



The Hunt for Xanadu

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Twenty-two year old Kelsey Porter has dedicated her life to avenging the death of her parents, murdered in their quest to find the mystical land of Xanadu. Before she can locate the murderers, she has to discover their motives for the brutal crime and finds herself at the epicenter of a Buddhist mystery as old as time. With the help of her companion, Detective Desmond Gisborne, she hunts the killers across the globe and discovers a darkness in her spiritual past that tests the very limits of her soul. Soon she realizes that it is not she who is doing the hunting, but the one being hunted. Kelsey must find a way to survive, while ancient demons attempt to destroy her.

The Hunt for Xanadu Details

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Author : Elyse Salpeter

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From Reader Review The Hunt for Xanadu for online ebook

Shaun says

Okay, "Hunt for Xanadu"... The first book I've read on the kindle!

I liked the writing, the descriptions were good; it had a decent flow to it. I'm not particularly a fan of flashbacks and dream sequences (spoiler-free), but I will say that these tended to happen in the RIGHT spots. Wherever it got to a section break or chapter break where I was itching to see what happens next – bam, flashback. I hate when that happens, but I think that's when it SHOULD happen, because it makes the reader thirst to find out what happens next. So the flashback/dream sequences all came when they were supposed to, to maximum effect. That's good.

The characters, there were really three main ones on the 'good' side, Kelsey, the protagonist Desmond, the budding love interest, and Ari, Kelsey's brother. The personalities of these characters and their goals were all laid neatly out. There were a few other characters who worked with Kelsey, on her team, so to speak, but I found them to be more superficial – they weren't really fleshed out. They were more just generic team member #1, generic team member #2. Maybe in the sequels we get to know them better? Or maybe they are just stand-in characters, which is okay, I'm just saying that they didn't really seem all that important nor did I care much for what happened to them, above the three main characters. (view spoiler)

The villain is well-done, but what I'd say I like most about him is you don't really see him all that much in the story. It's usually done in flashback or the characters talking about him, rather than seeing him first-hand. I don't mean to say that's bad, I actually like bad guys presented in that way, knowing only, really, that the protagonist hates them and that this person is a bad guy and an obstacle in the heroine's path. I think that's more effective in some ways than if you just had chapters of a bad guy killing random people to prove his badness. You see why he's bad only through the heroine's perspective. In other words, you don't need to see all the people he's killed (whom the reader doesn't care about); you see only the villain as he relates to the heroine. I know that's wordy, but.. I'm sorry, lol! The villain was handled well. There. Short and sweet.

Humor... I think there was some, not too much, and not distractingly so, like the writer was trying to set up a joke; the humor seemed to be drawn out of natural events, if that makes sense. I don't think I'm making much sense. But this review is already two pages so I'd better start wrapping it up.

I'd give it... four stars. It was better than okay because of the good writing, the plot seemed a little weak so it wasn't awesome, so I'd rate it between three and four stars. I don't want to underemphasize that I thought the writing itself was good, so that's why I'm rounding up to four stars. The book was good enough that I'd be interested in reading the next book in the series, and the writing was good enough that I'd be willing to read another book from the author in a different series/genre.

Monica Rodriguez says

The Hunt for Xanadu is a gripping, fast-paced story, right from the opening scene. The characters are refreshing and don't act predictable. The main character, Kelsey Porter, is a fascinating mix of skilled hero and vulnerable young woman. Events throw her together with Detective Desmond Gisborne, but because they share a common goal does not mean these two are happy to work together. The elements of Buddhism woven with fantasy created a unique story set in modern day that stayed with me after I put it down for the night. Multiple story threads came together in a wonderful web that took the characters around the globe and

by the end had me breathless. Just don't plan on stopping in the middle of the last chapter! It's a doozy!

Can't wait for the sequel to see what Kelsey's up to next!

Dianne says

The search for the mythical land of Xanadu, a place of eternal peace, eternal abundance, and eternal bliss has been riddled by death, deceit and devastation and pain. Kelsey Porter knows firsthand how much pain and loss her parents' search has cost. As a ten-year-old, she watched on as her parents were brutally murdered and she was brutalized and beaten and left for dead, all for the secrets to a land that shouldn't exist. Twelve years later, she is on a mission of revenge and finds herself caught up in ancient Buddhist beliefs, mysteries and practices, including entering the dreaming minds of those prepared to accept and believe.

Along with an unlikely cohort, Detective Desmond Gisborne, Kelsey soon discovers she is not only the hunter, but the prey, as well. Evil turns up everywhere, and even the truths Kelsey discovers can be painful, if not unbelievable. Kelsey discovers a spiritual past, or several of them that have ended in pain. A land and language she was thought to have made up as a child are real, part of another plane buried deep in ancient Buddhism. Are the monks she once considered friends even using her for their own purposes? Has she been a pawn to everyone? Is the truth of this legend worth dying for?

Mystery, myth and mayhem abound in Elyse Salpeter's **The Hunt for Xanadu**. Nevermind that there are paranormal or fantasy elements, this is fabulous reading, so dark, tense and intense, that the most dyed-in-the-wool mystery, thriller reader will see the need for these genre-crossing elements. For those who love a good paranormal read, sans shifters or blood-suckers or aliens, Ms. Salpeter has you covered. Her writing is strong, her scenes life-like and her characters are truly cut from a unique cloth.

If you are looking for something that will stand up to any in its genre for gripping story-telling, brilliant pacing and characters that bolt off the pages, all while you attempt to figure out the outcome, **The Hunt for Xanadu** could be "the one." I'd hate for you to miss it.

I received this copy from Elyse Salpeter in exchange for my honest review.

Series - The Kelsey Porter Series - Book 1

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Lori says

I didn't really like the characters, don't see why I'd want to read another of these books. I have to give the

author high marks for originality, though. I began the book thinking the quirky, but not deep, characters and the amount of action made it better for an action movie. Then it got weird and much more interesting.

Christoph Fischer says

"The Hunt for Xanadu" by Elyse Salpeter is a fast paced thriller in which a young woman, Kelsey, pursues the killers of her parents.

Her parents were murdered while trying to find the mythical land of Xanadu and the story's fantasy elements owe much to mythology rather than vampires and werewolves.

Accompanied by Detective and love interest Desmond her quest for revenge turns into something more profound. The personal development of a young woman with a horrid past, confronted with Buddhist beliefs and ancient demons makes for some great reading. I loved the character depth while the action part of the story also never lets you go.

The book is well written with a good storyline, strong narrative and interesting characters.

Michael Thal says

The Hunt for Xanadu: A YA Thriller

We've all heard of the mythical city of Xanadu appearing in literature and movies. It's an exotic utopia first described by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a nineteenth century English poet, in his poem, "Kubla Khan," published in 1816. Author Elyse Salpeter has embraced the myth and expanded the concept of Xanadu to a higher plane in her first book in the Kelsey Porter Series. The Hunt for Xanadu includes vigilante justice, is a paranormal thriller, mystery, is peppered with Buddhist folklore, and is a love story all rolled up into one fantastic novel.

Kelsey Porter was victim to a heinous crime when she was a child of ten. Terrorists killed her parents, raped and beat Kelsey until the child was near death. Only due to the help of the Buddhist monks at the Bodhidharma Monastery near her parents' home in Tibet was she able to survive. Mr. and Mrs. Goldman, her godparents, took custody of the child and successfully nursed Kelsey back to health.

Now a young adult, Kelsey knows who is responsible for her parents' death and her beating—Raul Salazar, leader of the Columbia drug operation in the United States. Salazar is obsessed in finding Xanadu and robbing the mythical city of its riches, and Kelsey is fixated on revenging her parents' murder.

With a descriptive writing style, an exciting plot, and interesting characters, Salpeter keeps her audience engaged from first page to last doing an amazing job of research, especially in Buddhist rites, rituals, and mythology.

As a student of Chinese History and Asian Philosophy, I found The Hunt for Xanadu unforgettable, and look forward reading Book #2 in the Kelsey Porter Series, The Quest of the Empty Tomb.

Julie Powell says

The Hunt for Xanadu is about a young woman whose past is hidden in shadows and myth, although it is set in today's modern world.

I love the fantasy element of this story, where the imagination strives to bring the reader into realms that feel real. The writing style is excellent and the characters were realistic and believable. I would have preferred to have seen more of the fantasy world, but still it was a great plot brought alive by those characters.

Oozing with talent, this author brings forth yet another exciting story.

Recommended.

Elyse Salpeter says

The Hunt for Xanadu by Elyse Salpeter is a remarkable novel, a fascinating and fantastical journey in time and space, and one of the most gripping novels I've read in a long time. It flies along at the pace of a thriller, with plenty of murder and mayhem along the way. But behind the thrill-ride is a spiritual story, an archetypal tale of mystery and darkness, riddled with fascinating and esoteric concepts in Tibetan Buddhism. Vivid characters, a truly appealing protagonist, unexpected twists, and crisp writing complete this unforgettable book. I can't wait to read the next one in the series!

--Douglas Preston, #1 bestselling author and co-creator, with Lincoln Child, of the Pendergast series

Roberta says

Come along on the hunt for Xanadu

An engaging fantasy with an original plot and premise. The characters are well developed and I'd like to continue to read about them. Settings and background material were well researched and I learned new things while enjoying the read, which is always a plus for me. I'm looking forward to more from this author!

Matt Rosenthal says

If young Bruce Wayne of Batman lore was born female, Kelsey Porter might just be her name. In the Hunt for Xanadu, we are introduced to Kelsey Porter, an athletically and intellectually gifted yet emotionally scarred young woman that you can't help but be drawn to from the minute you are introduced. The further into the story you read the more attached and the more you root for Kelsey to avenge her parent's deaths and confront the demons of her childhood in this intriguing fantasy tale based both in the modern day world and in Buddhist legend.

Creating characters that readers care about is one of the strengths of Ms. Salpeter's writing and this book is no different. The Hunt for Xanadu contains mature themes which may be unsettling for some readers of

Elyse's previous YA novels. However, these topics are dealt with sensitively and are pivotal to shaping Kelsey's persona, drive, desire and form the basis of her relationships with other characters.

Enter a world grounded in grim reality and ancient mythology and enjoy the Hunt for Xanadu!

M.E. Lorde says

'This novel is gripping! It's full of action, heroism and the pursuit of truth. Kelsey, the main character, grabbed my attention right from the beginning. Each character was distinct and three dimensional and they were connected in a way that forced me to keep turning pages. The writing was smooth and the plot line full of suspense. Kelsey is a strong heroine and determined. She is wonderfully appealing, dark side and all and charming as well. You feel like you're there with her, following her throughout the pages. There were great surprises and wow, I loved them all! If you like excitement, action, suspense, surprises, and quests, you will love this novel. It even has romance. This author has a new fan in me. I'll be looking for more of this books series and any other of Elyse Salpeter's books. Outstanding story!'

Karin says

Stayed up till 1:30am the other night to finish! Paid for it the next day at work, but OH WELL! It's a good story well told.. I'm not so into the supernatural element, but it didn't feel forced here. I'll be curious to see how it's used (or not) in future Kelsey Porters. I cared about the characters, which is always my test for books and movies!

Rachel says

I received this book from the goodreads first reads program. I didn't want to put it down! A great story that was well written. It is definitely one that I will recommend.

David Beeson says

I enjoyed Elyse Salpeter's young adult novels (the *World of Karov* series) so I wanted to try her adult novel, *The Hunt for Xanadu*.

There is, let's say at once, a great deal in common between both series (*The Hunt for Xanadu* is the first in a planned "Kelsey Porter" series). Both take us into a realm of supernatural events and beings, though with Kelsey Porter we're no longer in a completely new, invented world, but in the world of Buddhist teaching and tradition. Salpeter builds an elegant structure in which her characters in the real world that we know either parallel or, indeed, embody beings from Buddhist mythology, good or evil.

Indeed, there is a highly intelligent use of Buddhist thinking in the character of Kelsey. She is almost superhumanly talented as befits someone who, unbeknown to herself, is an avatar of a creature from the realm of evil, struggling to attain the good. In her current life, the resistance exercised against her by the

forces of evil does her the most devastating personal damage, at a human level: the destruction of loved ones and terrible personal injury. In her entirely human response of seeking vengeance for what she has suffered, however, she makes the evil worse, threatening as a result far more than merely herself, and making the task before her all the greater.

The evil that pursues her emerges in this book in the form of Colombian drug lords, operating both within the United States and in Colombia, where we travel for part of the action. The good, which Kelsey must protect but which is also protecting her, is represented by Buddhist monks from Tibet, to whose country we also move for the climax of the novel. Salpeter brings them alive and knots them neatly into the story line, to make it more compelling through its use of exotic locations and dramatic situations.

Again in the background of the work, is the reference already in the title itself to the world of Coleridge's poem, *Xanadu*. Xanadu, in Salpeter's world, isn't merely a palace of the Mongol Emperors of China, but a key world in the Buddhist cosmogony. She also frequently refers to Mount Abora, and seems to place it in Tibet, which works well in her narrative where those mountains loom large and not just in the physical sense. I was left a little dubious, though, because it seems to me that the "damsel with a dulcimer" of Coleridge's poem, who was "singing of Mount Abora" was more likely to be thinking of a place in what we now call Ethiopia (Abyssinia in his time: "it was an Abyssinian maid...")

As well as this use of pre-existing mythological material, rather than completely invented events and worlds, Salpeter marks the transition from young adult to adult by her characters actually having sex. So, alongside the violence which any reader must expect in a work involving drug barons, we also have a fair does of love including physical sex, including a scene set in a cat house, which would have been out of place in a book addressed to a younger audience (not that I think adolescents are at all reluctant to think about sex, or even always strangers to it).

Love as well as death, Eros alongside Thanatos: Salpeter does indeed give us the entire mix of the mythological and real-life concerns of humanity.

Overall, the *Hunt for Xanadu* was highly entertaining, and I enjoyed reading it. However, I do think a word of criticism needs to be made, and one of the potential five stars lost, if only because the demands of adult readership have to be stricter than those for young adulthood.

There are too many lapses in language itself, insignificant in themselves but contriving to make the book less smooth to read. For instance: "...live fish, caught that very morning from the large lakes and rivers that ran throughout the town and residing mountains". I'm not sure the rivers really did run *throughout* the town, unless it was perpetually flooded, as it certainly would be if the lakes did too; and I don't understand the notion of mountains residing. Did Salpeter mean "surrounding"?

It seems important to me not to throw up sentences like these, as they puzzle the reader and halt the flow, but it's even vital to avoid simple shortcuts with character construction. Kelsey is all but superhuman, and where she fails to be, she can count on the nearly insuperable powers of her nearest collaborators, they too exceptionally gifted. She can physically overcome and even kill far stronger men, her intelligence is second to none, even her linguistic skills are unrivalled – she speaks flawless Mandarin, for instance. I'd like to have seen more limitations on her powers, if only to make her struggle a little more, and to make it easier to understand why she occasionally fails.

Nevertheless, these are issues that can be addressed, and deserve to be addressed, if Salpeter builds further novels on foundations as good as those she has laid down in the *Hunt for Xanadu*.

Beth says

Wow is all I can say, I was trying to organize my books on my Kindle and opened this one to get a sense of what it was all about. Oftentimes I collect the books that I hear are free and many first books in series are. Bottom line is I forgot the organization part and read this in a day! What an exciting ride it was - and now I'm going to have to get book#2. Loved loved loved the characters!
