



The Complete Arrows Trilogy

Mercedes Lackey

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Together for the first time in a single volume, *The Complete Arrows Trilogy* is the adventure that launched Valdemar, Mercedes Lackey's expansive fantasy realm beloved by generations of readers.

Talia, once a runaway, is Chosen by the Companion Rolan, a mystical horse-like being with powers beyond imagining. She becomes one of the great Heralds of Valdemar, a protector of the realm, and a member of the Queen's Own elite guard.

Over the course of Talia's adventures, she struggles to master her unique magical abilities, while protecting her queen, the heir to the throne, and the kingdom itself. She battles against diabolical magic, treacherous assassination plots, dangerous unrest, and traitors to her fellow Heralds.

The Complete Arrows Trilogy Details

Date : Published August 4th 2015 by DAW (first published January 1st 1997)

ISBN :

Author : Mercedes Lackey

Format : Kindle Edition 711 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Young Adult, Science Fiction Fantasy

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From Reader Review The Complete Arrows Trilogy for online ebook

Chris says

when you finish a book and say 'i'm so glad i'm finally done with that terrible piece of shit book' then you know it's not a good sign. that was pretty much the effect that this trilogy had on me.

the first book was alright. i made the sacrifice and suffered through the deliberate lack of style lackey offers to her readership with all due effort. fine.

the second book was, to put it mildly, completely pointless. it's as if this book was written for the sheer purpose of allowing lackey to say 'hey, look. i wrote a trilogy' - if not to kill trees. there was absolutely nothing worth while in this book that couldn't be covered in two pages in the third book.

which brings us to the conclusion, arrow's fall. this book was horribly formulaic and gushy, like the other books - except to the nth degree. i'm not sure whether it was drugs?, giving birth possibly?, or possibly a running competition with her editor to find a way to put mushy shit like 'honeykins', 'heartsister', 'goddesses and gods, i miss her/him', etc. on every page.

i think i deserve the two stars i gave this book for actually having read it.

Laura says

I feel like I grew up with the Heralds of Valdemar even though I didn't begin reading them until college (when the series first began). Even though I've read the books over and over again, I still cry with Talia and get angry at her tormentors. I crush on Dirk and a few of the other Heralds and Elspeth makes me want to spank her (Talia has far more patience than I).

These books are best suited for mature teenagers and adults who love fantasy adventure. It's light reading with excellent characterization and a beautiful world setting. King Arthur lovers will love these books, too.

The Valdemar series has greatly expanded over the years but I haven't tired of it yet. I highly recommend Mercedes Lackey. Her Magics series is good, too.

Debra Cook says

Excellent series. Book 2 was okay though I was glad Talia finally learned how to control her power and her shields. The old not saying exactly what's going on got a little old especially by the 3 book. Though I do love how everything that was a problem in 1 i.e. referring to the troubles with Elspeth get revielded in 3. I especially enjoyed the true danger and Talia fighting her enemies holding her captive in 3. The rescue was amazing and the battle was too. I love Mercedes Lackey and I can't wait to try other books she has written and to return to the Kingdom of Valimar.

Liz H {Redd's Reads} says

Recently, life has thrown me some curveballs, so I decided to re-read a character story that was similar to what I was going through. I found Arrows of the Queen early in life (either junior high or early high school) and loved the story then for almost the same reasons I wanted to read it again now. Also, DAW recently released the trilogy in a single paperback, which rekindled my desire to read the series.

I want to be honest here; I usually skip Arrows Flight in my re-read because not much happens. As one of Mercedes Lackey's earliest writing endeavors, this trilogy suffers in a couple ways. First, the middle book is almost dead space with most of what is described being too drawn out. This really could have been a beefier duology and been a bit better for it. Second, the pacing is just a little off at times. I like getting to know how Court and Collegium work, and I like getting to learn more about Talia's friendships, but there aren't quite enough pages devoted to the action sequences. They read as very abrupt.

Readers who aren't accustomed to older styles of writing in the fantasy genre may become frustrated or annoyed by the editing presented in the originals. And, I haven't had the opportunity to examine the new release to see if the editing was updated at all. However, I think the story of acceptance, bullying, family, and adventure overcome these minor negatives.

The reasons why I love this tale are tied to the main character, Talia. As a child, she was raised in a household that didn't provide love or acceptance for who she was as a person. Then, when she traveled to the capital to become a Herald, she was met with bullies and court intrigue from early on, plus she had to work through her issues of trust, friendship, and communication. Mercedes Lackey shows a great deal of knowledge about the human psyche and emotions. Anyone who wants more LGBTQ, female empowerment, and diversity in their fantasy should check out any of Lackey's works as she was one of the originals to feature positive reactions and acceptance of what was mostly considered normal (in the worldbuilding) relationships of that nature.

Also, who doesn't love horse gods :)

Rich says

Valdemar Omnibus: Arrows of the Queen, Arrow's Flight, Arrow's Fall

Similitude says

Reread this on a whim: one of yon books of MY CHILDHOOD. It stood up better than I expected, but the nostalgia helped push it up a star. Certain themes (emotional instability, power grabs, etc) were much more clear on this reread

Zinz Vandermeer says

The Queen's Own series was one of my favourite of Lackey's Valdemar work. I always adored her female characters. I like that some are strong, some are weak, some are sexual, some are not, some are straight, some are gay, and they are all treated as humans. They are treated the same as men are, but with more variation and that's the real appeal of Mercedes' work.

Amanda says

This trilogy was a disappointment. It certainly could have been reduced to two books if not one. I blame editors for that though; they're always trying to drain every cent they possibly can out of readers.

It seemed to me Lackey couldn't decide what kind of book to write. It's heartwarming and adventurous then petty, then it becomes surprisingly dark. There are holes and lags in the plot like you wouldn't believe. I still liked it. It was so heartwarming and fun at times. It was what I needed at the time.

Andria says

I read this series in my pre-teens, and still enjoy reading it now and again as an adult. It was one of my favorites, but since time has passed, I've grown to love other book series far more than this one, though this one is still pretty stellar.

Young Talia is a brave young woman of whom I wish I could've been, because I would've loved having a Companion like Rolan, and being in the Academy where students actually talk to Companions (horses) and they talk to you in return.

Queen's Own series was one of my favorites right alongside Over Sea and Under Stone by Susan Cooper, and Narnia by CS Lewis.

♥Xeni♥ says

This was the second series that I had ever read in the Valdemar Universe. And it freaked me out a bit. I am surprised that Lackey started with Talia when she started writing... jumped right in there and took one of the scariest situations ever for a woman and wrote it into book three. I suppose if you made it through book one and two, you'd be a little more prepared for what happens in the last book, but I certainly wasn't.

Still, it didn't put me off the series, or the world! I love Valdemar so much (can I move there?!?) that even (or especially because) Lackey deals with such controversial issues such as torture, rape, child labor, etc I am still interested. I suppose part of that is due to the fact that her heroes and heroine's always manage to come out on top one way or another!

Talia is not my favorite character. She's just too sweet, too shy and too cute for me. But I do love some of the side characters that appear in this series!

Jess says

I usually adore Mercedes Lackey's work. If anyone were to ask me who my favorite author was I would say without hesitation it was Mercedes! And for what reason? Well in all honesty it's because she writes great Mary Sue's. I can usually plug myself into the role of her female heroines and enjoy myself immensely. Nothing wrong with that, it's not a secret shame or anything. I love reading about females in typical fantasy male roles thumping everyone on the head and running circles around everyone. When I was a young girl myself I would imagine myself picking up a sword (or bow, or spear, or magic, or what have you) and throttling the bad guy for all I was worth!

But for some reason this time I found it lacking. The first novel was great, spot on rise to position for the young girl. I think my trouble started when they spent an entire book trying to get Talia's gift in control. It got realllllly repetitive. After that I just lost interest and stopped really caring what happened to the characters. Ah well.

Casey says

The Complete Arrows Trilogy includes Arrows of the Queen, Arrow's Flight, Arrow's Fall, and lyrics to songs Mercedes Lackey has actually published that relate to the stories.

The books are rather consistent throughout in their execution, although Arrows of the Queen does not really escape from first book by an author syndrome.

Talia, a young girl living on the Border, in a strict polygamist family, runs away from home after she is told on her 13th birthday it is time for her to marry. She hears the sound of hooves, and trips down a hill to land in front of a Chosen, the famous magical and telepathic horses of the Heralds. The Chosen is without a rider, and Talia decides she will ride the horse back to the capital.

In fact, Talia is actually chosen by the Chosen, Rolan, to be a Herald. Being of such a backwater village, Talia is confused as to what is happening. She arrives at the Collegium and is informed not only is she going to be a Herald, she is going to be the Queen's Own, a special adviser to the Queen that is always paired with Rolan.

Of course Talia is completely overwhelmed. She grew up in a household of severe male authority and suppressed emotions. Talia is tasked with drilling some obedience into the Queen's daughter, Elspeth, who is also known as the Brat. Arrows of the Queen follows Talia in her studies to become a Herald and her development into an adult, along with all the bullies and relationship troubles that come as a teen.

When I first read that Talia had to whip up some manners and obedience for Elspeth, I thought it was a really silly plot point. She is essentially the most important Herald, and it is of the utmost importance that she has to make this little brat behave? However, that point has implications that are actually revealed further in the third book, Arrow's Fall, and I would never have realized the significance if I didn't read all three of the books.

Although Talia has a more rare ability, Empathy, and is given such importance, she is a character that has a lot of issues. Lackey doesn't really go into enough character development, so it's easy to classify Talia as someone who always gets everything rights. In fact, she is dealing with PTSD and her magical abilities going awry all three books.

That is my main complaint of the first book, is that the character development is rather cursory. Some of the females Heralds appeared interchangeable to me. There are lesbian couples, and I am assuming gay couples as well (no characters yet that have stated so) among the Heralds, and I appreciated that diversity, considering the contrast to Talia's upbringing. The Heralds have this open acceptance of sexuality, and having relationships that are not so restrictive.

I was reminded of Pern because of the references to Holders living out in the middle of nowhere, and the group of people with an animal that protect the realm (dragonriders vs. Heralds). Granted there is no sci-fi element, but I can see the influences. Later on, I was reminded of Robin Hobb's Fitz, as Talia must be completely loyal to the Queen, and the Herald's abilities reminded me of the Skill. So maybe this series influenced Hobb in some way.

Arrow's Flight and Arrow's Fall are more adult than Arrows of the Queen.

Arrow's Flight follows Talia and the Herald, Kris, on her apprenticeship, riding a circuit in the North near the border. Honestly, I think half of this book was Talia and Kris stuck in a cabin that is snowed in, but this middle book had good character development and conflict created by Talia's lack of control over her power. The border towns have problems that need to be judged/solved by the Heralds.

Arrow's Fall does have rape and torture, although it's not in graphic detail. Talia and Kris venture into the county of Hardon, to investigate a marriage proposal for Elspeth. A subplot is the relationship between Talia and Dirk, and misconceptions about her relationship with Kris. The last book finally pulls in the larger political scheming that was behind the previous books.

Certainly, these stories do show their age compared to more modern fantasy. However, I think it's good nostalgia reading for late 80s fantasy. I did find them at times to be slow because they often focus so tightly on Talia - the rest of the world is blotted out.

I am surprised I did not read Lackey at an earlier age. Magical horses?! In a way, I kind of wished the horses were more magical (no horses throwing magical fireballs unfortunately). The plots are not particularly unique, but I think there is something inherently enjoyable about a young girl magically bonded to a horse growing into and adult and learning her abilities.

Also, this trilogy has lyrics to songs Mercedes Lackey has recorded with other artists. They're all available on Youtube - it's nice to see lyrics that have actually been put to a song!

Emily Mcnew says

I must say that I rather enjoyed this book. While it isn't the normal genre that I read, I found myself completely sucked in to Talia's world. This book took me on a long journey through light and dark...or "Sun and Shadows", that I thoroughly enjoyed. I was devastated in book three by what happened to Kris and the horrific ordeal that Talia lived through. I had to walk away for a bit and collect myself before continuing the

story. All in all, this was a fantastic book and I thank my best friend for "making" me read it.

C. says

I actually read this as three separate novels, but it's easier to list this edition.

I think Mercedes Lackey gets too much criticism, even though I agree that her novels are almost generic in many ways. It is my opinion that within the fantasy genre, she's able to write novels that are fun to read even if they're not particularly insightful.

I believe I enjoyed the Queen's Own trilogy more than her other Valdemar novels mostly because they're the first novels of hers that I read, but I also think they're "tighter" than most of her other Valdemar novels, and generally have characters that are more likable and better thought out.

Diane K. Kovacs says

I love this story. It is an honest and at times very sharp coming of age story about a woman who is very familiar. In reading some of the negative reviews I'm struck at the similarity between the the negative reviewer comments and the bullies that torment Talia and the manipulators that try to destroy her professionally. The fact that she manages - mostly - to transcend the family that wants to force her to be a breeder against her will and interests, the bullies that just want to hurt her because she is a nice, decent, quiet, and attractive person, and the political types who's interest is in destroying her... but I won't type a spoiler. I especially like the in-story stories in book two. If you want a story that is just a tv-script or video game synopsis go elsewhere. If you want to read a story in which a nice, decent, quiet, attractive young female manages to survive and mostly prosper despite her family, bullies (who are very familiar to all of us), and power hungry scumbags (that infest all universes including this one).
