



The Golden Dynasty

Kristen Ashley

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Circe Quinn goes to sleep at home and wakes up in a corral filled with women wearing sacrificial virgin attire - and she is one of them. She soon finds out that she's not having a wild dream, she's living a frightening nightmare where she's been transported to a barren land populated by a primitive people and in short order, she's installed very unwillingly on her white throne of horns as their Queen.

Dax Lahn is the king of Suh Tunak, The Horde of the nation of Korwahk and with one look at Circe, he knows she will be his bride and together they will start The Golden Dynasty of legend.

Circe and Lahn are separated by language, culture and the small fact she's from a parallel universe and has no idea how she got there or how to get home. But facing challenge after challenge, Circe finds her footing as Queen of the brutal Korwahk Horde and wife to its King, then she makes friends then she finds herself falling in love with this primitive land, its people and especially their savage leader.

The Golden Dynasty Details

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Author : Kristen Ashley

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From Reader Review The Golden Dynasty for online ebook

Rachel Reads Ravenously says

Reread #4848548469 on 4/21/18

LOVE THIS BOOK

So when I discovered one of my all time favorite books was released in paperback for the first time, I bought that paperback right away! I meant to skim my favorite parts, but ended up completely rereading the entire book. And it was just as good if not better the second time around.

I am writing this review on a different edition of the book, so I think 2 reviews will show up and for that I am sorry if it bothers anyone. But since Goodreads doesn't have a reread option this was my only choice.

Anyways this is one of those epic romances that completely tears you apart on the inside and then puts you back together again. It's unconventional and yet it's beautiful and quite possibly the best book this author has ever written. If you haven't read it yet, you need to.

Kristen says

December 29, 2013 Update

I decide to give this book another try and I'm so glad I did. Even though I still struggled with the rape scene at the beginning of the story, I believe this to be Kristen Ashley's best work. It's not my favorite but it's brilliantly and superbly written. I'm so glad I gave it another chance.

April 12, 2012

DNF

I did not finish this book due to personal reasons. Because there is no disclaimer at the beginning of the book, I feel the need to let potential readers know about some of the content within the story. If you are sensitive to rape and/or repeated scenes of forced seduction, which, in my opinion, is a glorified term for rape. You might want to read this book with caution.

April 18, 2012 Update: I am aware that certain readers have a profound dislike for Kristen Ashley and her work. I sincerely hope that my comments about this particular book will not be used to exploit their cause. While everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion about a particular author and/or book, I would be distressed if my comments about this particular book were used to hurt an author whom I love and for whose storytelling I have profound respect and admiration

Lisa says

Still trying to take it all in....Holy crapola!

takes a deep breath

takes another really deep breath

Okay!

I am at an utter loss how to express in writing what I think about *The Golden Dynasty* by Kristen Ashley, the second book in her Fantasyland series. This book simply knocked me off my ass and once again I will repeat: **KRISTEN ASHLEY IS A FREAKIN AMAZING AUTHOR !**

Devastatingly beautiful! Those are the two words that come to my mind when I contemplate what I have just finished reading. Honestly, this book was not an easy one to get through. Kristen Ashley has not written a book which is for the weak, or more appropriately, those that are politically correct. She has written about a primitive and savage land with what we would consider a barbaric culture. *The Golden Dynasty* contains scenes of violence against women, rape, brutality, and abuse. There is a lot that was wrong with this story; however, Kristen Ashley is simply **GENIUS** in how she tells this tale and what she created is something magical.

The heroine of *The Golden Dynasty* is Circe. She goes to bed one night in her home in Seattle, U.S.A. and inexplicably wakes up in this barbaric world corralled with a bunch of other women who are preparing for the wife hunt. ***WTH.... a wife hunt?????*** Yes, a wife hunt. It is what it sounds like. This wife hunt is carried out every couple of years by the Korwahk Horde and as per tradition, the barbaric warriors are offered the opportunity to hunt a wife, claim them (rape them) and take them into their home. Needless to say, this is where I began getting uncomfortable with the story. Dax Lahn, the king of this barbaric nation, is a hard man who lives in a world where he can not have any beauty, love or passion as he must lead his warriors and ensure the survival of his Korwahk nation. He decides to participate in this years wife hunt as he sees Circe who catches his eye because she is blonde and fair skinned, someone who is vastly different than his people who are darker skinned. Essentially, King Lahn captures our heroine and "claims" her as his wife. In other words, after the capture, the marriage is consummated immediately despite the protests of the women (in this case, Circe). These events are just the tip of the iceberg and what Circe encounters is the fact that she is now in this parallel world where she does not speak the language, finds the culture scary and savage and she is married to the king.

"Lahn told me that when he claimed me, even in the moonlight, he saw my spirit shining in my eyes and it was the most beautiful thing he'd ever seen. To me, he was raping me. To him, he was receiving a gift he'd treasure always. This is a contradiction that it is difficult to come to terms with and although it does not heal the pain we felt, a memory seared into our brains, the terror we experienced, I cannot say it does not provide just enough balm to allow me to live with it."

I really had to come to grips with the fact that I was reading about a different culture – one that was extremely primitive and savage. If you are unable to do this as a reader I can assure you that this Kristen Ashley book will not sit well with you. Circe endures a tremendous amount of hardship at the hands of the king and his people. **HOWEVER**, despite this she battles back with **LOVE**. She falls in love with the savage land, the barbaric people and their King Lahn. *The Golden Dynasty*, for me, is a book about the capacity to love and the strength of forgiveness. Both Circe and Lahn commit a lot of wrongs against each other but they overcome against all odds and what blossoms is a passion and beauty like no other.

"Words make marks deeper than fists; they last longer and sometimes never go away."

This is truly one of the most romantic books I have ever read despite all the cringe worthy moments. Lahn and Circe not only overcome culture and language barriers, but also moral differences. They learn to accept one another and out of this acceptance comes a love that is simply beautiful and strong. The Warrior King and his Golden Tigress Queen fought for their love, they ached and bled for it and they achieved their HEA.

The following quote comes from a conversation that Circe has with another warrior whose wife is having a hard time adjusting. It sums up for me her struggle and what her and Lahn overcome.

"Your king did not break through with me until his touch stopped taking and started giving and until, in our cham, he treated me with kindness. He is the mightiest of Suh Tunak, recognized the battle he had on his hands, analyzed it, created his strategy and then he went about winning that battle using any means necessary. And, Zahnin," I edged closer and for the sake of this man who pledged to guard me even if it meant giving his life, who backed me against Dortak and who clearly wanted his wife to settle in her new life with him in his cham, I admitted to him at the same time I admitted to myself, "my Lahn won that battle. I now lay awake at night waiting for him to return. When he does not, I fall asleep looking forward to the morning when he will wake me with his hands. He is my king, he is my warrior, he is my husband and i am proud to say above all...he is mine."

The Golden Dynasty is full of brutal violence and savage behaviour but it is also full of beauty. Kristen Ashley truly has written a masterpiece.

I am usually not one who posts pictures of what I think characters look like. However, these following pictures of characters from *The Game of Thrones* truly epitomize what I think Circe and her Lahn look like so I am posting pictures (even though the girl looks a little young to be Circe). :)

Lana ✶Dirty Girl Romance✶ says

Re-read (for probably the 5th time) 3.25.14

6+++ STARS

I gave up my world for you, Lahn. I sat at your side through things people in my world would find loathsome and I did it with my head held high. I even felt pride that I could endure, that I could be a good queen to you. I didn't know how to be a queen but every day I walked amongst your people giving them my time and my ear and my attention, hoping that was what I was supposed to do. Everything I did in this fucking place, even before I fell in love with you, was for...fucking...you."

I don't care how many times I re-read this book. Every time I read it, it's not just as good, it's better. This is my go to KA book for whenever I'm in a slump. No review, no words, nothing will ever do this book justice. It's amazing, incredible, EPIC, out of this world GREAT. If you have read it, you know exactly what I mean. And if you haven't I really don't know what you're waiting for. Dax Khan is the alpha to beat all alphas. I'm not even kidding. Not slightly exaggerating. He's just THAT good.

I could sit here and regurgitate the synopsis or plot for you, but really that would just kill the experience that is this book. And trust me, this is one of those books that needs to be **experienced**

Having said that, this book might not be for everyone. There are moments in here that were very tough to stomach; violence, rape, forced seduction. You have to take into perspective that this is written in a land that is MUCH different, it's primitive, it's savage, brutal, and unlike anything you can imagine. You have to be prepared to go out of your comfort zone to truly enjoy this book. This is just one of those KA books that will wring a multitude of emotions from you. There are 3 scenes here that never fail to hit me right in the feels.

Ms. Ashley's writing is really what makes this story incredible. She is able to paint a picture for the reader through her writing, that you experience everything along with the characters.

Circe is transported to a land much different from her own, and straight into a wife hunt. She is forced to get used to their traditions, their ways and their language. The way that the language barrier is written is pure genius, because the reader gets to experience learning it along with Circe. It's just pure utter brilliance.

I'm a fan of The Game of Thrones show, and I love that KA was inspired by Drogo and Daenerys to write Lahn and Circe. Read only if you've seen the first season of the show (view spoiler)

Beautiful! Incredible! Fantastical 6+ star read!

Stacey is Sassy says

Re-read April 18, 2017 June 20, 2018

I don't think it could EVER be a bad experience...

It's my yearly visit and I loved it AGAIN. I will be back.

So, Goodreads is telling me that I'm re-reading The Golden Dynasty for the 21st time. Well, that might be a slight exaggeration...but it might also be pretty bloody accurate. I LOVE THIS STORY!!

I was having a think on why I love re-reading, or in a lot of cases listening to an audio for a re-read, so much. I think re-reading is like being a stunt person. You know the layout, study the highs and lows and know

when the scary parts are coming up. You can brace all you like, but you will still feel the impact. Sometimes those impacts will leave marks and other times you are so sure you're going to get hurt, you skirt around it at the last moment.

Reading, or in my case, re-reading for the 21st time (still a little shocked at that), The Golden Dynasty is exactly like that. I know when all of the bad bits are coming up and I prepare for the impact as much as I can, but still, manage to come away bruised and battered.

There are a couple of scenes that REALLY affect me. I try to make sure that I'm in the right place at the right time when the impact happens but I'm not always successful. There is this one scene at the beginning of the book that I HAVE to be at home for. I need to give my full attention and make sure nothing can distract me or take away my attention from it. Today, I was on the train when King Butt-Head (Balder) visits Lahn and Circe. Now King Butt-Head's visit isn't really the problem but Lahn's reaction to the visit had left me a little teary. Even after 21 reads I STILL CRY...EVERY...BLOODY...TIME!!! Obviously, I got my timing WRONG...really, really wrong.

This will not be the last time that I bring out The Golden Dynasty to cheer me up. For me, this is a book that will always take me to my happy place. An epic read that takes you from the lowest lows to the highest highs. I can brace all I like, prepare all I want, but the impacts will still move me, mark me and stay with me forever.

Another review - (view spoiler)

The below review is my first review of reading the book.

This is not an Epic review, this is just a tribute...

This review is a little spoilery so proceed with caution.

I have an incurable condition called OCKAD aka Obsessive Compulsive Kristen Ashley Disorder. It's self-diagnosed, but I'm pretty sure I've got it. How I diagnosed my condition was by studying my feelings while reading Kristen Ashley books. I recognised an overwhelming desire to re-read every book Kristen Ashley has written over and over again. This is not a one off situation either. It happens EVERY TIME. How do I manage my condition...with a lot of perseverance and a one-click management program of buying more and more books to distract me from KA. Sometimes it works other times it's a losing battle. I'm okay living with this condition on the proviso that Kristen Ashley keeps feeding my addiction with - alpha male, sexy, macho man, bossy heroes.

How to write a review for an epic tale like *The Golden Dynasty*? I have no bloody idea how to do it justice. This book brings out the most intense feelings in me about subjects that I would normally abhor. On the surface it's about a bunch of blokes who seem to care only about their own needs and which woman or slave will serve it best. These guys are into fighting, raiding, drinking, partying and having sex. To find their wives and partners they make it a game... The Wife Hunt. Let's find the prettiest chicks in the world, dress 'em up and tell them to run for their lives. The men then chase them down, fight off other contenders, which could end in their death, snap a chain around their neck and "claim" them. Sounds great doesn't it? No?

Well, the first part of this story is a little hard to take, I'll grant you that. The fact that the "claiming" doesn't always get explained to the women makes it so much better...NOT! Once their "claimed", the blokes then take them back to their cham (tent) and do a little more "claiming". Some of these lucky ladies knew beforehand what was going to happen, but others don't and have to deal with foreign words, actions and living arrangements.

So, initially you start this book thinking – How on earth am I going to fall for a hero who "claims" (if you haven't cottoned on yet, I mean rape) his heroine and then keeps doing it over and over again? Well after awhile, his "claimings" takes a turn and becomes a little more, shall we say pleasant. The story comes to life as we get to know the characters and can't help but fall in love with them.

Circe is from Seattle and wakes up in an alternate universe smack bang in the middle of the Wife Hunt. She has no idea how she got there but learns pretty damn quickly that she better get her head screwed on and run. We see through her eyes the horrors of the event and what she must survive. Circe soon realises she's not returning home and must learn to live in this place and find happiness where she can. Luckily, she makes friends and learns their language which helps her settle into her new life.

Dax Lahn is king of his people. He has not joined the wife hunt before because he hasn't felt an attraction to any of the women gathered. When Circe is paraded before him, he feels an instant connection. He chases her down, fights off his competitors and "claims" her as his own. Unfortunately, his queen does not know of his people and doesn't jump for joy and accept him wholeheartedly like he'd hoped. Lahn must learn patience and compromise to gain affection from Kah Lahnahsahna (My Tigress).

This story is about struggling in a new world, learning to accept people for who they are and what they stand for and adjusting your expectations. We see a man who is also a king learn that the old ways are not always the best ways. We meet some wonderful characters in Diandra, Narinda, Bain and Zahnin. We also meet some truly awful characters. Dortak and King Baldur made my skin crawl with their evilness and greed that jumped right off the pages. (view spoiler)

The Golden Dynasty is part of a series. Each couple in the book before and books after are connected by the quest to bring peace and goodwill to their universe. Luckily the heroines have friends to help and husbands who at first can be brutal, but learn to be loving.

This is one of the most intense books I have ever read. My feelings were like a rollercoaster. I wanted to hate Lahn for his handling of things, but realised they were part of his culture and he didn't know any different. I loved the friendships formed and the connections made between the people and their Golden Queen. The communication difficulties had me laughing at times and made me appreciate the difficulties Circe faced learning the Korwahk language. I was sad whenever Dortak's bride made an appearance as I knew the abuse she faced would be unbearable. I became frustrated at the warriors for what they made their wives put up with, which contradicted the love and appreciation they show them. But overall I just felt awe that Kristen Ashley's *The Golden Dynasty* let me escape for just awhile and live in Fantasyland.

Alexis *Reality Bites* says

ANOTHER 5 STAR READ!!!

E P I C!!!!

Kristen Ashley is

This couple is

This book is

The writing is

This series is

My Thoughts are

KA is a true GENIUS!! The second I finished this book I found myself wanting to go back to the beginning to start all over again. YES, it was that **GOOD!** I noticed how KA set up each story in the first book which is Wildest Dreams, again GENIUS! It was that fantasyland book where she mentions what's up with each couple and even sets the story line up for her current release Broken Dove.

Note to self: I wonder if it is a coincidence that all these women are swapping with their universal twins...All around the same time... Things that make you go hmm.

KA is very good with details she sucks you completely in to her fantasyland universe and you want to stay there. **FOREVER!!!**

On another note if you have not noticed I am totally and completely **OBSESSED** with this series!!! **TOTAL MUST READ!**

Dear friends, if you enjoy a good PNR(paranormal romance) I highly suggest you bump this series up on your to-read list!

FAVE LINES said or usaid

“You have rare beauty the like I have never seen but you will be more beautiful heavy with my seed,” he stated softly.

Holy freaking moly... my husband was hot!

“Do you have words, sister?” Lahn asked softly. The woman in white stared at him. Then, slowly, her eyes slid to me. Then a small, tragic smile drifted across her mouth and she said one word.

“Rainbow.”

I am your husband. I will keep you safe and I will do it by keeping my feet on this earth, breathing the air and being there to make you safe. Do you understand this?”

His eyes moved over my face and he whispered back, “I could not dream a better you.”

“Now,” Lahn went on, “you will leave with no trunks filled with Korwahk’s bounty in your greedy, fat hands. What you will leave with is your life and the knowledge that if you ever carry forth a plot that threatens my golden queen, you will die choking on your own balls and you’ll do it while staring in my eyes.”

I couldn’t believe this.

This was unbelievable.

It was also heartbreaking.

*Nope, I was wrong about that. **It was soul destroying.***

Blacky *Romance Addict* says

“I gave up a world for you.”

One of my absolute favorites, especially by Kristen Ashley <3
Amazing book, love it to pieces :))))

The story

Circe suddenly wakes up in a strange place surrounded by women and finds out that they are about to be hunted by warriors.

If only it was a bad dream, but no, the warrior king sees her, fights for her, and wins her.

Right after the brutal claiming (rape), she is presented to his people as their golden queen.

Yep, poor Circe had it bad right from the start, and now she has to deal with the king, her husband now, who is a brute savage, raised as a warrior in a culture so beyond different than hers.

But poor Circe is pretty lucky cause that king turns out not to be so bad after all, and he earns her trust and affection as the book goes on.

sigh Lahn *sigh*

Lahn and Circe

Lahn is the king of the Korwahk people, a warrior who is set in the Korwahk ways, a fact that doesn't help Circe in any way.

The way they live, their rules and laws are so different from hers that she has trouble adjusting (I mean seriously, who wouldn't), but as Lahn shows her his sweet side and as they get closer, she comes to peace with the fact that she'll probably never return home.

And so they both have to adapt, Lahn to Circe's weird ways, and she to his.

Circe was a lot of fun to read, especially the parts when she does something wrong and has no idea about it :D One thing about her I just didn't get and it's the only thing in this book that bothers me, how after (view spoiler)

Lahn, gosh I really loved that savage guy <3 Even though he did the terrible thing at the beginning, he made up for it, big time, like when she (view spoiler), plus all the sweet scenes between them :))

He did act like a jerk a couple of times and yeah I took Circe's side there, especially the big thing at the end :(((

Gosh it's one of the saddest scenes from KA.

But again, he totally made up for it in the end <3

Overall

I just love this book :)

It's one of my favorites, and after this re-read, I still love it <3

It's weird cause it's so different from everything I've read, especially the savage part, but still :)))

The language part was great because it made sense that they couldn't understand each other (even though I got lost later on and just stopped trying to translate everything ahahahh).

What else... I said about the only thing that bothered me in the book above in the Lahn and Circe sections, it just isn't believable to me, but it still didn't make me love the book less :)

Oh yes and it made me cry, even in the re-read :((((

When Dortak's wife (view spoiler), and later on when they have (view spoiler).

Btw it's a coincidence that I have the same name as Dortak's wife, only hers is spelled differently. It doesn't make me feel good cause of the way she ended up :((((Just my luck ahahhaah

And I was thinking....

If everyone in this world has a duplicate in the Fantasyland...

And Lahn's taken there...

I'm gonna grab the one from my world ;))))

buddy read with Vishous and Shelly

Jilly says

The only thing that could make this book okay is if the author donated all of the money made on it to battered women's shelters to help the women who have suffered the atrocities that she is trying to glamorize in this book. Rape is never romantic. Domestic abuse is never forgivable. Slavery is never acceptable.

We start out with a "hunt" where women are in a corral and are set loose to run for their lives as men on horses hunt them down, rape them, tear off all their clothes, and then display them naked in front of the camp as their capture/slave/wife. She now belongs to him. Let the raping begin!! Many of these women have been captured from foreign lands and have no grasp of the language, so they don't know what their new "husbands" are saying to them, just that they are in a living hell of captivity and rape with a savage.

This is what happens to our hero, Circe. But, Circe is "lucky" because she is raped and captured by the king, Lahn, who considers her his "Golden Queen", so he sends in an interpreter to try to communicate with her. This interpreter tells her that this is their warrior ways and she needs to get her crap together and start acting right or else things could get even worse for her. (worse, how?) So, Circe decides that her captor is kinda cute (cuz, don't we all forgive rapists if they are cute, huh, girls?), and she starts to like him.

And, it's all sweet love and happiness - Stockholm Syndrome Style!

Until, he decides that she was bad by not telling him where she was for a while, and he backhands her across the face, knocking her into next week. Bring in the magic interpreter!!! She must explain that this, yet again, is just their warrior ways. Plus, he's ho-ot! (cuz, girls, if your boyfriend starts smacking you around, you just gotta forgive him. It's just the way he is. He's passionate! You don't gotta leave him cuz he's got such strong feelings! And, he feels bad! He won't do it again!(unless you make him mad again, cuz he's passionate!)). So, of course, Circe forgives him and true love travels on.

This book is determined to degrade women in every possible way and act like it is somehow forgivable because it is all part of this savage culture. But, here's the thing. The author made up this culture!! She decided to create this culture of violence against women. I just have to ask myself, "Why?" And, why does everyone like it and excuse the atrocities in this book? I just don't get it.

SamJ ★Needs a HEA★ says

Re reading again! I love this book.

And I left this series till last and did not think I would like it, and even starting this book, it started horrifically, and I wondered how KA could redeem him, but for me she just did!

"I could not dream a better you."

Oh my God.

Oh... my... God.

Did he just say that?

I stared into his warm eyes.

He just said that.

And that was so sweet, so unexpected but so welcome, my breath arrested and all I could do was continue staring at him.

He wasn't done. "A better wife, a better queen. Not even in a dream could I create better than you."

.....

"He is my king, he is my warrior, he is my husband and I am proud to say above all... he is mine."

.....

"Then I whispered, "I love you, my Lahn," and heard the swift hiss of his intake of breath. Then he buried his face in my neck and whispered back, "Loot kay hansahnalay na, my Circe." And I love you, my Circe."

Christy says

MORE than 5 stars!!!

?

It's no secret I am a huge KA fan. Love her books. Some are good, most are great, and a few are exceptional. This is an exceptional read! Such an amazing story! Loved every single thing about it!

I went to bed in my bed in a world I understood and I woke up here in a world that was entirely foreign to me, everything about it, and not one thing about it was good. And now I was running for my life.

?Circe is just a girl from Seattle who woke up one morning surrounded by Korwahk warriors and many other women who are getting ready to be 'hunted'. It is the way of the Korwahk, how they choose their brides. And Circe gets chosen by none other than the King of Suh Tunak, Dax Lahn. Dax Lahn is not just a alpha male, he is **the** alpha male. He's a warrior, a savage, a king. Circe is freaked. She can't understand Lahn (they speak a different language) and she doesn't' know how she got there or how she is going to get home. With the help of a translator who later becomes a friend, Dax Lahn and Circe start to communicate. Lahn is crazy about Circe. He loves how fierce she is. She is his true Golden Queen.

It takes this couple some time to finally click, but once they do, it's a true and beautiful love. They are both devoted to each other. Even though their cultures are completely different, they both attempt to make concessions to make one another happy. The love they share is deep.

"If you're given the opportunity to look deep enough, you can see a person's spirit in their eyes but usually, they are guarded, kept safe. Not you, my tigress, the night of your claiming, even in the moonlight, I could see your spirit shining from your eyes. You hold your spirit close to the surface for all to behold and it is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen."

As I said before, Lahn is THE alpha male. He is PERFECT! Being an extreme alpha, we know he's going to be rough, stubborn, protective and possessive, but when he brought out the sweet side, I loved him even more!

"I am your husband, I will keep you safe and I will do it by keeping my feet on this earth, breathing the air and being there to make you feel safe. Do you understand this?"

“Out there, King Lahn is a fierce warrior but in here, my Lahn... kah Lahn is sweet.”

?Circe was a fantastic heroine! She was also strong and tough, but so funny, feisty and quirky. She was soft, but she also had what it took to be a Queen. I loved how possessive she got over Lahn.

“He is my kind, he is a warrior, he is my husband and I am proud to say about all... he is mine.”

A story about two people from two totally different worlds. A beautiful love story that was just epically good. There is some drama, angst, a lot of action and romance! These Fantasyland books have me looking forward to the day my other world twin decides to switch places with me ;) hehe! Anyway, this is one of my absolute favorite KA reads! A MUST READ!!!

Yes, I know this casting is very unoriginal, but I simply couldn't see ANYONE else as Circe and Lahn! ♥ ♥
♥

Aestas Book Blog says

5.5 stars!

I ABSOLUTELY ADORED THIS BOOK!!!!

Kristen Ashley never ceases to amaze me with the beauty of the books she writes. Seriously, this story is just magical <3

Its a story about two people overcoming extreme cultural differences for the sake of love. There were parts of this book that were gruesome, brutal and sickening, parts that were swoony, heart-melting and utterly precious and ultimately it told a beautiful story about compromise, understanding and acceptance.

The story follows Circe, who went to sleep one night in her bed in Seattle and woke up in a nightmare world. Literally. She woke up in a an alternate parallel universe to ours in a corral with a whole bunch of women, most of whom didn't even speak her language, who were penned there, half naked, waiting for “The Wife Hunt” to commence.

O_O

The Wife Hunt?!?!

“It was a nightmare. It was a nightmare’s nightmare.”

To call The Wife Hunt brutal would be an understatement. It is a common practice by the Korwahk people with the purpose of finding wives for their warriors. But the way they go about it, to our eyes, from our culture’s perspective, is horrific. They round up the most beautiful women from both their people and others who they kidnap and, at an appointed time, are let loose in the woods and hunted down by the warriors, raped, and thus claimed as that warrior’s new wife.

Now, this is something which under normal circumstances would turn me way the hell off a book. But I had a lot of faith in KA’s story-telling ability and so I spent some time prior to reading it trying to understand or come to terms with it.

I wont say anything here that will spoil the story, but I will try and give a little bit of a general explanation so that in case you, like me, read that description and kinda balk and start backing away while wondering if there was any way in the world you could ever love a hero who would do such a thing, then maybe this will help you understand him a little before the start of the story.

There is a LOT of emphasis made in this book about how this is their culture. The people in their culture (including the women!) are happy with it. They are a prosperous, thriving culture. These are their customs. These are their ways. Yes, to outsiders, and to us, their ways are savage, brutal, barbaric, cruel, take your pick, but to them, this is their world.

And, after the brutal first scene in the book, The Wife Hunt (which, by the way, was not very graphic), things do start to gradually change a little....

“There are some men, no matter what blood flows in their veins or what teachings were drilled into their heads, who are just good men.”

Our hero, Dax Lahn, is one of those men. And for a guy from such a brutal culture, he was actually pretty darn swoony!! And Circe is just an incredible heroine – she is strong-willed, fiesty, sassy, deeply understanding and I instantly felt connected to her character. And not long into the book, it becomes abundantly clear how proud Lahn is of her, of having found a warrior women. And he really does do his best, in his own savage-brute way, of trying to figure her out.

They spoke different languages, came from different worlds, couldn’t understand each literally or culturally and yet they both worked so hard at figuring each other out. It was totally, completely, endearing - the big brutish warrior King and his Seattle chick Queen.

The thing was that regardless of the fact that this was their culture, there was still the issue that that Circe was NOT from it and so Lahn had to learn to make concessions along the way too. And whenever he screwed up, I loved that she totally stood up to him. Which he, in turn, found endearing.... it was all just very sweet.

But, I’ll be honest, some of the stuff that happens in their culture is really hard to accept. Reeeeeeeeally hard. Borderline impossible. But I really just tried to go into it with an open mind and realize that a lot of the things that to me, I found demeaning or heartless were really the results of my own culture speaking. Its a hard thing to wrap your mind around.

It helped though, that Lahn just melted my heart. He was just the biggest brute and definitely the kind of guy

that nobody messes with and yet, when it came to her, he showed another side where he actually was just the biggest loveable softie <3 And its impossible not to see just how MUCH he cares!!

“This is my vow to you... I am your husband, I will keep you safe and I will do it by keeping my feet on this earth, breathing the air and being there to make you safe. Do you understand this?”

And I absolutely loved that Circe made concessions in a lot of ways to his culture – after all, she was the one who came into his world, but she had a few key things that really didn't sit right with her (totally understandably!!) and in an awesome way that just made me want to cheer, stood up to him over and over again. Basically, she never lost who she was or her spirit or her character but still found ways to accept him and his culture and compromise.

“Lahn told me that when he claimed me, even in the moonlight, he saw my spirit shining in my eyes and it was the most beautiful thing he'd ever seen. To me, he was raping me. To him, he was receiving a gift he'd treasure always. This is a contradiction that it is difficult to come to terms with and although it does not heal the pain we felt, a memory seared into our brains, the terror we experienced, I cannot say it does not provide just enough balm to allow me to live with it.”

Once I got over the brutality of their world or rather, just tried to accept their way of life, I was able to fully focus on the epicness of their swoon. And oh my freaking god was it ever EPIC and SWOONY. There would be pages and pages on end where I'd be grinning from ear to ear.

Lahn did do a lot of brutal things, but for some reason, I found myself forgiving him. Not excusing or justifying his actions or even accepting them, but understanding and forgiving him. And the SOLE reason I felt that was was that I could see and sense all along that he was really, genuinely trying to be a good guy by her standards. He was trying to adapt and compromise. And yes, there were times when he screwed up, hmmmm, no, more like where he really effing f*cked the hell up, but he got better, progressively. That was his redeeming quality in my eyes.

And, let me tell you, when this big guy f*cks up. He royally f*cks up. But I loved that he realized it and he was prepared to grovel (well, lol, in a kingly brutish swoony way, but still) to get/earn her forgiveness. A big Alpha guy who is Alpha enough to apologize and ask for forgiveness without losing an ounce of his Alpha-ness (and also, more importantly, learn from his mistake) is the kind of character I pretty much just fall head over heels in love with.

I kind of also think that I might have been more okay with the issues in this book than the last one because despite the brutality of them, they are out in the open. This isn't about deception or doing something behind someone's back. This is just about the clear cultural RIFT between two people who come from vastly different worlds.

“Your king did not break through with me until his touch stopped taking and started giving and until, in our cham, he treated me with kindness. He is the mightiest of Suh Tunak, recognized the battle he had on his hands, analyzed it, created his strategy and then he went about winning that battle using any means necessary. And...my Lahn won that battle. I now lay awake at night waiting for him to return. When he does not, I fall asleep looking forward to the morning when he will wake me with his hands. He is my king, he is my warrior, he is my husband and I am proud to say above all...he is mine.”

One of my favorite things about this book was watching both of them learn each other's language. KA did an incredible job of creating a believable, beautiful sounding and fairly detailed Korwakh language and I loved

that I actually started being able to understand what they were saying without translation. But seriously, when Lahn spoke English, even when he only knew a few words, my heart just melted into a puddle of goo. “Rest, baby.” *swoooooon*

“Oh shit, yeah. He could be sweet.

And that sucked.

“You know what sucks? I whispered to him, doing it because I knew he would have no clue to a word I was saying. “It sucks that you can be sweet and when you’re sweet you’re really sweet. That sucks.”

He didn’t stop tenderly stroking my hair as I spoke but his eyes dropped to my mouth and when I was done, they came back to mine.

Then my heart squeezed when he whispered back, “I don’t understand you, baby.”

There it was again. Sweet.

I lifted a hand and placed it on his chest. He looked down at it but his eyes came back to mine when I spoke.

“Out there, King Lahn is a fierce warrior but in here, my Lahn... kah Lahn is sweet.”

His eyes changed, intensity shifting in when he murmured, “Fierce warrior, sweet.”

I grinned at him. “You’ve sort of got it.”

“Fierce warrior, sweet,” he muttered again.

Honestly, I don’t know what else to say about this book except the scenes in it are epic!!! Everything from ceremonies to rides to contests to executions to tender, beautiful private time to hot intense private time...

I totally fell *into* this world and *into* this story.

Lahn and Circe’s love was beautiful and romantic and I utterly adored this book despite parts of it being hard to stomach.

It definitely made my favorites shelf.

CASTING:

(PS - I found these ^^^ on Tumblr and take no credit for the fanart)

For more of my reviews, visit Aestas Book Blog

And come join the Aestas Book Blog Facebook Page

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

You know you've struck gold when you've found an author whose every book you experience becomes your newest favorite, and such is the case with Kristen Ashley. Every single book I've read, 21 to date, has become a keeper because the characters and their stories grab hold and just will not let go!

How is it possible that this happens time and time again, you ask?

Well, when I sit down to read a book and escape the crap that comes with real life, it's not the properly placed semi colon or comma that makes me sigh, nor is it the perfectly structured sentence that brings tears to my eyes, it's the amazing characters, the characters who stop being just words on the page and become living, breathing people... their lives, their stories... those are the things that make me content. *Happy*. That's what Kristen Ashley gives me.

Every. Single. Time.

And this book, like all the others, has given me the very same.

The Golden Dynasty is the second book in the *Fantasyland* series, and nothing like *any* book I've ever read. Think *Game of Thrones* meets *Braveheart* in *Avalon*, and that's what you get with this book. Vile barbaric customs and traditions, gods, goddesses, witches, magic, plundering, pillaging, executions, and loads of burn up the pages sex make this one of the most intense books I've read, and Dax Lahn one of the most demanding, frustrating, bloodthirsty, brutal alphas of any Kristen Ashley book.

And, heaven help me, but I'm in love with him!

Keeping in mind this is a primitive and, what we would consider a barbaric culture, I feel I should mention that this book contains graphic scenes of violence against women, and rape, while never shown on the page, is also part of that culture. For those who might be concerned about this and wondering if they should read this story, I'll tell you this; The heroine, Circe, does everything in her power to change these things, and is a true champion for the women in this story. For these reasons, and many more, I so admired Circe. Her compassion, her strength, her capacity to love... and I mean love *hard*, made her the perfect wife for Dax Lahn, whose world has no room for beauty, passion, or anything except leading his warriors, The Horde, and ensuring the survival and prosperity of the Korwahk nation.

As gory as this story is, as cruel as its warrior king hero could be, this is one of the best of KA's romances, in my opinion. The language barrier, the cultural and moral differences... so much stood in the way of The Warrior King Lahn and his Golden Queen Circe getting their *happily ever after*. But they knew what they had, what they *could* have, and they ached for it, reached for it, bled for it... and when they finally got it, it was a beautiful, amazing thing.

If you're already a Kristen Ashley addict, or interested in checking out her books, be sure to stop by our Kristen Ashley Addict's Support Group here on Goodreads!

Candace says

Of all the books in Kristen Ashley's 'Fantasyland' series, 'The Golden Dynasty' was by far my favorite. I love dark, controversial romances that make you love them in spite of all reason. This was one of those stories. I spent as much time cringing as I did smiling, but I couldn't have asked for more. I loved this one!

If you've read many of Ms. Ashley's books, then it goes without saying that the hero is an over-the-top Alpha. Dax Lahn, King of Suh Tunak and the Horde of Korwahk, was pretty intimidating, even by her standards. In his world, the men are warriors that are prized for their physical dominance and ability to take what they want, including a wife. As they roam around raiding villages, they murder, rob and rape. They are barbarians.

Circe goes to sleep in her world, but wakes up in a parallel world. She has no idea of how she ended up there, unlike Finnie who agreed to trade places with her otherworldly twin in the first book. A quick assessment of the situation has Circe, rightfully, terrified. She has awoken to a real-life nightmare.

Along with several other women, Circe is caged. Provided only scraps of clothing, she is told that she has been selected to participate in a great Korwahk tradition. What tradition? The wife hunt.

The wife hunt is exactly what it sounds like. A group of women are rounded up and dressed in skimpy outfits. Then, after being displayed for the Horde warriors, they are released...and hunted. The men track down the women, overpowering any other warrior challengers, and "claim" their wife right then and there. To say the least, this is a horrific, traumatic and uncivilized tradition.

This is how Circe comes to be Dax's wife. Understandably, she hated him. Their relationship developed gradually. Eventually, it turned into something beautiful. This was a story that appealed to baser urges.

As primitive as Dax could be, he revered his wife in his own way. This was something that Circe came to recognize and appreciate. Granted, she was far more forgiving than I could have ever imagined possible...but it is fiction and a romance, so you knew it had to happen to move the story along.

Even as the feminist side of me thinks that I should be appalled by this story, the honest part of me has to admit that I was completely addicted. Circe came to wield a great deal of power in her own way, capitalizing upon the great deal of admiration that her husband had for her. It certainly wasn't a politically correct type of story, but it was beautiful in its own right.

I fell in love with Dax, right along with Circe. Here was this super-tough, barbarous bad-ass, who truly couldn't understand why his behaviors were so off-putting to his new wife. Even as he was determined to dominate her, he was saddened to think of his actions crushing her spirit in any way. He wanted her to submit to him, while loving the fight and her spirit.

If you are looking for a romance with a hot-headed Alpha hero, then look no further. This book will not disappoint. It is by far, my favorite of the books in this series.

On the other hand, if you are sensitive to darker subject matter, like rape and physical violence, then you'll want to steer clear of this one. It is full to the brim with controversial topics. All the more reason for me to love it, but I know that isn't the case for many readers. Be forewarned.

Check out more of my reviews at www.bookaddictthaven.com

Rachel Reads Ravenously says

That's it. That's all I have to say.

Eda # Dax Lahn's Golden Tigress # says**

RE-READ#7

*Still one of my favourite books ever. *sigh**

**** 10 “loot kay hansahnalay na” STARS ****

“If you’re given the opportunity to look deep enough, you can see a person’s spirit in their eyes but usually, they are guarded, kept safe. Not you, my tigress. You hold your spirit close to the surface for all to behold and it is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen.”
~ LAHN

This book... **This f*ckin' book.**

It was nothing like any other I’ve ever read.

From the first page, to the last, I lost myself inside the brutality of this foreign world, inside the complexity of Lahn and Circe’s relationship, inside the heartbreak and joy of this very fictional but touched by the sweetest bits of reality story... I lost myself in a dimension with goddesses and gods, traditions of rape and execution, war and gore, magic and witches, barbaric and savage nations and their primitive, unforgiving, unique customs. *I lost myself in one of the most unlikely love stories I’ve ever read and lost my heart to a certain violent, bloodthirsty warrior king, carrying the softest and warmest soul inside...*

Circe kisses her father and goes to bed, in their home in Seattle and when she opens her eyes, she is in a paralel world, an alternate reality that is entirely foreign to her... She is in a pen with many other women, some terrified, some excited, surrounded by Korwahk warriors, waiting for “**the Wife Hunt**” she is forced to participate in. *She is to be chosen, hunted down, “claimed”, paraded and taken as wife by a Korwahk warrior, as is tradition.* Needless to say, she is scared shitless...

Dax Lahn is known as a cruel and heartless savage, as the mighty king of The Horde of the Daxshee and as

the leader of the terrifying Korwahk warriors. He always attends, but never participates in the Wife Hunts. *But this year one of the woman in the parade catches his eye...* A woman with long blonde hair and fair skin that shine under the sun, igniting his blood, watering his mouth, filling him with feelings of possession and want. **A woman that he chases, fights for, fights “with” and finally “claims” as his wife...**

“Out there, King Lahn is a fierce warrior but in here, my Lahn... kah Lahn is sweet.”

~ **CIRCE**

Circe is now the wife of Dax Lahn, the Golden Worrior Queen of the Korwahk people and her husband's “Lahnahsahna”, his fearless tigress, and his golden bride...

Will she ever be able to go back home, to his father and her friends? With the fierce pull she feels towards her husband and the weird connection to this crazy foreign nation, will she even want to?

“Kah Dax, kah Tunakan, kah Lahn.”

My king, my warrior, my Lahn.

“Meena, my Circe, kah nahna.”

Yes, my Circe, all yours.

Circe and Lahn have so much that stand in their way of a happy life together... They speak different languages, they have different moral codes, they have different cultural backgrounds... But Circe and Lahn try to communicate and understand each other. They learn to accept each other for who they are, and hold on to the connection they both feel in the core of their hearts. They reach for a true and strong love, they fight for it and when they finally get it... they never let go.

“He is my kind, he is a warrior, he is my husband and I am proud to say about all... HE IS MINE.”

~ **CIRCE**

This book made me angry. This book made me smile. This book made me feel hurt and sad and frustrated. *This book made me go through so many different emotions.* What makes this story beautiful is the way it shows us that love can be found in the most unexpected places, with the most unexpected people. That love has the power to make a person forgive, forget and unsee a lot of things he or she might have never thought they could. *That love can help people to overcome all the obstacles on the way, against all odds, and create a connection between them so fierce, no one can ever sever it.*

“You are my golden queen. You are my tigress. You are my Circe. Always, Circe. ALWAYS. Never will I allow your gold to be taken from me. NEVER. Understand this, Circe, and

NEVER FORGET.”

~ LAHN

You see, one of my dearest friends, Hanife, has been insisting on making me read this book FOR YEARS! Of course I, the idiot that I am, judged the book by it's cover and ignored her pleas. **Now, I am totally kicking myself for putting this book off!** Once again, it has been proven to me that Kristen Ashley is an amazing author and that she **NEVER** disappoints.

“Words make marks DEEPER than fists; they last LONGER and sometimes NEVER go away.”

P.S: I know it's weird that I've started the “Fantasyland” series with Book#2... My buddy told me it's the best book of them all and that I wouldn't get lost even if I didn't read Book#1 first. She gave me a little heads up about the PNR element, summarized the general plotline without spoilers before I started and it worked!

So thank you so much Hanife, baby! I love you! ♥
