



Fire

Kristin Cashore

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Fire is one of the most dangerous monsters of all - a human one. Marked out by her vivid red hair, she's more than attractive. But with this extraordinary beauty comes influence and power. Aware of her power, Fire lives in a corner of the world away from people. But now the day has come when she is needed by her king.

Fire Details

Date : Published September 24th 2009 by Gollancz

ISBN : 9780575085114

Author : Kristin Cashore

Format : Hardcover 334 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Romance, Fiction

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From Reader Review Fire for online ebook

Sandy says

Not bad. Not as good as *Graceling*, but interesting enough. Probably a 2 1/2 star effort. I had originally given it three, but was so worked up by the time I was done typing the rant below that I had to change it (please consider that when looking at the rating). Will probably appeal just fine to the same crowd that liked *Graceling* - unless they become bothered by the same things I am. And good Lord, was I bothered. Considering how excited most people seem to be by this book my difficulties with the book are probably largely personal.

I've got a lot of beefs with this book. I'm not sure exactly what my expectations were for this one anymore, but this book definitely didn't meet them. And there were a number of problems, described below in no particular order.

First of all: There are WAY too many similarities to be found to *Graceling* in terms of characterization. Both books feature fairly obnoxious female main characters who a) possess some sort of strange supernatural gift that they really don't want and that stigmatizes them from the rest of society, b) are completely absorbed in their own problems, c) have refused to marry, and d) have an incredibly convenient connection to the local royal family that they aren't particularly proud of. The difference is that in *Graceling*, Katsa was fiesty and interesting. *Fire*, while somewhat interesting (if you like soap operas, see below) just aggravated me. Both books also feature really excellent male romantic interests who are way more engaging from start to finish than the main character and who also happen to be youngest princes who have great fighting skill but no interest in ruling. It really bothers me that when it comes down to it, the two central characters of both books are just variants of each other. Doesn't show a lot of growth at all on Cashore's part.

Speaking of not-so-stellar writing, allow me to complain about *Fire*'s structure. Just as in *Graceling*, this book takes about 200+ pages to introduce all of the major players and their back stories. Then we break into the main plot. When we finally get to the war that we've been building up to for the first 300+ pages (well, actually just the middle 100 pages since the first 200 were all stupid introduction) it's hardly touched on at all except as a tool for *Fire* to a) figure out that she really does love Brigan and b) be incredibly, obnoxiously whiny about how awful war is. In *Fire*, many of the chapters follow a certain pattern: a) *Fire* recalls some memory of her awful father, which b) somehow relates to something else happening to her in the present, which often leads to, c) a startling revelation. While not a bad formula to use, it gets old after a few hundred pages.

But back to obnoxious similarities between *Fire* and *Graceling*. Despite the ages of the main characters in both books, they aren't really teens. They're adults in their teen years. This didn't bother me so much in *Graceling* when I first read it, but it's so painful in *Fire*. Both Katsa and *Fire* are WAY too knowledgable about the world around them and they're making such adult decisions with such maturity and it never once seems out of place for the setting. Well, at least until the book's final 150 pages or so, when plenty of splendid melodramatic angst scenes appear in which *Fire* whines about how awful the world is and then learns her lesson by talking to and/or observing another (more adult!) character who of course knows better. While reading *Fire*, I wondered if it wasn't for *Graceling*, if *Fire* would have been marketed as an adult book - with teen appeal for sure, but its tone and characterization have a much more "adult book" feel.

My biggest problem with this book, and a big part of the reason why I feel it was so adult: I was incredibly bothered by the way that sex was handled in *Fire*. ALL of the sexual power was given to men and women

were their toys who apparently can't say no 9 out of 10 times when a man wants them. It angered to no end that Fire was so victimized because "oh, poor me, I'm so beautiful that men fall all over themselves for me, which I hate, but I'm just a woman so what even can I do about it? It would be different if I was a man..." - over and over and over again. It got old. Just like Katsa and Po, Fire and Archer became lovers the moment their relationship turned romantic. Ditto for Fire and Brigan. Archer did nothing but piss me off with his womanizing, and it angered me to no end that Fire knew about it while she was still sleeping with him, and put up with it. Even Clara, the spymaster-princess and easily the strongest female character in the book, falls for that stupid man's spell and ends up knocked up. Lord. I'm also incredibly peeved that while Fire is 17, every man she sleeps with is a good five years older than her - and they're easily among the youngest of the adult characters. I realize that this is fantasy and such age differences and the maturity level of certain 17-year-old characters is typical of traditional fantasy, but it drives me nuts.

My final rant: The book is a total soap opera. Really, the plot is driven more by characters than by plot, and even then not so much by character growth. It's more about who's really who's father than anything else. Entertaining enough I guess, and probably one of the only reasons I kept reading after 200 pages, but not the tone I wanted after so much immediate action in Graceling.

So yeah...the book's fine if you like soap operas, where pretty much each of my other beefs with this book would be acceptable. A huge disappointment for me though. And it made me dislike Graceling more because of all of the stupid similarities that taint my memories of the first book. Damn.

Annalisa says

Granted, I went into this book annoyed with Cashore's anti-marriage, pro-casual-sex message in Graceling, but the book never got interesting enough to overcome those messages. Okay, I didn't finish it, but if 222 pages into it, I'm bored and nearly shaking with rage at Cashore for using a YA story as a thinly veiled piece of propaganda, I doubt the end of the book will redeem itself. This isn't even YA, it's adult high fantasy, but these days publishers market everything as YA, and so it's sold and read as YA where Cashore forces her stories around some unhealthy and harmful messages instead of letting her characters and story grow organically.

This world full of monsters so beautiful people throw themselves at the monsters in lust and the monsters can control everyone's mind to make them do whatever they want was not a world I wanted to believe in. Plus, Fire is way too much like Katsa, but less interesting, more whiny, and the whole society more promiscuous. The book is congested with: friends with benefits (incidentally an 17-year-old with a guy several years older than her whom she doesn't even like and knows he's sleeping with every other girl in the country), a whole society sleeping around and fathering illegitimate children all over the place, lots of uncontrolled lust, people and animals throwing themselves at **Katsa** Fire because she's on her period, rape (from all that uncontrolled lust), murder, that whole village plunder and destroy stuff, and the happy mention of her father saying that just because **Katsa** Fire is beautiful he would never act out on that lust because he loves her, so throw a little incest into the mix. I don't know of a single, healthy relationship in the whole book, at least the part I got through. And the very worst of all of this is these things have nothing to do with the storyline.

The story was so slow developing and the characters one-dimensional that never gained my sympathy. So I'm making up my own ending, which I've hidden under a spoiler tag since apparently it's pretty closer: (view spoiler) It doesn't really matter to me. The characters and story didn't grab my attention; it's the messages that did.

Lola says

DNFed at 50%

WHY DID I EVEN TAKE THE TIME TO EDIT THAT PICTURE?

It does not deserve it.

Yes, 2 stars (one star for "I didn't like it" and another star because it was truly well-written.)

First of all, you shall know that I really really enjoyed the first book in this series, Graceling. I adored it actually. I thought I was discovering another great author knowing how to write great fantasy/adventure books.

Kristin Cashore got on my nerves.

She played with them.

She played with me.

She played with my emotions.

Ok, first of all, we have a dark and intense prologue of 16 pages. The number of pages is not important but sure is a lot more than usual books I read. So, in that prologue, we meet two characters, one of them being a boy who really got my attention. Leck (not called like that at that moment.) Anyway, so Leck is able to control minds as Fire. I thought "oh my my, what a great love story that'll make. They'll meet and fall in love with each other because probably they won't be able to control each others minds and they'll be relieved."

Like hell.

I don't even know if they finally met. (Ok, I do because I read some last pages but, while I was reading, I did not know.) I did not know that he was the one who (view spoiler). All I know is that I wanted Fire and Leck to meet and fall in love. Because duh, doesn't Leck redeeming himself, because of Fire, seem exciting? For me, it did. But, that's not what happened.

Oh la la, I just have so much anger in me right now. Must say that it sure doesn't happen often because of a book. At least, it'll be a memorable one for a special reason. *Sigh.*

I didn't have a direct problem with Fire. She was nice enough, for a fantasy/adventure book MC. I liked when she got all angry and on defense but she mostly was calm and one-dimensional, as many other characters. I didn't know that much about her. I knew things only when the narrator told us memories of her and her father (which is a badass!) Shame shame shame because she could've been such an interesting character.

Damn.

Fire and Archer have a "relation" at the beginning of the story of what I understand. But, seriously, I have no idea what kind of relation it was. It was much of:

*"Would you marry me, Fire, if I slept in no one's bed but yours?"
He knew the answer to that, but it didn't hurt to remind him. "No, and I should find my bed quite cramped."*

Oooook.

Also, in this book, there was a war setting. **I hate war settings.** I don't like when a book gets *that* serious. The only books I tolerated (and REALLY enjoyed) with war settings were Captive Prince: Volume One and Captive Prince: Volume Two and probably Captive Prince: Volume Three, but it hasn't been realeased yet so I haven't read it. I must admit that I'm a bit scared I won't love Days of Blood & Starlight because of that.

The writing was splendid (due the 2nd star as I said.) I wansn't expecting and I didn't get less. The pacing was SLOW. So SLOW. Not much was actually hapenning up to where I got (and DNFed.) That's kind of why I DNFed this book (along with the fact that Fire and Leck weren't already a couple as I was hoping for.) The author created a good world building with many descriptions. In one page, there was usually 1 small (very small) dialogue and the rest were descriptions. A lot of them. Most were boring.

I bet this book would've been so much better and I may've liked it more if it was directed to adults. More interesting, exciting and yes, some sex scenes would've been welcomed as in my opinion.

Technically, I wouldn't recommend this companion novel. I didn't like it and I wouldn't probably read Bitterblue. Maybe I'll finish this book if I ever feel like to but that could also never happen and I won't be sad. Yes, technically I wouldn't recommend this book but, since I saw that I'm in the minority here, why would you not read it because of what I said about it? Maybe what I was expecting isn't what you want in a fantasy/adventure book. So, go ahead, see for yourself. Maybe you're going to really like it. :)

That's it. I could say more, but I feel calmer now.

Also posted on Seeing Night Reviews.

Miranda Reads says

She made a bad monster, and a worst human.

Fire's world is full of monsters. They are similar to regular animals only more **beautiful and dangerous than any other creature.**

Their **pelts are mesmerizing** - rich hues of midnight blues or forest greens or sunset oranges. That combined with their **nearly psychic powers** allow for monsters entrance lure their prey to their untimely deaths.

It's hard to wake from a nightmare when the nightmare is real.

Fire is one of those monsters but she's far more deadly, **she's a human monster**. Her hair contains the most beautiful shades of reds, auburn and magenta, her **beauty is beyond renowned** and her mind can ensnare all but the strongest willed humans.

But.

She doesn't want this.

She hates how **her beauty entrances even herself**, how her best friend has grown possessive over her littlest gesture and how despite all she can do, she's constantly shuffled off to the side.

When a mysteriously empty-headed archer **attempts an assassination**, Fire soon finds herself en route to the king in the company of a very distrustful prince and his guard. For the first time, she's alone - **will she break free of convention or be stuck hiding inside herself forever?**

Absolutely loved this **pseudo sequel/prequel/companion novel** to Graceling. It has some elements from the first book (namely, the Big Bad evil Graceling - the one that controls minds through the sound of his voice) but this novel is set in a completely different country and set several decades before Graceling.

Normally, I'm a bit bitter when book two contains no principle characters of book one but I am definitely making an exception in this case. **Really enjoyed it!**

It was a hurting tune, resigned, a cry of heartache for all in the world that fell apart. As ash rose black against the brilliant sky, Fire's fiddle cried out for the dead, and for the living who stay behind to say goodbye.

Audiobook Comments

The reading was really well done. It wasn't a full production like book one, but the reader did a great job of characterization and tone.

The 2018 ABC Reading Challenge - F

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kari says

Disappointing.

Having read and loved Graceling, I was greatly anticipating Fire and was unfortunately very let down. Fire never gripped me, I never came to care about her, or even like her much.

There are a lot of things about this book that bothered me. The character of Archer, the friend with benefits, seems out of place in a YA novel. There was an awful lot of casual sex and making babies and confused parentage.

And, seriously, she has to walk around with an armed guard because she's having her period? All of that info went nowhere, it didn't add to the story and wasn't necessary to the plot.

Fire's relationship with Brigan didn't ring true. It didn't have anything to base it on other than he was kind to her and she couldn't get in his head. Where have I read that before?

I didn't quite understand the whole monster world. Where did they come from?

There wasn't any real tension to the book, nothing she was striving toward or away from, it all just sort of sits there, nothing really memorable about the whole story. It seems like a lot of lead up to nothing.

The whole plot with the archers coming after her and Leck kidnapping her fizzled.

I can't even recommend this one to fans of Graceling, sorry to say.

Daiane says

Boring. Predictable. Vague. Sooo bad and Sooo boring!

The only thing that I liked was the connection with the first book. However, even though we have the same world, we have such different characters!

We have a long and dark introduction. A little boy with a lot of power and little responsibilities showing how cruel he can be in his world. I thought it would be one of those books that play with your mind but it was basically just the introduction. Meh.

Then we get to the main heroine, Fire. She has all this power and she refuses to use it because she is good and yadayada. Which is okay when you are not in life-death situations. So she has a bunch of guards protecting her because, oh, she is such a fragile woman.

So, you are expecting me to say that she finds her inner powerful self and I went all "you go girl!"? Well, not here. The story was basically about her boring life. She spends more than half of the book having periods and it would be okay when we got somewhere with it, but it never added anything to the plot. She was annoying and weak. Everybody loved or hated her because of her looks and she had a friend with benefit that was more like a rabbit, leaving kids everywhere. But wait, she liked a guy that WAS NEVER THERE!!! The love interest here was so plain and uninteresting.

(view spoiler)

One day he goes out because the kingdom is at war and when he comes back she "discovers" that she likes him. But when he asks her if she wants to go home with him, she just wants to stay in her room away from him... What a lovely couple.

There were some tentative plot twists which I found just so predictable. Some were just there to make Fire have emotions and more letters on the page. It wasn't so irrelevant and I really think it could be better developed.

The writing style was awesome but the story was just lacking too much for my taste. A lot described people and places that just passed and never appeared again. It felt so unnecessary. Most of the pages were irrelevant to the story and were just there to make the book bigger. I was always waiting for something to happen.

The other thing that annoyed me was the marriage factor and how relationships are treated. Not only in this book but in the first one too. Everybody slept with everybody. They all cheated. They were all bastards. I don't remember one real happy couple who didn't sleep with somebody else! There's no background to make the characters believe that marriage is a bad thing but it's treated as something really bad that I just felt like the author wanted to push her beliefs over me.

To sum up, it was too boring. I just got to the end because I wanted to know if something interesting was finally going to happen. Well, it didn't.

Meagan Spooner says

Okay, I don't often write reviews, because as an author I always feel weird giving a critical opinion of other authors' work. I think it's because I sort of feel like other authors are my coworkers, all of us working and writing to make people fall in love with reading, so who am I to publicly say what is or isn't right?

But I can't help myself in this case. I feel rather as though I fell as inexplicably and inextricably under this book's spell as its characters fall under Fire's. I had no chance against its beauty! And now I have to shout my love from the rooftops.

To be honest, for the first few chapters I rolled my eyes every five minutes, because seriously, who gets away with writing about a heroine who is objectively the most beautiful woman in the world, one of a kind, loved and desired by everyone who meets her, blessed with fiery red hair and gifts for music and archery and horseback riding, and--to top it off--able to control the thoughts and feelings of those around her? It seemed like the epitome of Mary-Sue-ness.

Yet, I kept reading. I told myself it was out of devotion to the first book, but really, I couldn't have stopped myself.

The writing is beautiful, and Fire herself is at the same time so damaged and SO strong, that I fell completely head over heels. Finishing this book was heart-breaking, truly--and it's been ages since I met characters I was so loathe to leave when the book ended. I honestly spent the entire last 100 pages of the book just sobbing wildly off and on until I finished.

I swore up and down when I finished reading GRACELING that it was impossible for me to like the sequels better. Kristin Cashore has made a liar out of me. I wish there was a sixth star for me to give this book.

And if someone doesn't give me BITTERBLUE pretty much IMMEDIATELY, I may have to start taking hostages.

Sasha Alsberg says

My head hurts from crying but other than that, so very good!! Loved this book!

Heather says

Having read and loved *Graceling*, *Fire* by Kristin Cashore had a lot to live up to. I should have known that it would exceed my expectations and then some, quite possibly trumping its predecessor.

Fire is the last remaining human monster living in a war torn kingdom called the Dells. Once filled with beauty and wealth, the Dells have fallen into ruin by the hands of her monster father, Cansrel and his human conduit, King Nax. Though both have been dead for several years, the kingdom remains in a vulnerable state, as neighboring kings are attempting to conquer the lands and steal the crown from young King Nash and his commander brother, Brigan.

As a monster, Fire has the ability to read and control minds; however, due to her fear of becoming the monster her father was, she has spent years denying her power and has attempted to disguise who she is to protect both herself and those around her. When Fire is attacked by a mindless poacher, Fire travels to Queen Roen in search of answers and aid, but a fateful meeting puts her in the direct path of the very two people she has tried her best to avoid, Nash and Brigan. Knowing all the power Fire posses and the potential that power could have in saving his kingdom, Nash calls on her to use her power for the greater good. But when does power become destructive? And who can tell when the lines have become blurred? What follows is a beautiful story about embracing who you are and conquering your fears.

I found *Fire*'s world to be well drawn, expertly woven and colorfully written. Each character is a delicious shade of gray, possessing both light and dark tendencies; much like we do in life and Cashore does a remarkable job of creating a realistic royal family in a fantastical setting. *Fire* was an extraordinarily heroine that I found very relatable in spite of her monster nature. A story of love and loss, hope and fear, forgiveness and passion, *Fire* provides a wondrous journey through a magical land that you won't soon forget.

Tamora Pierce says

Fire is a monster. Monsters in her homeland are creatures of brilliant colors, each with abilities, that feed on humans and animals (there are even monster insects!) and each other. They have a tremendous attraction for human beings, one of extreme passion which leads to murder, clutching, or attack, depending on the human, which is why Fire has led much of her life isolated in the house of her hated monster father, who died several years ago. Her only friends are Archer and his father.

And then everything goes pear-shaped. A strange Bowman with an empty head shoots Archer. Fire brings him in, but he escapes, and is murdered in turn. The realm is in chaos, and the crown is calling on Fire to use her mind-probing skills to find out what spies are withholding. Fire doesn't want to do it--she feels she must live her life in expiation for her father's existence and her own--but she must go to the capital to face the issue herself.

It's an incredibly complex book. Fire is in the position of holding off one brother who is driven to possessive passion by her monster looks, while another brother distrusts her and she cannot tell what the third thinks of her at all. She's in an ethical tangle over entering the minds of others, but she has to do it to survive, or

people would tear her to pieces. She has her own dark secrets, for someone who has lived in the country all her life. And her best friend, the only one who wants nothing from her, is a horse named Small.

Cashore's writing is more polished than GRACELING, and Fire is a very different person from Katsa. The book is REALLY good. Reading it made me very, very happy!

Tatiana says

Unlike Graceling, Fire doesn't get better upon rereading.

The core of my issues with it remains the same, specifically Cashore's nontraditional approach to marriage and women's empowerment. I'll elaborate on it later. But besides that, this time this book is just boring. I think I was pretty generous to give Fire 3.5 stars 2 years ago. I now feel it deserves at least 1 star less. Too much navel-gazing, too much contemplating and whining and crying on Fire's part without enough action and romance to balance things out, too much talk of periods and cramps. Plus, the nature of Fire's power is such that even the most climactic part of the novel comes off as an over-complicated non-event.

I still think there is an improvement in Cashore's writing in terms of world-building. But, after reading Megan Whalen Turner's novels that were, undoubtedly, an inspiration to Cashore, Fire pales in comparison. The intrigues, the politics of it are only weak shadows of those of Attolia.

And now onto the main concerns. I think it's certainly brave of an author to create novels where heroines are different from the so-called norm. Cashore writes young women craving full independence, undesiring of long-term partners and children. That's fine. But I can't help but be disappointed in how all women are portrayed in Fire. They all are not exactly immoral, but definitely lacking in scruples, dignity and caution. They cheat, they sleep with everyone around, they get pregnant when they have resources not to, they don't care if they are cheated on, they, to me, seem to think they don't deserve love, monogamy or at least respect. The men are no better, they are indiscriminately cheaters, philanderers and rapists. I'll be hard-pressed to find even one healthy, committed relationship between a man and a woman in this book, a relationship where participants are equal partners in all decisions, including those concerning procreation. Call me old-fashioned, but I believe a man should have a say in the decisions about child-bearing as well.

As a result, Fire is full to the brim with illegitimate children (literally, almost everyone in the book is a bastard or a result of a rape) and excessive amount of casual, adulterous and forced sex. It's a soap opera!

And it's boring and would have benefited from some tightening up.

I don't think I'll be reading Fire again.

karen says

fortunately, jenn awww yeeaahhhh is literally half my size. go on - look at my shoulders - i am like a mighty moose to her delicate deer:

there is no way she can make good on that threat.

so i am just going to say it: i liked this book less than i liked *graceling*.

bring it, tiny creature.

and from a critical standpoint, there is nothing wrong with this book. it has a fine story arc, good character development, a good array of both descriptive and action sequences - i would say that the pacing is a little slower than in *graceling* and can get bogged down in a bit too much detail, but that's not necessarily a deal-breaker, although unusual for YA lit.

so my gripe is woefully lowbrow. ready? i just could never get into the *character*. the idea of mind control is awesome, and this book makes important moral points about its use, but i don't want to read YA philosophy books, i wanna read about girl power and magic and murderous justice!

(although, for the teens, also good points about pregnancy - if you can't live with the results, take precautions. pleeeease stop making babies - the *teen mom* phenomenon where girls are getting knocked up just to be on teevee is gross)

but it doesn't have the kickass factor of *graceling* - this is all chilly analytical restraint and good judgment and guardedness. it is like watching someone play chess. you have to respect the skill involved, but really, i would rather be watching

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFW0Uv...>

i find her emotional responses bland - the man she loves beds every woman in his path, and she shrugs it off without jealousy. not only can i not relate to this, but i cannot respect it.

but then, vengeance runs deep in me.

and i don't need to fall in love with my characters - i am all about appreciating the antihero, but i have to be able, at least, to respect them and their path. self-sacrifice is great and all, but you're a superfine babe with the power of mind control - seriously. after a point, the mind control becomes irrelevant, right??

she needs no additional powers.

but this is all sound und fury und nonsense. for whatever reason, i just was not able to get into this book, despite several really cool scenes. part of it was trying to fit this world into the previous book: so this world has "monsters" but not "gracelings" but why?? and how do they really differ? part of it was the grotesque nature of all the male characters: grope-y king, slutty archer, sadist dad, reading the minds of a million would-be rapists. part of it was the stifling of a beautiful, powerful butterfly under this overdeveloped guilt for things not her fault. flaunt that shit - you aren't your daddy just because you are gorgeous. good on you for being a clara barton there for a while, but take down that hair, dollface. drop it like it's hot etc etc.

do we need another sassy gay friend intervention?

so - yeah - not at all painful to read, but it is no threat to my still-monogamous relationship with *Ashfall*.

now i run away, having learned lessons from goliath....

come to my blog!

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

There is this big jerk of a kid that is an animal or monster torturer in the beginning of the book. Luckily, he's only in a little bit of the book toward the end. I wanted to be a giant to step on his sorry arse!

Moving on . . .

I have mixed feelings about this book so I'm just going to go with I liked it but didn't love it. And there is nothing wrong with that.

Let me put up my spoilers sign before I forget. Sigh. . . .

So, I was thinking Archer was going to be my love interest in the book until. . .

1. He's all in Fire's business when she talks to any of the guards.
2. He's always harassing her to marry him.
3. He tells Fire he will quit sleeping around if she would just marry him.

DUDE! I WOULD DROP-KICK YOU OFF THE ROOF! And Fire too for that matter for still sleeping with him!

But, I digress.

It took me a minute to like Brigan. He was a jerk a bit at first but for good reasons. Then he started to fall in love with Fire and she with him. I was hoping there was going to be a big ole wedding but there wasn't unless I missed it while stomping on people and drop-kicking people off roofs. <--- that was a big ole run on sentence

Brigan had a sweet little girl named Hanna that I loved too.

Fire met Brigan and King Nash and other peeps when she journeyed from her home with Archer to meet everyone and do some stuff.

Fire lived in her own house and Archer and his father, Lord Brocker in the other house. They protected each other.

Anyway, all kinds of things went down and war is brewing and spies everywhere trying to kill everyone. Fire can read minds and change peoples minds or destroy them if she wants. She's part monster. <--- Heh! I'm not

even explaining all of that, you can read the book. This does make men fall at her feet with desire and rape on their minds! I mean, really? She is also attacked by other monster animals because they desire her blood. Thus, we get to read continually in the book about her damn time of the month and how they had to kill extra raptor monsters to keep her safe. I have never heard about a woman's period so much in my life!

I did like Fire though even with the few faults she had and I loved her horse, Small. He was a great horse and friend to her.

So there was a lot of people coming and going and fighting and some evil peeps killed someone that I didn't want to die even if they made me mad. There were several attempts on Fire's life.

Overall I liked the book and some of the characters. I did love Fire's guards, Musa and Mila. They were good women guards that ended up as friends too. There were a few other people I liked too.

So, onto the next book and hopefully it will be good too. I like that these are stand alone books. I liked *Graceling* better than this one, lets see what I think about *Bitterblue* =)

MY BLOG: Melissa Martin's Reading List

Daria says

So. Where do I begin?

Perhaps I should begin with my rating. One star seems harsh, truly, but goodreads describes that rating as, "Didn't like it." And that is an accurate description, for I simply didn't like the book.

Thus I'm sticking with one star.

And now for the book itself: I was hyped for the day I would actually get my hands on it and presumably storm through the whole thing in six hours, as I had done with *Graceling*. This anticipation was fueled by the raving reviews (on goodreads and elsewhere) which called it EVEN BETTER than it's companion, DIFFERENT, BETTER WRITTEN, STUNNING, BOUND TO "WOW" YOU -

Well, all I can do is wonder if others had read this book with their eyes closed.

Please, all ye who read this rant and disagree with me, don't think of me as being accusatory; it's just that, plowing my way through the book, that was one of the thoughts which amounted to my overall disbelief. Different? *Fire* is a mirror image of *Graceling*. Same plot. Same characters. Same nuances. Except, it seems, it is *Graceling* with the good sucked out of it. Katsa, in the first book, was spirited and interesting. (With her temper, she reminds me somewhat of Thirrin of the Icemark - possibly the best, strongest, and most genuine female protagonist I have come to encounter. Kudos, Mr. Hill, for everything.) But Katsa did have some sort of ridiculous internal battles along the way, which I plausibly accepted, so long as there were heads to bash and throats to slit and all that general badassery was involved. Take away the ability to kill ten men with a toothpick in under thirty seconds, and you have *Fire*. Brigan was a sort of modified version of Po, Archer was Giddon, and so on and so forth. (Leck, incidentally, was completely unnecessary. So he gave us a prologue and killed some people. Great.) It mollifies me at the amount of connections I can make between the two books, and this shows me that Cashore is limited in her ability to weave characters, because eventually they

all start reflecting one another.

I had expected for Fire, the most important persona in the book, to be a sort of Katsa, if not having immense strength in body, then in spirit.

SHE. IS. NOT. A. STRONG. LEAD.

Even if she were not a lead, she would still be a completely useless and annoying brat. She whines, she mopes. She cries. (Not that crying is a bad thing, but she cries for absolutely no purpose.) She seems to hardly do anything herself, and constantly rely on other characters to help her. She has no pride, she allows herself to be waited on by a team of armored bodyguards, and cannot survive alone - such a pity, because that was what made Katsa so admirable. Perhaps Cashore intended them to be different, simply by making Fire weak? But she is not. Where did the author intend Fire to go, whom was she trying to impact?

And Cashore had tried to impact her readers, I really think she tried. Throughout Fire's epiphanies (usually after she ends up storming out on some character or another - she does that a lot), Cashore tries to send across messages. But the thing is, a) they're so naive that it's not worth the trouble, Cashore, or b) they never get to the reader at all, because Fire is a sort of pitfall in the many heroines of literature. What was I supposed to have learned, that one shouldn't be ashamed of one's parentage? That it really can't be helped that society will see a person as someone else, no matter how different their heart and intentions are? "Be yourself" - is that what is put across here? Fire discovers that she can use her nature for good in the end, she really can! Well, jolly good for her. Fire can't get over death; she can't get over truth. By the end I was screaming, **GET UP, WOMAN. GET A GRIP. AND GO SAVE THE WORLD.** Really, I was so desperate to see her take control for once and ride out to meet the looming army with a battle standard in hand, the dawn glinting on her silver helm. I was that much saddened.

But moral lessons aside, I was extremely irritated - make it vexed, by some point - about some of the technicalities. The sex lives of all the different characters accounted for, oh, let's say, half the plot. Most of the book was spent running around discovering who slept with whom, who sired whom, and who killed their respective fathers and how. I mean, come on, the whole "I am your father," "REALLY?!" thing has gotten so old, and Cashore drops that bombshell a few times in the book. Incidentally, yes, Cashore, Fire's great secret I figured out ten chapters before you finally gave it away.

It ran like a great big midday TV soap opera. There was too much sleeping around, too much desire to sleep around, and inability to stop oneself from sleeping around. Also in the realm of irritating lay Fire and her seriously annoying menstrual necessities, the whole impregnation and contraception aspect, and too much talk of having children, not having children, and being pregnant. Countless times I had smacked the book against my forehead, howling **WHY IS THIS NECESSARY TO THE PROGRESSION OF THE PLOT?**

Beneath all these different feels lurks a sort of hideous impression about what Cashore may have implied in this book. She asks, somewhere towards the middle, "What is the point of a woman monster?" and it seems to me she answers it. If she truly believes something like that, then I should like to take the book itself and smack someone with it, preferably her. Of course, I could be completely wrong, so I'll keep this suspicion to myself. But it seemed to me as though the book, which was supposed to be feminist, went way, way, way in the other direction.

The writing, by the way, was not that good. Not much description, and not much unique brilliance. It does not shine. An exception I made for the fiery persona in *Graceling*, but here it only underlines the *Fire's* flaws.

Signed off, I'll now take my leave.

Lily C says

Watch my review here:

<https://youtu.be/RuBRXzb7Cgo>
