Tragedy is fuelled by destiny, the sense of combined avoidability and unavoidability, that we can strive against fate, but in doing so may be doomed to ensure it. The characters, what would be the 'villians' in another piece; The Immortal General who slew his wife for her infidelity with his king, the Twisted Half-Elf who shattered body is less broken than his mind and soul, the Lustful Master of Bargaining who is the 'Dark Lords' mouthpiece, etc. All are fleshed out. You care for some more than others, as well as the 'minor' characters of the piece, and you do care for some of the 'good' characters as well. But man... by the end of this, if your anything like me, you will be baying for the head of the Gandalf 'analouge'.

It should be noted that the book is more than just an analysis of the Lord of the Rings through the bad guys eyes. It has it's own, very well developed and highly interesting mythology. It captures much of the essence of the 'epic fantasy' genre, while twisting it to it's own ends.

In the end I'd highly recommend this book to pretty much anybody honestly. Books that make you feel emotions, and complex ones, are sometimes hard to come by and in that regard I've found Jacqueline Carey seldom disappoints. this book made me mad, sad, depressed, elated... and it made me hate Gandalf.

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### **Pandem Buckner says**

(The above date is my most recent reading.)

This book is the companion to *Banewreaker*, which I've already reviewed; I'd really recommend reading that review first.

As for this one, well. . .the first time I read it, I screamed at it more than once. Just saying.

There are only three words to describe this book.

The first is, "grey." Like the first book, it has no absolutes of good and evil; morality and truth continue to be purely subjective here.

The second word is "excellent." If I hadn't already been a fan of the creative, talented, and lovely Jacqueline Carey, this book would have sealed it for me.

The third word is "gut-wrenching." It hurt, reading the last four chapters of this book, and that, to me, is a sign of its excellence.

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### **Cassandra Page says**

My review of Banewreaker, the first part of the series, is here: <http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/...>

If you are thinking about reading Godslayer but haven't read Banewreaker yet, don't. The two are parts of one overall story; neither stands alone - so much so that I wondered as I was reading them whether Carey had written them as one book and her publisher had decided to split them into two.

I think Godslayer is the better book - it's much easier to get absorbed in - but it has the advantage of building on the foundations already laid in Banewreaker.

I loved this book, even though it broke my heart just a little bit. I didn't realise before I started that Carey had declared this series was a tragedy, so I was hoping until the end that the protagonists might come out on top. I'd even come up with a theory of how it could happen (Dani healing Satoris with the Water of Life). It was only in the last few chapters that it became apparent that the only victory the characters I loved - the servants of the "evil" god Satoris - were going to get was a Pyrrhic one.

But I guess if you're inspired by the idea that Sauron in Lord of the Rings wasn't really the bad guy, it's never going to end well for his team.

I've read a couple of reviews that criticised the series for being too much a clone of LOTR, but I didn't feel that way at all. There are some massive points of difference. I'm not denying there were some similarities - Dani is like Frodo in some ways, and Malthus is very much like Gandalf - although because I was effectively rooting for the Nazgul I hated Malthus a \*lot\*. But they were enough to interest rather than to irritate me.

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### **Joe Crow says**

I really like the idea, and there's some quality imagery and stuff, and I can see the bones of a really interesting treatment of the whole "let's reverse the Lord of the Rings and see how it all looks from the other side", but I have to say that Mary Gentle's "Grunts", as gross-out-humor-prone as it is, does a much better job of it.

I did enjoy it, although I can't help picking the world-building and the general writing craft apart. I've heard good things about Carey, but I have to say, this seemed like it needed some more editorial direction or some

extra cooking or something. I mean, I understand the urge to replicate the wooden characterization of the overt "foes" of the main bad guys, but the orcs in Mordor felt more real than most of the lightside guys. Even the elf chick, whose main choice is one of the pivotal events in the whole deal, seemed thin and puppetlike.

There are pieces of an excellent book here; but she never seemed to really develop them the way they deserved. The spider-filled valley leading to Sartoris's stronghold and the Dreamwalker's ideas about it, the great swamp and the Eldest, the whole thing about Sartoris's blood seeping into the ground around his stronghold for millennia so the local vegetation is warped by his pain, all of these could have been seeds for interesting things to wrap the plot around, but they seemed to just get brought up and then drifted past.

I think she might have gotten trapped by trying to follow the structure of LotR too closely. I mean, if she ever writes a follow up about the Dreamwalker's war, I'll check it out. Maybe by going past that restrictive pattern, she can finally take this someplace it deserves.

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### **Janet says**

Carey brings her Sundering duology to a hard but satisfying finish. The characters on both sides of the conflict are all driven by their deepest values, but Carey focuses her attention on the valor, loyalty, and dignity of the so-called "forces of darkness" and on the pivotal choices of those who do not seem powerful enough to shape great events.

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### **Talkswithwind says**

This is a review for the series. The other book is Banewreaker.

If you hear "Jacqueline Carey" and think Kushiel's Dart, you may be mighty tempted to pick up this series based on that.

Don't.

There are no subby women with bottomless capacities for pain in this series. Heck, it isn't even D'angeline. Very little sex, in fact, and none of it kinky. Different universe completely.

This is rather nakedly The Lord of the Rings but done from the point of view of the Nazgul. At least, that's the concept I think that fired Carey. There is a White Wizard that shows up after being left for dead underground. There are two people from a barely known tribe who have a terrible burden to carry into the very fortified heart of darkness. There are Elves, Dwarves, and Men. And Trolls, though they don't turn to stone in sunlight. For part of it there is an actual Fellowship tasked with assembling the pieces of prophesy for later use. Boromir even dies to protect the Bearer, though that's not his name here of course.

Naked, I tell you.

That said, she carries it off. The plot is focused around thwarting a prophesy for the destruction of our anti-heroes. And they're not even anti-heroes, really, as the motives of either side are equally suspect. Towards the middle of the second book it becomes clear that some things really are set in stone and our actors quietly

work to see that the struggle continues in a different form once the wheel turns 'round again.

This story is not one that has you cheering at the end. It is a character study for all involved, and that's where the main story lay. The last quarter of the second book is the expected mad romp, but the resolution of it is not 'good'. A lot of people are unhappy at the end of it.

All in all it is pretty good. There are enough strings at the end for another few stories if Carey desires, though it doesn't look like she does. These two are a self contained story.

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### **Adam Whitehead says**

The land of Urulat is about to see the end of a conflict thousands of years old. The machinations of Satoris the Sower have been exposed and the would-be King of the West, Aracus Altorus, advised by the Wise Counsellor Malthus, has raised a mighty host to assault Darkhaven and rescued his beloved, Cerelinde of the Ellylon. It falls to Satoris' most loyal servants, the Three, to prepare his defence. But whilst great armies ready for the clash, it falls to two of the humble desert-people to find their way into Darkhaven and strike the blow that will render Satoris truly vulnerable.

Godslayer is the second and final novel in The Sundering, a duology that studies and subverts the traditional epic fantasy paradigm as established by Tolkien. Like its forebear, Banewreaker, Godslayer is an epic tragedy, closely based on events and characters from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*, *Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*, but at every turn analysing deeply every character's motivation. As Satoris ponders, does it matter that you are not evil if everyone else believes that you are?

This premise allows Carey to examine many themes and ideas, such as propaganda (Malthus/Gandalf as a sort-of Goebbels for the 'good guys' is an interesting take), destiny and the cyclical nature of history: just as Morgoth was cast down but his servant Sauron was overlooked, allowing him to return later, so Satoris has his own lieutenants who stand poised to inherit his mantle. These ideas are rooted in strong characterisation, particularly of Tanaros and Cerelinde, though other characters also come to the fore.

Godslayer suffers from some minor issues. The story is inherently predictable, once you realise what Carey is doing. Also problematic is that *The Sundering* is one novel split in two for publication (itself appropriate, since *The Lord of the Rings* was originally published as three volumes; the fact that Carey tells an epic a story in considerably less pages may itself before a comment on the fantasy genre), meaning that the two books do not stand well alone. Since both are available now and you can read from one into the next without a problem, this is not as much of an issue as when the book was newly-released.

On the plus side, this is a clever and thoughtful conclusion to the series. Through authors such as Bakker and Erikson, epic fantasy has of late been more and more interrogating itself and asking hard questions about its underlying assumptions, but Carey does the same here a lot more concisely. Carey also delivers a story that is an emotionally powerful tragedy. The opposing factions cannot agree on anything and good men on both sides die needlessly as a result of mistakes made thousands of years earlier. The reader becomes as frustrated as the characters do at the ongoing carnage that is only happening at the whim of the proud and long-absent gods.

Godslayer (\*\*\*\*) is a worthy conclusion to this duology that questions the conservative nature of much epic fantasy and finds it wanting, as well as delivering a powerful and tragic tale in its own right.

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## Antigone says

Here's the last half of Carey's miserable series, *The Sundering*, which now simply must come to an end as we've run out of characters to devastate and destroy. Readers have short-handed this story to *Lord of the Rings: Sauron's Perspective*, and that's an accurate assessment. One suspects, however, Tolkien could have provided us with more meat and meaning and, frankly, I think if this is all Carey had to offer she could have done so in one volume, saving her audience a bit of money in the process. Such mercy does seem called for.

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## Silvia says

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\*\*this is a review for both volumes of the series\*\*

Well, you know the plot of this one: for the first time in ages the Forces of Good gather together to rally against the Evil Overlord that has been threatening the peaceful people of a quite absurdly shaped continent. Meanwhile, a party sets out on a quest to help a Chosen One fulfil the Prophecy about the Enemy's weakness. Everyone knows that story. Or at least, you think you do.

The whole business started when Satoris refused to withdraw Men's ability to reproduce after his brother Haomane asked. So now he got stabbed in a thigh, the world was split in two and he's left stranded away from his siblings, the God-like Shapers who molded this world to their fancy. He's in good company in his half of the world, though: he's surrounded by all his siblings' creations. Half of which want to murder him, because Haomane somehow convinced everyone he's the villain. Including Men.

And now Haomane's Allies are even trying to fulfil that old prophecy predicting Satoris's demise...

### ***TL;DR or "please don't spoil the whole thing for me"***

*The Sundering* is a quite enjoyable fantasy novel that seeks to subvert many tropes related to the figure of the Evil Overlord. It features some excellent world-building and well-rounded characters. The plot follows a common high fantasy formula, but as events are justified in light of the unusual Dark Lord character and his backstory, it is still pretty refreshing.

The style is chunky at times, but can also reach unexpected heights of beauty and clarity.

It has some diverse characters, at least more than your usual LoTR rip-off, but struggles heavily with prejudiced representation of certain groups and real-life bias.

### ***PLOT***

The premise is certainly interesting. Although I think it would have worked splendidly with a humorous take (something like Satoris getting a PR team to build a less gloomy image?), I quite like the serious take Carey

presents. Actually, even though Satoris's backstory is a complete subversion of the Evil Overlord, the plot itself goes down in much more typical high fantasy manner. Which of course means tragedy. It was also pretty clever how Satoris displayed most traditional Dark Lord tropes (sun never shines on his lair and reek of evil for example), but they were all justified in his backstory (e.g. Haomane can spy him through the Sun). Although the concept is very interesting, the plot had some weaknesses. Especially in *Banewreaker*, because we follow both factions, we often see the "good guys" only winning through sheer luck, not because of their superior abilities or the antagonist's errors. The trend also continues in *Godslayer*, although to a lesser extent. There is also a big incongruence in Satoris's characterisation towards the end of the first book: how is genocide less of tarnish to his honour than killing a woman? It is also pretty cringe-worthy, considering real world racism, to see a character we're supposed to empathise with make a fuss of not killing a white woman but showing no regrets exterminating a group of brown people despite the fact that neither of them had directly attacked him, but just set an element of the prophecy in motion.

There is also a certain discrepancy between the way Satoris is framed in the two books, or at least I read his character differently in the two volumes. In *Banewreaker*, he's presented as a fundamentally good entity, who has been blamed for certain events which were not completely his fault and is thus considered evil. In *Godslayer*, while his backstory is still told in the same way as in the first volume, we are told he's accepting a role in a Great Story (which we never actually hear or see unfold. I need a sequel) he knows because he used to be a friend of dragons, and he's doing evil only because of that. Even keeping in mind at this point he did commit genocide (no, I'm not over that. I will never be over that. These books lost so many points because of that and Tanaros alone), it's an internal inconsistency, especially because the reason he gives for not killing Cerelinde is that he will not become what his enemies expect him to be... but isn't he embracing it to fulfil the Great Story? I will forever be confused.

## STYLE

As anyone following me through my reading has seen, I had some major issues with Carey's writing style. I only study English as a second language, so I sometimes struggle reading it, but I've never had so many issues as I had with *The Sundering*, not even when I first started reading in English. I often had to re-read a passage multiple times to understand how characters and things were disposed and who was speaking or acting. This made fighting scenes almost painful, especially hand-to-hand combat, which reached fanfiction-sex levels of "I give up understanding who's touching who and how".

Still, there were some scenes painted with such perfect clarity it was like seeing them happen, which make me hope Carey has improved since her debut novel.

## WORLDBUILDING

The setting was definitely one of the most interesting features of the novels. The world creation myth and the lore about Shapers seemed like they were out of actual mythology. I am aware there are cultures with myths where the world was created from the body of a dead god, so I'm not claiming it was original, but it was still good to read.

I also really liked the different peoples inhabiting Urulat. I wish Carey had devoted more time to cultures other than Ellyl and Men, because they are the only ones she depicts in a stereotypically high fantasy fashion. Fjel and Were's cultures were explored a bit more than the others and they were absolutely great. Although I liked the Fjel better, I am extremely intrigued by the Were's magic. The Fjel were a wonderful subversion of traditional fantasy orcs. I especially liked the ways peoples who had not been given Haomane's gift of thought collected and shared knowledge in different ways (and this was mostly showcased with the Fjel and Were), much in the same way Ellyl can still reproduce, if more rarely, even without Satoris's gift. Another species which I completely fell in love with were the dragons. Carey really nails the inhuman

morality while still making them feel benevolent (when they've eaten recently at least). As they were created directly by the World God, they know more than anyone else, but their depiction doesn't feel like reading about a wise crinkly grandma. I also loved the trend of dragons giving knowledge and power to those who were cast out by society.

## **CHARACTERS**

I generally liked the characters, both factions were well fleshed out and interesting. Some, like Ushahin, Cerelinde and Lilius, were quite memorable in my opinion. Even those I disliked, it usually was because they were bad people, but not uninteresting characters. The only exception to this is Tanaros Blacksword. I felt he really undermined Satoris's characterisation and the story's meaning. Especially in *Godslayer*, we are told again and again that Satoris welcomes those Haomane's Allies cast out, and we're supposed to take it as a good trait of his. But among the people he has welcomed there's Tanaros. Now, unlike all the other people living in Darkhaven, Tanaros was not fleeing prejudice or unfavourable conditions which were not his fault: he was cast out because he committed a violent crime. Supposedly, the reason he was drawn to Satoris was because they both experienced betrayal at the hands of their loved ones. But their reactions were wildly different, and if the author wanted to paint Satoris as the good guy, she ought to make him refuse Tanaros, because Tanaros is not a good guy by any stretch of the imagination. He also hasn't repented for his actions after centuries. Of course, we can never be sure Carey actually intended Satoris to be a good guy because he does that genocide crap and because about halfway through the story she seems to have changed her mind and made Satoris not a misunderstood good guy but an evil guy who's only evil because a giant cosmic plot demands someone play the role. Personally I like to see Tanaros's whole character as an early warning that Satoris isn't actually a good person/deity/creative entity, although he was in the right in his fight with Haomane. The characters system also suffers from this shift in perspective: up until that point the novels focus on Tanaros as the main character, afterwards Ushahin gains more and more importance. It is implied in the ending that [major giant spoiler] it was uncertain in the Great Story who of them would eventually take up Satoris's role[spoiler]. Which is a plot point I adored; I almost bumped *Godslayer* up a star because I liked the ending so much. Still, if I could have avoided having to read through Tanaros's point of view so often I would be happier.

## **CASUAL "-ism's**

The novels have some very good diversity, but also really problematic aspects.

As I've already said, the genocide of the Yarru-yami reflects a real-world bias that constantly devalues the lives of dark-skinned people.

The books also have issues with sexism and ableism.

It was painful to see Tanaros's actions defended and justified by the same narrative that features Lilius, a character whose main motivation is seeking the power which is denied to her because of her gender. Tanaros killed his wife out of jealousy when he discovered she cheated on him. Never in the whole story we see him genuinely ashamed of his actions. The only one who calls him out on this is Cerelinde, and in that occasion she's depicted as a prejudiced spiteful pampered girl who "just doesn't get it":

More or less anything having to do with the "madlings" reeks with ableism (just. Even their name. I understand a mentally-ill character coined it in-story, but I'm still pretty sure it doesn't make it any better when the author is, as far as I know, neurotypical and mentally healthy), but the worse instance is by far when Cerelinde tries to convince the servants to get on her side by telling them Haomane could heal them, "make them whole". Come on, they are whole, they are people, their illness doesn't make them broken or incomplete. It's disgustingly ableist to say something like that. It also doesn't help that, unlike her racial hatred against the Fjel, her obsession with curing Ushahin's servants is never called out by others.

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### **Obaid Haroon says**

Amazing conclusion to the story. Great writing, plot and characters. If there is one thing to take away from this book, it's that you should never believe someone is evil just because you've been told.

Spend the coin of your death wisely.

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### **Oracleofdoom says**

I loved her Kushiel series. And I knew, getting into these books, that they are essentially Lord of the Rings from the bad guys' point of view. I knew, going in, that this meant it probably wouldn't end well.

I think she did a good job, but the problem is with my personal taste. I cannot stand reading books where the characters do nothing but repeatedly fail at every single thing they do. And that seems to be what these books were about. I know some people must like that sort of thing, otherwise no one would ever read John Steinbeck, but personally I just find that draining.

Personal taste aside, I liked the ideas presented in it. People get upset and are unwilling to listen when their personal paradigm is threatened. If you look at any controversial argument you tend to see that a lot. Especially with regard to religion.

I thought there were too many character points of view. I think I prefer her style in the Kushiel books that focuses on just one person. I admit that I just could not bring myself to care about certain characters, like Dani and his uncle. I wanted to keep reading about Lilius, Tanaros and Cerelinde.

The other thing that bothers me, and I think this was part of her point so it's not necessarily a criticism, is that I don't feel anyone really learned anything. The bad guys' crime was essentially just wanting to live and be left alone. The good guys just refused to accept that, and refused to acknowledge that, basically, "They started it." I wish just one character would have come around to realize that. They were like religious fanatics refusing to see reason. Which I'm sure was the point, but it left me ultimately dissatisfied and depressed. Stories that are a pure exercise in defeat are good for discussion, but I greatly prefer a difficult journey with a happy ending, please.

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### **Myridian says**

I love and hate this book at the same time which speaks to how well crafted it is. Carey continues to demonstrate her mastery as she leads us down the inexorable path of her characters.

My one beef was that I'm not sure I buy Lilius committing suicide. It's true that she had attempted immediately after the fall of Beshtanag, but would she really in full awareness of what it would mean to the conflict have chosen to end her life in that moment? I didn't quite buy it.

I also feel a deep sense of sadness that this was Carey's conclusion to the story. There was almost know

dawning of understanding for one side for the other. Almost no attempt to point a way toward reconciliation.

I sensed this was not going to be what happened, but earlier on in the novel I imagined an alternate ending in which Dani uses the water of life to heal Satoris which might then serve to heal the breach between the gods. In many ways I like Carey's end better even if the approach made me take two weeks to finish the last 50 pages.

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### **ka?yap says**

A beautiful and heart wrenching story with some brilliant characters like Tanaros and Ushahin. This will stay in my mind for a long time.

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### **Rituranjan Gogoi says**

A grand tragic conclusion to one of the most beautifully written fantasy novels of all time (in my opinion). 'Godslayer' will create emotional ripples in my heart for as long as I can remember. The story, the characters, and the mythology is imbued with such passion and power.

This is a book which doesn't focuses upon the story, rather it intimately develops the characters whose choices impact upon the story with a veritable depth. Carey writes with an intensity that is almost poetic. The wounded and flawed characters, who are utterly dignified and empathetic in their poignant struggle gives the story and its plot the life-essence.

The pacing is great, and the story picks up right after the events of the first book. The Allies of the Lord of Thought have gathered and are marching towards Darkhaven. The pieces of the prophecy are being assembled. And, caught amidst the war of the gods are the mortals and the other lesser shapers. There is so much of sorrow and yearning in the story that it leaves the reader moist-eyed. It is a story of possibilities, of 'what-might-have-been', of choices undertaken, the faint veil between the grey spaces of lies and truth. And, therein lies the catharsis.

It has all the tropes and vibes of LOTR, but, it is also so much different in spirit. It has action, magic, and all the standard requisites of an epic fantasy, and yet it has so much of an lively human appeal. Everything is great in this book. Carey's lyrical writing captures the mood of melancholy, grimness, light of love and longing with a fierce zeal. The characters are so beautifully and passionately portrayed that it pains my heart to leave them. It is like a iridescent gem in its full splendour.

"Godslayer" would have made Tolkien proud, had he lived to read it. There is so much wonder at work here. The sublimity imbued in the grand powerful tale far exceeds the grand master of the genre. It will definitely endure as one of my most favourite books (duologies) I have ever read. I urge to all the fantasy lovers out there to read this poignant beauty!

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### **Bronwyn says**

The second book in The Sundering, Godslayer is a book that will ultimately rip your heart out- throughout

the first book and into the second, you are treated to a view of "evil" that really makes you hope the "bad guy" wins- never have I wanted to see a hero fail so badly.

I think, though, that the most interesting part of Godslayer (and Banewreaker as well) is the re-affirming of the idea that there are always two sides to a story, there are real people on both sides of a war. Evil experiences emotional loss the same as good, and what we think of as ultimately evil may, in the end, just have been someone playing a role they didn't even want.

I found out about 1/3 of the way into this book that Carey was loosely basing her story around the Lord of the Rings trilogy, and I have to admit that I had a very emotional reaction to this, and was sort of angry that I'd found out. Despite the constant foreshadowing of the downfall of Lord Satoris (aka. Sauron), I held out hope that "evil" would prevail; once I realized it was inspired by the Lord of the Rings, I knew then and there that the ending was never going to be good for the "evil" characters I had come to love throughout the books. And I suppose that means mission accomplished; Carey was able to get me emotionally invested in the characters, and to see the story from another perspective.

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### **seak says**

Old review:

What an amazing conclusion to a great series. I really don't know why I'm even writing a review, if you liked the first, you'll have to continue with this whether I say so or not. But definitely do so.

In some of the interviews I read of Jacqueline Carey on The Sundering series, she always mentions that it is a tragedy, so I don't feel too bad letting you know that she is correct. No matter how much I wanted it to be different, it was so. But, that only makes the amazingly well-crafted characters that much more endearing. Watch out for spoilers below if you haven't read the first volume.

As we found out at the end of Banewreaker, the ruse failed and even the dragon, Calandor, died defending Beshtanag while Lilius, the sorceress, is imprisoned. The forces of Darkhaven head home and Haomane's allies rally the forces of the West and prepare for war. The prophecy is on its way to fulfillment and still Satoris, third-born of the Shapers, refuses to become what the forces of "good" believe him to be and kill Cerelinde to end the prophecy once and for all.

There is such a struggle when reading Godslayer. The juxtaposition of the two forces is shown beautifully as Satoris refuses to kill Cerelinde to prevent the prophecy while at the same time Haomane's allies refuse to kill Lilius to allow Aracus Altorus to use the Soumanie. Each side does everything they can to keep from stooping to the other's level. Again, things are grey throughout this book and wonderfully done.

Who should read this? Like Banewreaker, be ready for lyrical prose and a wonderfully realized world with amazing characters you can't help but love. Read this if you're ready to break the mold, yet don't want to stray too far. This is a great story you'll be sure to be thinking about for days after.

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