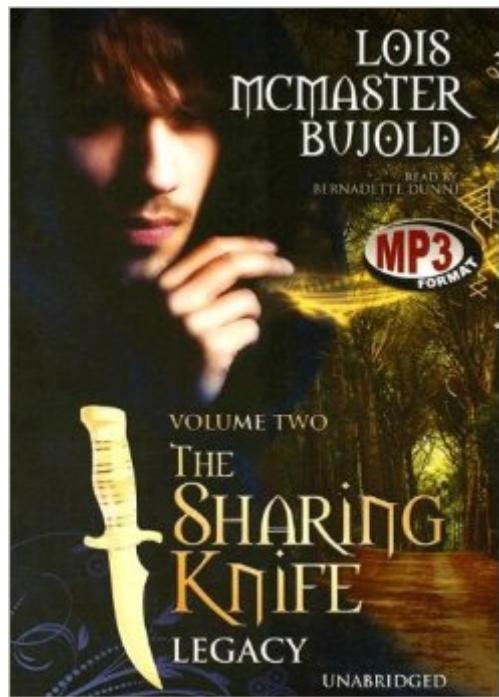


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The Sharing Knife, Vol. 2: Legacy



Synopsis

[MP3CD audiobook format in vinyl case.] [Read by Bernadette Dunne] Filled with magic, heroism, and all-too-human characters, Bujold's *Sharing Knife* saga is both a gripping adventure and a poignant romance. In this second volume, Fawn Bluefield, the clever farm girl, and Dag Redwing Hickory, the seasoned Lakewalker soldier-sorcerer, are newly married. Their arrival at Dag's home on Hickory Lake Camp is met with prejudice and suspicion, as many in the camp deny the literal bond between Dag and Fawn, woven in blood in the Lakewalker magical way. Then Dag is called away by an unexpected -- and viciously magical -- malice attack on a neighboring hinterland, threatening Lakewalkers and farmers both. What his patrol discovers there will not only change Dag and his new bride, but will call into question the uneasy relationship between their peoples, and may even offer hope of a less divided future.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

[This book is not a stand-alone novel. It is part two of a two-part work, and can not be read by itself. In this review, I will discuss "The Sharing Knife" as a whole.] The *Sharing Knife* is a dramatic change of pace for Lois Bujold. She became known for her series of science fiction stories centering on the character of Miles Vorkosigan. Then she tried her hand at fantasy works in medieval settings (The Spirit Ring, Curse Of Chalion, etc.). But in each case, the stories featured extremely well-drawn and fascinating characters experiencing and resolving a plot crisis. What's different in this work is the

"plot crisis" element. It really doesn't exist in the same way as her other books. Instead, we are dropped into a situation that is something of a stalemate between the forces of chaos, the forces of order, and the forces of growth. The chaos is represented by "malices", creatures of magic that literally erupt from the ground to suck the life force from the world. The order is supplied by the Lakewalkers, descendants of the mage-lords who created the malice plague in the first place. And the growth is supplied by the Farmers, ordinary people who live in uneasy symbiosis with the Lakewalkers. The Farmers can not protect themselves from the malices, but the Lakewalkers rely on the Farmers for tools and goods that can not be produced in nomadic camps. Into this three-part dynamic, Bujold drops a love affair between a burnt-out Lakewalker patroller and a young Farmer girl who is too bright and restless to really fit into her society. The two accidentally join together to kill a malice and end up falling in love. The first book details the initial relationship, the reaction to it from Farmer society, and the marriage between Fawn and Dag.

I reviewed "Beguiled" and my advice to myself and others at that time was basically "wait and read part II before passing final judgment." I was pretty irate that the book had been split into two parts, and I'm still not crazy about it. And if you haven't read Beguiled, you really must do that before reading Legacy. I just don't think Legacy can stand by itself... So, what to say? Lois McMaster Bujold is a beautiful writer. Her ability to tell a story is stellar. And I really can't think of any still living, still writing writer who I have read in the last decade who is a better writer than Bujold. And her superior writing skills shine forth from every page in The Sharing Knife. And the "reading is easy", at least it was for me. I read Legacy in one sitting and didn't notice the passing of time at all. My problem (not hers) is that I really didn't *enjoy* reading the book. Does that make sense? Reading a story where the primary external conflict for the two protagonists are their dysfunctional families and incompatible cultures is not a fun read. I adore Bujold's Miles' books (SciFi is my genre of choice and I have been a "Trekkie" since 1968) and I really like her more recent fantasy series set in the Chalion universe but this particular story was too ... well, not to my taste. I've read Steinbeck, Hemingway, Faulkner, Fitzgerald, all the really great American novelists and maybe Bujold is heading down that path. She's that good. But I read those novels because I took a LOT of literature classes when I was in college... Back in those days, in my own free time, I watched Star Trek reruns, read the "Dune" books, Tolkien, Zelazny's Amber series, and ... well, I won't go on. You get the point. I do read "seriously" but non-fiction.

I am a real fan of Lois McMaster Bujold's work - she was initially known for her Miles Vorkosigan

series of nearly 20 books but I actually preferred her foray into fantasy, "The Curse Of Chalion" and "Paladin Of Souls" particularly. "The Sharing Knife" duology (the first book called "Beguilement" and then this one, "Legacy") is set in a different time and world than that of the Chalion/Hallowed Hunt books - this world is more like an agrarian early America. My first comment is that if you haven't read "The Sharing Knife: Beguilement" yet then you need to buy that book before you even consider this one. These two books are a duology but, unlike pretty much all Bujold's other books, I felt this one would have been rather a struggle if read on its own. So if you haven't read "Beguilement" then get it first and don't read on as this review of "Legacy" has spoilers for the first book. **SPOILERS FOR BOOK 1***This book starts off where "Beguilement" left off - Dag and Fawn are married and are making their way to Dag's home. We have gone through the difficulties Fawn faced with her family's dubious acceptance of her new husband - now we get the same from Dag's people's point of view. Only worse. A lot of this book seems to be about cross-cultural clashes. The Lakewalkers and Farmers are different groups of people and it seems that neither can accept the other. Dag's marriage with Fawn has actually broken some Lakewalker rules and despite him being a semi-hero it seems his friends and relatives don't cut him a lot of slack. The first half of the book is about Fawn and Dag trying to settle down in Lakewalker territory - and struggling.

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