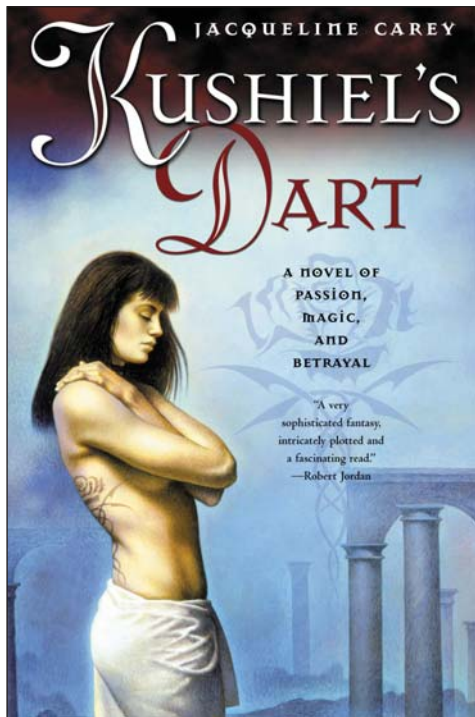




Jacqueline Carey

Kushiel's Dart



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



ROBERT CAREY

Jacqueline Carey was born in 1964 in Highland Park, Illinois. After receiving BA degrees in psychology and English literature from Lake Forest College, she spent half a year living in London and working in a bookstore, traveling once her work permit expired. Upon returning to the US, she embarked on a writing career while working at a local college to provide steady income and traveling when possible, thus far ranging from Finland to Egypt. She lives in Saugatuck, Michigan. Her previous publications include various short stories, essays, and a nonfiction book, *Angels: Celestial Spirits in Legend & Art*. *Kushiel's Dart* is her first novel.

IN HER OWN WORDS

“Historical fantasy offers a unique reward. There is an inexpressible pleasure in examining the vast canvas of history and reworking it in broad strokes, of weaving together the threads of what might have been and what never was to create the world anew out of whole cloth. If the process succeeds, the end result is seamless.

Being possessed of endless curiosity and a deep, abiding fascination with history, culture, and myth, I love doing the research needed to ground my work in tangible reality. And as a fantasy writer, I have an equal love for the process of forgetting, of allowing myself to recreate the world.

And at the heart of it always lies a story.

In no other genre does story occupy the place of precedence as it does in fantasy. All fantasy derives its roots from the oldest tales told by humankind, the myths and legends and fables that inspire wonder, awe, despair and passion, that teach us about justice, courage, and compassion. These are the stories the earliest poets sang. These are the archetypes that haunt our collective unconscious.

“A very sophisticated fantasy, intricately plotted and a fascinating read.”

—ROBERT JORDAN

The challenge lies in making these familiar elements one's own and creating them anew, breathing fresh life into them. I seek to do this by incorporating aspects seldom dared before, by writing prose that speaks to my deep love of literature, by crafting vivid and memorable characters. Is fantasy relevant in a postmodern society? Yes. The old, old truths endure. A hero or heroine faces an insurmountable challenge and prevails through strength of will, through courage, through self-sacrifice and love.

Thus are born the stories that shape our dreams.”

—JACQUELINE CAREY

ABOUT THE BOOK

A nation born of angels, vast and intricate and surrounded by danger...

A woman born to servitude, unknowingly given access to the secrets of the realm...

Born to parents who forsake her and sell her into servitude, bearing the weight of an ill-luck name and the pin-prick of blood emblazoned in her gaze, Phèdre nò Delaunay is flawed, until one man transforms the prick of her unworth to a pearl of great price. Now Kushiel's chosen is plucked from a life as an adept and given access to the secrets of the realm.

Phèdre nò Delaunay's sumptuous and exotic life turns upside down upon the murder of her cherished master and savior Anafiel Delaunay. Caught in the midst of imperial treachery and sold into slavery, this anguissette is the only hope to save her nation born of angels from utter devastation. *Kushiel's Dart* is a tale about the violent death of an old age and the birth of the new. It is a novel of grandeur, luxury, sacrifice, betrayal, and deeply laid conspiracies. Phèdre's world exposes cunning poets, deadly courtiers, deposed rules, a besieged Queen, a warrior-priest, the Prince of Travelers and the Master of Straits, barbarian warlords, heroic traitors, and a wily villainess ... all seen through the unflinching eyes of an unforgettable heroine.

Here is the glittering and sensual epic of Machiavellian intrigue and corruption, pagan splendor, and high opulence. Phèdre nò Delaunay is a woman who struggles for honor and duty, whose loyalty to the land she loves takes her to the edge of despair and then salvation.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Anafiel Delaunay opened his home to Alcuin and Phèdre, gave them his name, and treated them like family. Yet at the same time, he benefited from their services to Naamah as a means to spy on his enemies and gain insight into plottings against the throne. Alcuin and Phèdre in turn would do anything to please Delaunay, even risk their lives. Do you feel that Delaunay knowingly took advantage of Alcuin and Phèdre's loyalty to him? Do you feel Delaunay allowed Phèdre to accept dangerous assignments, knowing that her love for him would drive her to do anything to make him proud?

2. Delaunay often spoke of Rolande's rashness as being the cause of his downfall in the Battle of Three Princes. Did you feel that Delaunay's better judgment was also clouded by his obsession to avenge Rolande's death and his solemn oath to protect Rolande's only daughter, the Dauphine?

3. Delaunay had treated Phèdre like a daughter and was the only person to turn her "curse" into a blessing. Yet when Phèdre discovers Delaunay and Alcuin are romantically involved, she cries bitter tears of despair. Did you feel she was upset because she wanted to be intimate with Delaunay? Or did you attribute her despair to sibling rivalry? Was she jealous of Alcuin for once again being Delaunay's favorite pupil?

4. Melisande Shahrizai proves to be a dangerous woman to Delaunay, Alcuin, Phèdre, and all of Terre d'Ange. She's a lethal combination of blinding beauty, cunning intelligence, and evil ambition. Yet she is first introduced as a friend to Delaunay. Do you feel that with all of Delaunay's knowledge of human nature he should have seen Melisande as a threat much earlier on? Or do you feel he was always aware of how dangerous she was and neglected to protect himself, Alcuin, and Phèdre from Melisande's deceitful machinations?

5. Hyacinthe is Phèdre's only real friend, since before she even enters Naamah's services. Up until the war in Alba, their relationship had always been platonic. Or was it? Did you feel that there were feelings of unrequited love for either of them? Did Phèdre harbor feelings to one day be with Hyacinthe? Do you feel Phèdre and Hyacinthe have some unfinished business to settle in the sequel to *Kushiel's Dart*?

6. When Joscelin and Phèdre are first sold as slaves to the Skaldi, they're treated fairly well by many of them, in particular, Hedwig and Gunter. Gunter even allows Joscelin to defend himself against Evrard the Sharp-tongued, after which Joscelin is allowed to join the Skaldi as Gunter's bodyguard. It's not until they are traded to Waldemar Selig's steading that they are truly mistreated. Would you have liked to know that Gunter's steading had escaped the war without injury? When Joscelin and Phèdre escape Selig's steading, did it upset you when Phèdre was forced to kill Harald the Beardless, one of the thanes in Gunter's steading who had been kind to her?

7. Blessed Elua says "Love as thou wilt." Yet when Joscelin Verreuil does just that with Phèdre, he is cast out of the Cassiline Brotherhood. While it was Joscelin's choice to remain with Phèdre, did you feel that the Cassilines should have respected Elua's will?

8. Joscelin has a difficult time accepting Phèdre's status as an anguisette and the services that accompany the role of one of Kushiel's servants. In the sequel, do you feel that Joscelin will learn to accept Phèdre's need to serve Kushiel? Or is this something that could eventually destroy their relationship?

9. While reading *Kushiel's Dart*, did you find yourself wishing that Phèdre would stop being an anguisette and settle down to marry Joscelin? Early on in the book, did you think that Delaunay and Phèdre might end up together?

10. Jacqueline Carey has left *Kushiel's Dart* wide open for a sequel. What are some of the things you'd like to see happen in her next book? How would you like Joscelin and Phèdre's relationship to develop? How will the book resurrect Melisande? Will Phèdre be able to resist Melisande's charms? Do you hope Hyacinthe will return as a main character again?

PRAISE FOR KUSHIEL'S DART

"*Kushiel's Dart* takes fantasy into shadowy exotic corners it rarely dares to tread.... I read many new writers, but few of them capture my attention as Jacqueline Carey has. A writer to watch—as the cliché goes—but more importantly a writer to read." —STORM CONSTANTINE

"Perhaps once in a decade, if you are fortunate, you discover a debut novel as intoxicating as Jacqueline Carey's *Kushiel's Dart*. Part reimagined history, this sumptuous, spellbinding fantasy is kaleidoscopic in breadth, intimate in detail. It is sure to be read and talked about for years to come." —ERIC VAN LUSTBADER

"This is a considerable story, beautifully written. It's a book the reader can live in for a while, and be sorry to leave... a powerful narrative, with savage action balanced by exquisite characterization. The best fantasy I've read in years."

—PIERS ANTHONY

"*Kushiel's Dart* is the book for anyone with a taste for high intrigue and sumptuous description, for sensuality and excitement. It's a wonderfully elegant book... I read it as slowly as possible to make it last longer."

—DELIA SHERMAN, AUTHOR OF *THE PORCELAIN DOVE*

"*Kushiel's Dart* is a thing of wonder and beauty. Jacqueline Carey is so wonderfully well-polished, so delightfully audacious, that she fulfills and transcends the whole Fantasy of Manner genre." —ROSEMARY EDGHILL