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Michelle Sagara

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Kaylin returned from the West March in one piece. Now that piece is fraying. She's not at home in the Imperial Palace—and she never intends to be. All she wants is normal garden-variety criminals and a place of her own. Of course, normal in her new life involves a dragon as a roommate, but she can handle that.

She can't as easily handle the new residents to the city she polices, because one of them is Nightshade's younger brother. On a night when she should be talking to landlords in perfectly normal buildings, she's called to the fief—by Teela. A small family disagreement has become a large, complicated problem: Castle Nightshade's latent magic is waking.

And it's not the only thing.

Cast in Flame Details

Date : Published August 1st 2014 by Harlequin Luna (first published May 16th 2014)

ISBN :

Author : Michelle Sagara

Format : Audiobook 400 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Magic, Dragons, Urban Fantasy, Fiction

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From Reader Review Cast in Flame for online ebook

Valine says

A lot less Nightshade than other books which I liked, but not enough Severn. I do like learning new words and this book had me press the lookup feature about 10 times. The worst part was that since it has been a year since I read the last book, I forgot so many of the minor characters names and the role they played since Sagara doesn't really summarize their past. I'm not saying I want half the book be summary, since this is vol 10 after all, but an index would be nice (especially since it can be a few books that a character was last mentioned). I would like a book that centers around the wolves to help see into that world and thus in turn doing crazy relationship building between Kaylin and Severn.

Nichole says

I feel like I need to write the same review of this book as I did the last book. Did I enjoy it? Yes. Was any particular plot arc addressed? Not really. Did Kaylin resolve some weird magic problem through her marks, intuition, and good intentions? Yes. Did any of the relationships in the book progress? No. Where is this series going? What's the point? I've lost it.

Maryhannah says

Everything that intrigued me about this series has stagnated. You could copy-paste a plot summary from any of the last five books in the series, change the monster of the week, and the satire would be undetectable. Kaylin will never choose a guy, Kaylin will always solve the problem in long passages explaining over and over her stunning ignorance of her own powers, and Kaylin will never make a serious effort to figure out what the heck is going on with herself. She will, however, wait passively for the next crisis to reveal some other tiny piece of the lore of her world. I read every new book in the series in the forlorn hope that something will change, but the author has found a formula that works. More power to her and all working artists, but it's getting old.

Amanda Byrne says

Originally posted at Vampire Book Club:

Private Kaylin Neya is convinced she'll go deaf if she doesn't move out of the Imperial Palace soon. Too many arguments between Diarmat, Bellusdeo, and the Emperor have left her ears ringing. She's determined to find a new apartment, but the place has to meet with the approval of the Emperor, since her roommate will be the only female dragon in existence.

It's not long before something else demands her attention, though. Something's woken in Castle Nightshade. Something deadly. Something that's tracking Kaylin simply because of the company she keeps. And if she doesn't figure out how to stop it, the entire city of Elantra could end up in ruins.

There's so much bantery goodness in *Cast in Flame*. With the arrival of Teela's friends Mandoran and Annarion, Kaylin often ends up the brunt of jokes as Teela attempts to explain mortal behaviors and mannerisms to them. Her friends are used to her familiar now, whom she's dubbed Small and Squawky, and he makes himself heard frequently, much to Kaylin's chagrin. I particularly liked Kaylin and Mandoran's exchanges in the early chapters—he's much more easy going and friendly than a lot of his peers, and his curiosity about mortals is amusing.

Home is important to Kaylin—growing up in the fief of Nightshade, home wasn't a place of safety or comfort. Since much of the story is focused on her apartment hunt, it twists into the concept of home and what it means for the various races that populate Elantra. Home for the Barrani isn't the same as it is for the Dragons, and none of them understand what home means for Kaylin. She doesn't want a place where she feels secure; she'll never have that, not as long as there are marks on her body and people wanting to use them. She wants a place that is hers, and hers alone; a place she's earned, a place where she can relax, where she can offer a bed or a floor to a friend in need. Most of the Elantra books have had some sort of lesson or deeper meaning to them, but this is the first one that resonated with me.

It's a faster paced story, too. There's a lot that happens, and it happens quickly. From her first day back on the job after returning from the West March to the final showdown in front of the High Halls, there's no lags. And that epic battle is exhausting. I got tired just reading it, and I felt every pain and ache that Kaylin did.

But for all the good this story has, there are parts I'm growing weary of. While in the last few books we've seen a definite shift in the relationship between Kaylin and Severn, in *Cast in Flame* it's almost at a standstill. It's possible it seems that way because the story unfolds over a short period of time and there's not much room to deviate from the main plot, but for this 'shipper, I was slightly annoyed. Even more annoying is the sense we're getting farther and farther away from what Lord Nightshade has planned for Kaylin and her power, especially when you consider how much emphasis it received in the first couple of books. I hope Sagara will be bringing that thread back into play soon.

Cast in Flame is an excellent addition to a great series. Characters that grow with every outing, some of the best worldbuilding I've ever read, and plenty of intrigue and action to keep you turning the pages, this is one of my favorite series, and *Flame* is a must read.

Sharon Tyler says

Cast in Flame is the tenth book in the *Chronicles of Elantra* series by Michelle Sagara. It is currently scheduled for release on July 29 2014. Kaylin knows that any day that starts with dragon arguments is going to be bad, and far too many days have started that way since she returned from the West March in one piece. She does not fit in, or feel comfortable, living in the Imperial Palace. All she wants is to get back to her normal work routine, apprehending average criminals, and a place of her own. Well, a place with a dragon as a roommate. But the newest residents of her city are having some trouble adjusting and are causing some serious problems in the fiefs. When a family argument wakes something that should have been left alone everything and everyone that Kaylin has ever cared about is at risk.

I cannot believe that *Cast in Flame* is book 10! Some series start to either all read the same or get so off track when they get past five or so books that I only read them because I have already invested so much time into the series. This is not the case here. I feel like this series is getting better with each book. While it is getting more complicated and metaphysical, the threat to life and limb and the importance of specific characters and

relationships is growing and going strong. If you have need read the previous books, do not (I repeat DO NOT) start here. You need to start at the beginning with Cast In Shadow. Go ahead, get reading. This review will still be here when you are ready for it!

Anyone that has started this series and enjoyed it needs to read Cast in Flame. The last few books have gotten better and better. The only issue is that now I have to wait to see what Kaylin has to deal with next.

Julia says

The magical aspects have very little interest to me in and of themselves, but Kaylin's relationships and quest for a home were superb.

? BookAddict ✍ La Crimson Femme says

Dragons, magic, warriors and psychopaths in a complicated world of intrigue and politics - welcome to the world of Ms. Sagara. This series is phenomenal. Ms. Sagara is hands down one of the best writers of our time. The world she creates is intricate. Every single book builds upon the previous. Her books must be read in order and usually best one right after another. If too much time goes by between reading of the books, it may be a bit hard for a reader to catch back up to speed. In Cast of Flame, Kaylin once again finds herself in the middle of trouble. Between Teela's childhood friends, a dragon queen roommate and an angry dragon king, which one will end Kaylin first?

The children who returned with Kaylin from the West March, what have they become? What is it about them which disturbs the Ancients as well as the Devourer? How are they awakening the avatar of buildings? More buildings are answering their calls and it may not be a good thing. This is because one of them is Castle Nightshade and it no longer wants to listen to Nightshade. While Kaylin is trying to help Teela's friends adjust to life in the outside world, she's also trying to find a new home. Feeling uncomfortable in the Dragon Palace, she tries to find a new place of her own. Unfortunately, Kaylin will have a roommate who requires a level of security and higher creature comforts she cannot afford. Luckily for Kaylin, there is an old house which may adjust to her needs.

Whilst this series moves very slowly with new information stingily revealed in each book, the details provided is robust and colourful. The reader learns more about the dragon queen and how she's survived in her host world. Returning back to her home world with refugees is harder than she thought. They are displaced and try to integrating into a different society than she left; many disagreements occurs. The title of this book references flame when it should really focus on negotiation. Kaylin is constantly pulled between all her different relationship connections to smooth over a misunderstanding. She spends so much time helping others, she is worn out. What is also distressing is how Kaylin handles all the troubles. She continues to run in head first without thought. She is all instinct and no planning. She also runs on fumes as she isn't rested and makes poor choices. She barely survives each new conflict.

What is frustrating about this series is the new players who are a variation of the same theme. It feels as if we have no resolution. What is the end game? Are we trying to find the God in this world and how all the creatures afterwards were created? Are we going to finally understand what the Chosen is supposed to do? Will these threads finally come together into a breathtaking tapestry, presenting a clear portrait of this

complex world? More importantly, who will Kaylin finally succumb to for a lover? Will she be owned by Nightshade - body, mind and soul?

I do wonder how much longer this series will continue. I also wish for Nightshade to become once again more forceful, possessive and showing off his "ownership" of Kaylin. Nightshade is more of a tiger with all his fangs pulled out and his claws removed. The pussycat Nightshade of this book is no match for the earlier intimidating one. The bit of fear Nightshade used to elicits from Kaylin added a lovely undercurrent of sexual tension which is now sadly missing. Still, I am thoroughly addicted to this series and Ms. Sagara's writing style. I can't wait for the next book. Recommended for high fantasy readers who enjoy high drama.

**provided by NetGalley*

Denisa says

4.5 The cliffhanger!

Monty Cupcake ? Queen of Bloodshed ? says

If there was more editing, say to take out the endless repetition and overly elaborate descriptions, this would've been 4-5 stars.

The beginning was meh, the middle was full of repetition, and the end was great. I liked the finale battle a lot and the last guest was excellent. I hope to see more of the guest. Enjoying the two new Barrani.

Susan Baratta says

I'm noticing in this series that no matter how much time we spend with Kaylin, she never really grows. It's getting tiring. I miss Nightshade in this book and Severn has gotten BLAH. The book is absolutely readable, they always are, but the characters are stagnating. Even the emperor was underwhelming and although that scene was unexpected and exciting, Kaylin just wasn't. Even the other characters think she's dumb and it seems they put up with her simply because she's The Chosen. I love the little dragon, he needs to bite Kaylin a little harder.

Mara says

3 1/2

What can I say, what can I say...nothing new I guess. I should copy my review of book 9 and be done with it... < grin>

I keep reading my reviews of the former books and I realize that nothing changes in my understanding of this series. I end up loving it *in spite of it*.

Ms Sagara's ability as a writer and a story teller can't be downplayed, because with all my nits I keep reading and liking The Chronicles of Elantra.

Nits:

same old, same old:

- terribly naive, pure YA heroine (a fact that absolutely contrast with her past)
- an incredibly convoluted slow-moving overarching plot, at times simply unbelievable, Elantra is worse than a war zone, it keeps being hit to the point of near destruction,
- characters that don't always grow up. Or at least to my eyes they do not. They may understand better, but they still lack any real emotional growth.

I've read many other series, but I can't really remember if any of them was so extreme. In every single book there's the Armageddon. Not a threat to the heroine or her life, but a real destruction of the entire world. And with a time span of literary weeks among the stories it's almost unacceptable.

Moreover, there are moments when I wonder if the author has decided on a final point or she's going on on a "daily" basis.

The world-building is always stunning, even if the magic isn't always so clear (but then it's not to the heroine too). I love the philosophy sneaked into the books, but I admit that after 10 books I could do without it. There are moments when I feel it's completely outputting and I'm tempted to skip. (Often it's displayed at a crucial point for the story, slowing it terribly without any reason.)

So, really, I'm not sure what to say. If you like the previous 9 books, you'll like it too. But prepare for the same frustrations.

Hilary says

Kaylin's tired of living in the Palace and the humiliation of stared at in the Halls. She wants a place of her own again. She wants a home. House-hunting isn't easy with the only female Dragon though, and the two lost Barrani she brought back aren't exactly giving her the time she needs. In fact, they're making life downright complicated, as if her relationships with Teela, Evantor, Tara and Nightshade weren't tricky enough.

For the first time we see something like real sibling relationships within the Barrani, with disappointment, possessiveness and the occasional desire to strangle one another, and we see the races come together in defense. Kaylin's role as Chosen puts her in the center, of course, and if she makes the wrong choice all could be lost, starting with her friends, and her very human confusion along with her lack of understanding combine to give her a different insight, but she's still betting with everyone's lives.

I always eagerly await the next Elantran installment, each time fearing it will be the last, and have never been disappointed in the result. This is no exception.

Disclaimer: I received a free copy from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Sabrina says

The ending is great. No question. I won't quibble over that. However, the repetition is really starting to irritate, irk, bother, grate, offend. Sentient buildings, playing with the word stickers on her skin, wandering through alternate realities, all culminating with a fight against some bad guy, ad nauseum. I don't want to be done with this series, but if something doesn't change I don't think I can keep going, which is a shame as I really love this author.

Marlene says

This joint review was originally published at The Book Pushers

Marlene: I love this series. When I finally got around to reading the first book, *Cast in Shadow*, I couldn't figure out what I'd been waiting for. I glommed through the rest of the series in less than a month. Of course, that means that now I have to wait a year for each new book.

Cast in Flame was definitely worth the wait.

E: I seriously LOVE this series. Like Marlene I didn't pick this one up right away but since I found it I haven't looked back. I have reviewed a few of the previous books here on The Bookpushers starting with *Cast in Ruin* and continuing with each succeeding installment. I have been captivated by all of them. I also find the year wait torturous but I also know that *Sagara* will provide me with a lovely long read that I can sink into and know I will enjoy rereading.

Marlene: When I reviewed the previous book in the series, *Cast in Sorrow*, on Reading Reality last year, I said that you could take the girl out of the city, but you couldn't take the city out of the girl. Kaylin is so much a creature of the city of Elantra, that I felt that her story lost focus when too much of the action took place way out of her natural setting.

The story is told from Kaylin's first person perspective, so when she is out of her depth, we are too.

Cast in Flame brings the action back to Kaylin's home turf, so even though the challenges that face Kaylin are a direct result of the mess she brings back home from *Cast in Peril*/*Cast in Sorrow*, it is great to have her back where she belongs.

E: I agree with Marlene that Kaylin is a complete city girl. She is at home in the roughest toughest most dangerous parts but when she has to deal with "nature" her life becomes even more complicated. While I enjoyed the trip waaay out west and learning some of what made Teela who she was I was glad to be back in the city so I could see the rest of the crew I have come to enjoy. Unfortunately while Kaylin was dealing with troubles in the Western March things hadn't exactly settled down inside the city. Granted they didn't have any "Kaylin-type" issues but the ripple effects of her previous actions are still becoming known. And what she brought back with her is also starting to take effect.

Marlene: This series probably makes no sense whatsoever if you attempt to start it with *Cast in Flame*. So start with either *Cast in Moonlight* or *Cast in Shadow* to get on board. If you like fantasy or urban fantasy, you'll be glad you did.

E: As Marlene said this isn't a series that you can pick up with the most recent release and enjoy. You really need to start at the beginning so, as a subtle hint if you are curious and haven't started it yet check out our interview with Michelle Sagara on our other post today. And you just might have the opportunity to see what we are raving about for yourself.

Marlene: Kaylin has roommate problems, and house-hunting problems, and pride problems in this story. All she wants is a place that she can call her own. For it to actually be her own, it has to be someplace she can afford on her Hawk's salary. Unfortunately, her dragon roommate complicates matters. Not because Bellusdeo needs anything fancy, but because she is the one and only female dragon in Elantra. The Emperor wants her protected at all costs, even if one of those costs is imprisoning her. Kaylin is caught in the crossfire, and all she wants is to escape the palace.

The way the house-hunting worked, it reminded me all too much of a parent trying to restrict a child's choices, even though the whole point of moving out is breaking free. Not that Kaylin's choices are constrained (except by her finances), but Bellusdeo is trapped and hates every minute of it. And Kaylin hates that Bellusdeo is trapped, and vice versa. There's plenty of guilt to go around.

E: All Kaylin wanted was a place to call her own to replace the one destroyed by an Arcane bomb, a chance to walk her usual beat with Severn, to help the midwives, and to lose her money betting on the usual sporting events. Instead, she discovered that house hunting with a dragon roommate and a dragon familiar was a lot harder than finding her first place. I really enjoyed her adventures in searching for a new place because I have moved so many times in the past it was like Sagara encapsulated all of my previous frustrations and triumphs in one move. And the place she ended up finding was very very fascinating. The more this series unfolds the more I discover about precisely why Elantra is so unusual and why the city holds both the Barrani and Dragon Courts instead of any other place that contain a power reservoir.

Marlene: The place Kaylin ends up reminds of the sentient houses in Robin D. Owens Celta series. Which is awesome.

E: I thought after three books focusing mainly on the Barrani, Sagara had shown all there was but gladly I was mistaken. It was such a contrast to see Nightshade's younger brother compared to all of the other Barrani. He was a mixture of idealized innocence, power, stubbornness, and explained why the Barrani young are usually kept out of site and struggle to survive. I also loved seeing evidence of the emotional bond between them because in a way it explained some of Nightshade's actions and his attempts at placing Kaylin in certain situations. However, their bond and the expectation that each had remained unchanged combined with what I can only call teen hormonal angst ended up making things rather difficult for the entire city of Elantra including the Fiefs and has set things up for Kaylin's next adventure. **rubs hands** I can't wait.

Marlene: The Barrani that Kaylin brought back from the West March in Cast in Sorrow are just not like Teela and Nightshade. They have been living in a kind of limbo for 1,000 years, and are frozen in their youth. While they haven't been matured by their experience, they have changed in ways that no one expects.

The mess that they unintentionally create powers the action in Cast in Flame and sets up the next book quite nicely. Except that I want it NOW.

E: In addition to learning more about the Barrani, the Dragons were front and center. Not just Kaylin's roommate or her usual crew of instructors but one who has previously remained a threatening figurehead. I really enjoyed seeing more than a disembodied voice yelling and I loved how Sagara got around the need for proper etiquette. I also really enjoyed seeing Kaylin in the midst of her element trying to work with everyone

to fix a problem without destroying or blaming those who didn't know the results of their actions. In other words Kaylin was still trying to protect those she viewed as childlike or innocent regardless of their age and power.

Marlene: Kaylin does protect everyone she thinks needs it, whether they are technically older and more powerful than she is or not. Mostly they are more powerful, but because of that power have emotional needs that they can't afford to get addressed. The way that Kaylin gathers people around her reminds me of something that Delenn says about humans in Babylon 5. We humans are the only species that takes disparate groups and makes a community. That's what Kaylin seems to do.

E: As always Sagara delivered with a climatic fight scene that built along with the overall tension. On several occasions I wondered if Kaylin and her allies would win along with the price they would pay for fighting. It was good to see the disparate species coming together with their various skills as they all tried to save Elantra. Even with all the danger I felt the central theme, which I have noticed in more than one installment, is a desire for a home. To find, make, and keep that home against all others.

Marlene: The battle scene was awesome. I kept getting interrupted as I was reading it, and I got so annoyed!

It's not just that everyone participates in the battle, but that long-standing enemies set aside their differences to save their home. Which is Elantra and not their individual little slice of it. Also the aftermath was amazing. Not just that the temporary alliances might hold, but the way that Kaylin was able to deliver some home truths to some very scary individuals. But then, that's Kaylin all over.

E: While thinking about my impressions of Cast in Flame set in the context of the greater series I came to another conclusion. The more I read this series the more I realize that while Elantra is the Emperor's hoard, the people, regardless of how they come to Kaylin's attention are really her hoard and she seems to be the glue that holds the world together. I am curious to see if I stick by this theory or if it changes as Sagara continues to expand and grow her creation. I consider Cast in Flame another great addition to the Chronicles of Elantra series. It continues to move events forward while giving me tantalizing hints about character motivation, future abilities, potential struggles, and intrigue. Like always I can't wait for next summer.

I give Cast in Flame an A-

Marlene: Kaylin is definitely the glue that ties together people who would otherwise never have a thing to do with one another. Also, because of her background, her ability to be cowed into submission by anyone more powerful than she is, is definitely, and sometimes amusingly, lacking. She's already been as low as it is possible to get in Elantra, a lot of things don't scare her that should. It's funny that so many powerful people try to adopt her, and it seems more like she adopts them, no matter who they might be. She makes people see the world differently, and through her eyes. She still believes in the best in people, and makes them believe it too.

The next book is perfectly set up, and I'm very unhappy that I'll have to wait another year to see if Kaylin can rescue everything that needs rescuing without destroying the city any further.

She also curses marvelously well. May your claws get caught in your blankets. Indeed!

I give Cast in Flame an A.

Stacey Brutger says

DESCRIPTION:

3.5 Stars

Any day that starts with dragon arguments is going to be bad.

Kaylin returned from the West March in one piece. Now that piece is fraying. She's not at home in the Imperial Palace—and she never intends to be. All she wants is normal garden-variety criminals and a place of her own. Of course, normal in her new life involves a dragon as a roommate, but she can handle that.

She can't as easily handle the new residents to the city she polices, because one of them is Nightshade's younger brother. On a night when she should be talking to landlords in perfectly normal buildings, she's called to the fief—by Teela. A small family disagreement has become a large, complicated problem: Castle Nightshade's latent magic is waking.

And it's not the only thing.

REVIEW:

I find myself struggling to write this review. There's just too much detail to capture to do it justice. In this book, Kaylin continues to work as a Hawk and take magic lessons at night...that is when she's not getting into trouble. The barrani she recused from West March have been changed by its wild magic. As they attempt to assimilate to the new world, chaos follows in their wake. Their presence awakens a dormant magic that's both deadly and dangerous. Kaylin and her friends race against time to solve the mystery, but the ancient evil won't be stopped without a fight.

I loved learning more about this world, it's unique and exciting, and while this book introduced some new elements, the normal freshness seemed missing. There wasn't really a mystery or murder to solve until late in the book. And while dragons take flight and join the battle, parts of the story were overtaken by too much technical details and repetition. It destroyed the flow and dragged out what should've been great action scenes. Unfortunately, I had the same problem with the last book. A good fifty pages or more could've been cut without missing anything and created a much stronger book.

I adore all the characters, especially Kaylin and Severn, but I'm a romantic at heart and anxiously wait for them to take their relationship to the next level. And become disappointed all over again when nothing happens. Overall, I enjoyed the amazing storytelling and fascinating world. Despite the problems, I'm emotionally invested in these characters, so while I will read the next book, I don't see myself pre-ordering them anymore.

Darkphoenix says

I am very fond of the Chronicles of Elantra and now, nine books down, I feel more invested than ever in its characters (yes, even some of the more unpleasant ones) whenever I begin a new book in an ongoing series, I am overcome with dread that it will disappoint and it never ceases to amaze me when that doesn't happen.

This series (and perhaps Sagara's writing) are not for everyone, for one, her sentences and style of writing, can seem unusual and abrupt. I know that when I started it, it took me some time to acclimatise to her style, but having done that, I found her books very enjoyable and vastly entertaining. For a series with a wide cast of characters, they all seem very well established and realised with very distinct personalities. Even among the Barrani (possibly the most uniform race of people, both in terms of physical appearance as well as superficial behaviour) Sagara manages to infuse a distinct personality in the various characters. The pace, as with the previous book, remains uneven, but I think that that's intentional on her part. *Cast in Flame* starts slowly, at an almost sluggish pace and then suddenly, as it closes in on the climax, the pace gets almost frenzied. It is chaotic and very busy; with something happening almost all the time, it is exhausting. I felt that more keenly with this particular book than the rest (although that may simply be because I haven't re-read them in a very long time.) I sometimes have to revisit the previous books to reacquaint myself with the characters and the setting, but Sagara's characters and world are so well developed that they remain firmly etched in my mind.

The events that occur in *Cast in Flame* are a direct consequence of those that occurred in *Cast in Sorrow*. All is not fine with the newly returned Barrani (the Lost Ones) and they are not what they seem to be. They appear Barrani and indeed consider themselves to be Barrani, but that's not what they are. Annarion and Mandoran are chief among the Lost ones that are at the centre of most of the trouble. Said trouble starts in the Keeper's Garden, spreads to the fief of Nightshade and finally ends in a terrifying showdown that threatens the entire city.

As far as main protagonists go, Kaylin is among my favourites. She has a sense of humour, she is self-deprecating and has a barely developed sense of survival. What I like most about her, is that she's not afraid to speak her mind (often at the expense of her safety) She doesn't back down from a difficult task and holds life very precious. She has a keen sense of justice and I am glad to say, even nine books down, that hasn't changed. It is difficult to develop a character over a period of time, while at the same time, retaining the core of that character. Sagara manages this very well. Kaylin continues to grow into her powers while at the same time, staying true to herself and her own personal ideals. Of course, being stubborn also helps.

Teela had a lot of screen time this time around, much like the two previous books, and she remains one of the my favourite characters. It is clear that she cares very deeply about Kaylin and that comes across, clear as sunlight, in their exchanges. There is almost a sense of indulgence with which Teela treats Kaylin (though, even that isn't completely accurate) She is strong but doesn't charge into dangerous situations (as so many female characters tend to do) and when she does, she can take care of herself, more often better than most the male characters. Yet, she too has a sense of humour and her interactions with Kaylin, remain as entertaining as ever.

Bellusdeo, the new dragon and the only female dragon, also spent most of the book with Kaylin. Bellusdeo is an interesting character, she too cares about Kaylin, I might go so far as to say, that she considers Kaylin to be her friend (in as much as an ancient Dragon is able to) She also treats her with respect and this comes

across when she appeals to the Dargon Court on Kaylin's behalf so that things might be easier for her. Yet, her claustrophobia also comes across in her interactions with both Kaylin and other characters. She is being stifled by the life in the Dragon Court. She is viewed less as an individual, and more for what she can do for the Dragon race; produce babies (or eggs) Her frustration is palpable and there is a sense that if something doesn't give soon, she might take some drastic action.

Of the others, Severn was around as well, though not as much as in some previous books, he remains very much a secondary character but someone Kaylin can depend on unconditionally. He remains her sole link to her life in the fiefs and understands her better than Kaylin herself. Their shared life in the fiefs, also makes their bond stronger.

It was nice to see Tara and Tiamaris as well as Sanabalis and the Arkon (among the Dragons) and the Consort, the High Lord (among the Barrani.) Of course, there were other Barrani around as well, like Evarrim and Ynpharion, the former was as odious as ever while the latter was little more sympathetic this time.

Then there is Nightshade; who is still being his mysterious self. His motives are entirely his own and he remains one of the more enigmatic characters. He is untrustworthy, yet strangely enough, quite likeable. I look forward to seeing more of him in the next book.

Helen is the newest character we are introduced to in *Cast in Flame*, and she is a building, similar and dissimilar to Tara. Helen is not a Tower but like Tara, she too was built/created by the Ancients. One of the most unique things about this series, is its view of buildings, some of the ancient ones (Towers like Tara and the Hallionnes) are sentient and these too have very distinct personalities and have very human needs (companionship, to be needed, etc.) Helen, like Tara, is very much a character, and an interesting one at that.

As for Kalyin's familiar, well she could finally speak with him, the downside is that she can only do it when he turns into a huge translucent dragon.

And after eight books, we finally meet the Emperor, or rather, Kaylin meets him. He is one of the primary reasons behind Bellusdeo's unhappiness, he and Diarmat. Bellusdeo is instrumental in the outcome in the fight for the city and far from lauding her bravery, he criticises her for putting herself in danger, which does not make her very happy. The Emperor finally meets Kaylin, at the behest of the Arkon so that Kaylin might drum some sense into his head with her customary lack of tact or self-preservation. And it is particularly pleasing to read their interaction, that Kaylin is not afraid to speak her mind (ok, she is, but she does it anyway) and stands up to him and tries to make him see sense. She does have some success and manages to at least partially convince the Emperor, that his current approach with Bellusdeo is not going to work in his favour. It was also a rare moment of vulnerability on his part to admit that (notwithstanding the colour of his eyes)

Cast in Flame was a solid entertainer with its usual cast of interesting and engaging characters. If you're willing to be a little patient, this will be a very interesting and fun read.

David says

The latest in the *Chronicles of Elantra* picks up with Kaylin looking for a new place to live, and finding that the search is complicated due to roommate issues. As with most books in this series, a few innocent-seeming

events turn into catastrophic chaos.

No new significant characters are introduced in this book, but we do get to see further development of characters introduced in the last book.

This book is solid, but it does bring up an issue that I've had with the series as a whole - Kaylin ends up dashing from one disaster to the next at a speed that is unrealistically sustained. The entire in-world duration of the series to this point is measured in months, and most of the books involve a world-threatening event with Kaylin in the middle.

In the end, I look forward to reading the next installment in this series, but I don't find myself desperately craving it. Which is probably a good thing, since it will be another year, and I get tired of reading series that leave me on the edge for multiple years at a time.

Maria Dimitrova says

After the little trip to the West March that Kaylin took in the last couple of books, things are getting back to normal. That is Kaylin is back in Elantra and she's neck deep in yet another crisis. She also has to deal with living in the palace and since that is getting on her nerves, she's looking for a new place to live. However, because of her roommate there's a problem with finding a landlord willing to deal with the Emperor's ridiculous demands. So basically it's a lost cause. Until the Keeper recommends a place. It's ideal because it's very similar to Taura and can pass the imperial scrutiny.

Of course disaster strikes just when things start to look up. I felt bad for Onorion and Mandoran. They've had it tough and now it seems that their very presence puts everyone they care about at risk. At least now Kaylin has competition for the most clueless person in Elantra. Though in the Barrani's defense, they'll probably overcome it eventually. Something I'm not sure Kaylin is even capable of. Still with those two around things will never get boring.

At the end of the book we finally got to meet (view spoiler) I expected someone both scarier and more demanding. Instead we got a typical male – totally clueless about the only female of his kind left. I wanted to bang my head hard on any available surface while he was talking. Let me tell you, his chances of getting laid are slim to none with the way he's thinking and proceeding. And I know that he wants to save his kind but dude you have the wrong attitude. And if he doesn't get a clue soon dragon kind will eventually go extinct. I can't wait to see what Kaylin will teach him!

Gwen says

Sigh - don't you just love a story that just resonates with your soul and you feel as if you have a real bond with the characters there. You can just go back again and again to immerse yourself in their world and just how devastated you feel when it is finished and the NEXT BOOK IS NOT AVAILABLE YET!!!!!!

Well Michelle has done it again for me I just loved the book, the new characters who have come in to add colour, with some of our old favorites moving into the background (I am sure to be seen again)but it does add a freshness to the story.

Please go and buy the book if you haven't yet and as usual it helps to have read the others.

Julie says

I received an e-ARC from NetGalley for Cast in Flame.

Approximately 6-20 hours, depending on time of day, after reading a new Sagara book you are inevitably pissed off you have to wait another twelve months for the next installment. Huge thanks that it's only twelve months, by the way. Seemingly rare these days with author's switching to every two years or gods-know-when.

Kaylin's journey continues with an exceptionally mundane premise for a fantasy book – apartment hunting. Of course, this turns out to be a minor element, but essentially that is driving plot for the characters. It's not a very exciting apartment hunt (as a concept) and there is a lot of focus on newer characters, but what the book is really about is the continuing problem-solving and magical journey of the protagonist. Kaylin has further slipped into an accepting role of her power and gained a confidence in her abilities. She runs towards the fights because she knows she can do something, and she doesn't let the doubt of others weigh her down. There are heaps of magical skirmishes and set-ups for what is to come. Something big is eventually coming, you just know it.

I thought the meeting with the emperor at the ending was a letdown, but I'm hoping because she didn't meet him as 'the emperor' that we'll still have something more fraught to come. There have been nine books of dire warnings of what would happen when she met him; there better be a better payback. On the other hand what I found really impressive were all the little elements from prior books that were re-introduced and expanded in this book. I found throw away comments or questions for the first three books became larger elements in this story. Sagara is really on the ball with her writing and not leaving anything dangling or superfluous! I think she's also started to introduced ways to limit the ever expanding cast of characters and (hopefully) get back some focus on the 'mains' (ie Severn... and just where IS the hawklord these days?). Fantastic world building, character development and developing mythology – IMO the best fantasy series on the market. I recommend you buy 2 copies - one to read now and one to read when you have worn the first one out.
