



The Misted Cliffs

Catherine Asaro

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One generation after war had nearly destroyed three nations, evil was returning. And only Mel Dawnfield's daring sacrifice could stop it...

The promise of peace rested on this young woman's noble vow: to marry Cobalt the Dark—heir to a family of legendary cruelty. With only her uncontrolled spells to guide her, isolated in Cobalt's solitary home in the Misted Cliffs, knowing poisoned blood ran through her husband's veins, Mel struggled to embrace her unexpected mage powers and unveil the light in her shadowy new world—including the radiance hidden in her husband's soul. For her enemies were gathering strength and they would soon unleash the darkest of evils in the name of war.

In the final battle, Mel's ability to harness her magic would mean the difference between a harmonious world...and annihilation.

The Misted Cliffs Details

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From Reader Review The Misted Cliffs for online ebook

Kelsie Beaudoin (The Bookworm) says

The Misted Cliffs is even better than the first book in the series: The Charmed Sphere. It does start off a bit slow, but then the marriage between Cobalt and Mel happens and it is impossible to put the book down.

I really enjoyed Cobalt as a character. He is tortured, violent, and has the temper of a fire crab (HP reference ;P). But underneath his rough exterior he is gentle and smart, and when he falls in love with Mel she helps to mellow him out a bit. Their love is slow to grow, which made me happy. I hate when romance novels immediately jump into head-over-heels mode. I also liked Mel's character. She sees through Cobalt and knows exactly how to calm him down. And the way she learns about her powers was really fun.

Read more here: <http://readbookwormread.blogspot.com/...!>

Minni Mouse says

2.5 stars because this had every cliché one might think of in fantasy romance -- political feud between warring kingdoms, arranged political marriages, enemies turned lovers, become who you were born to be -- but it didn't deliver any of them extraordinarily well. As a result, this story just became one big glob of been-there-done-that-better.

THE GOOD

The cat.

THE BAD

Bland story, insta-lurve, unconvincing characterizations, mediocre pacing.

THE VERDICT

The Winter King by C.L. Wilson does all these fantasy romance tropes...but loads better. Do yourself a favor and pick up that series instead.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Romantic fantasy is one of my favorite genres, and reading Catherine Asaro's THE MISTED CLIFFS, I was reminded of the reason why. Deposed kings, sword and sorcery, magic and spells, kings and queens, dark-hearted rulers and self-sacrificing princesses, all combine to make this story one of the best.

For Princess Melody Dawnfield, being the daughter of the current king of Harsdown means more than looking pretty and watching men vie for her hand in marriage. Trained as a mage and excellent swordsman, Mel is her parents' pride and joy. She also feels so deeply for her town, and the adjoining towns of Aronsdale and Misted Cliffs, that she agrees to marry a man feared far and wide to save her people from the threat of war.

Cobalt the Dark is a man at war within himself. His half-crazy mother and terror-inducing grandfather raised him, and hold much of the blame for his dark heart. When Cobalt learns that his father, Varquelle, isn't dead

as he once thought, but imprisoned, he risks his own life to rescue the deposed king. Now that the former king is free, however, war looms on the horizon. Although tortured at heart and feeling that war is the only answer, Cobalt agrees to marry Princess Melody in the hopes that the war, although undoubtedly inevitable, can at least be put off.

While much of the kingdom feels that Cobalt is evil, Mel learns that he's only troubled by his own inner demons and the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that stand before him. Melody, as well, is not what her husband expected. Not only is she powerful in her own right, but her love and warm heart begin to thaw something within him that he thought was long dead and buried.

THE MISTED CLIFFS is Ms. Asaro at her writing best. A tried and true formula of a haunted hero and a warm-hearted heroine, combined with the magic of a kingdom you'll want to visit again and again, make this book a true winner. I highly recommend that you read THE CHARMED SPHERE, her previous LUNA release, as well as THE MISTED CLIFFS. They are both stand alone books, but THE CHARMED SPHERE will delve you into the kingdom of Aronsdale, which plays a supporting role in this current book. I don't yet know the title of the third book in the trilogy, but no doubt it will bring us even deeper into this world where love and magic are intertwined.

Kerry says

The Misted Cliffs started off slow and I wasn't sure if I was going to like it. Especially since it started out with the rescue of the villain from the previous book in the series, by the man who the back blurb claimed would be the hero of this one. It also took a number of chapters for the main protagonists to ever meet each other.

However, once things got going, the book began to take off. Again, at first I was unsure as the hero and heroine seemed to be caught in a romance novel about the dark tortured hero and the heroine who would bring him to life again. It was well written and enjoyable but something was missing. Once all the pieces were set in place though, the plot didn't just speed up, it took off.

One of the things I like about Catherine Asaro's book is the way she can introduce characters who appear to be black and white unpleasant at the least and evil at the most, and then reveal more and more about them until we begin to understand them and maybe even like them. She does this with Varqelle Escar. He is Cobalt's father and the villain of The Charmed Sphere and while he is never a truly nice or likeable character, by the end of the book he is much more understandable - as is the fact that Cobalt is so desperate for his love and approval, which was a puzzle earlier in the story.

As for Cobalt himself, he is a tortured character, badly treated as a child and broken inside because of it. Mel doesn't miraculously heal him by her very presence; and I was delighted by this as it is much too easy an answer used often in straight romance novels. She sets that healing in process, but it still has a long way to go. Cobalt is still walking a fine line between light and dark at the end of the novel and while he's shifted that edge, it hasn't vanished. It is part of his character and he will always be dark and driven to some degree; he has better balance now and Mel there to remind and guide him when necessary, but there hasn't been a magical and unrealistic reforming of his essential character.

I also liked the way Asaro turned another near-cliché on its head. This is a fantasy novel and it includes an invading army and a stand against them, complete with cavalry, swords and a mage. But our characters are at the head of the invading force, not the defending one. They don't have some magically or divinely given right of conquest, nor is there a logical or fundamentally righteous reason for the invasion. The characters are

doing what people do, following ambition and desire and Cobalt's reasons for this aggression is again understandable if far from perfect. What did a son with the skill and drive of a conqueror do in peace time when they didn't have organised sports where he could overwhelm his fellow men?

Yet, despite thinking of himself only as a warrior, Cobalt proves to have a real talent for making up diplomatic solutions to potentially violent problems on the spot. Yes, he'll need Mel to temper his darker side, but she isn't the cause of his brighter actions, only a catalyst to help him make better choices.

As for Mel herself, I have less to say about her. She is a well developed young woman at the beginning of the novel and remains so throughout it. She doesn't need to find herself; she's already done that through a safe, happy and secure childhood. She just needs to learn to apply who she is to the new situations she finds herself in the book. If everything had stayed peaceful and she's married her cousin as planned, she would still have had a happy and fulfilled life, although it wouldn't have been nearly as dramatic and adventurous. She is a well developed character and I'm eager to read more about her, there's just less to say about her in a review like this.

I tossed up between an 8 and a 9 for a rating for this book. In the end I decided to go with the nine as I was left with a really good feeling at the end of the book. I think Asaro's SF is more edgy and better than her fantasy, but her fantasies are also good, enjoyable reads in well developed world. I am already looking forward to the next book (especially since I saw Stephanie Law's amazing cover art.

[Copied across from Library Thing; 16 October 2012]

Pam Frost Gorder says

This review is for the audible version:

"A light, romantic read"

I'm slowly working my way through this series, in which certain people possess magical powers that are channeled through the geometric shapes around them. Each book is somewhat formulaic, but enjoyable, and I always find myself interested in the lives of the characters. The first few chapters always contain a lot of exposition, so that readers who missed the previous books will still be able to follow along.

Jean says

Well paced, the story thankfully stands alone - I picked it up at a used book sale without knowing that it was the second in a series. I really enjoyed the shapes-and-colors based magic. My main criticism is that a major twist, on which a huge chunk of the plot was based, was foreshadowed far too early and felt so obvious to me that it drained a lot of suspense and made me frustrated with the characters. Otherwise - a good novel. I probably won't seek out the rest of the series, but I'd read them if they fell into my lap.

Taggerung says

The magic set up in this book is unique, and the character interaction is as well. It's not a complete love story, though that does play a big part in it and it isn't sickeningly romance-novel-ish. Time and distance

seem a bit strange when it comes to traveling through this world though. It's an enjoyable book to escape into, with just enough fluff and emotion to make it interesting instead of overbearing.

Gretchen says

An enjoyable sequel to *The Charmed Sphere*, this follows Chime and Muller's daughter, Melody. I wish we could have seen Chime and Muller's transition to ruling Harsdown and the struggles they must have faced when bringing change, but that would have been a less-fluffy novel.

Mel is a likeable enough lead who is trapped into marrying Cobalt, the Midnight Prince, son of the would-be conqueror from the first book. Be prepared for a lot of romantic tropes. I was a little disappointed with her by the end of the book because she had such promise is the beginning - she was struggling with her mage abilities but was a proficient fighter who walked her own path. By the end, she is following Cobalt and just trying to temper his actions. She fights once when they are attacked but is saved by her husband. The next time she is attacked, she has tapped out her mage abilities and basically wilts.

The most interesting part of the book was Cobalt. I'm not sure that someone who has suffered that much abuse during his life would turn out as well as he did, but I liked exploring his relationships with his family and with Mel. I also appreciated that Mel's love for him and his love for Mel did not conquer all - he was too busy conquering other countries. I wondered if Mel would be able to stop him, but he is who he is: a man driven by ambition and quite good at what he does.

Cobalt's mother is an intriguing and strong character too, and I would have liked to learn more about her.

Anna says

I really loved this book. I enjoyed *The Charmed Sphere*, but *The Misted Cliffs* trumped it. I love a strong female lead. Mel followed her destiny, and although she was afraid, unsure, and alone, she didn't let anyone to stop her. A great romance but yet it wasn't cliché. I loved the fact that even though Mel came to love her husband, she wasn't blinded by that love. She knew and battled his faults. Twists, turns, and intrigue. Can't wait to read book 3!

Annie says

As an avid reader of Catherine Asaro, I got bored waiting for another Skolian book to come out and so decided to try her other series.

I was not disappointed. It was as corny as I had expected. Definitely not one of her greatest books, I still enjoyed the plotline. The characters were a bit stiff-too much explaining how they thought instead of just letting them think-and the first five chapters had way to much description.

All I can say is that her editor sucked. There were several descriptions that should have been taken out, and made the story a little boring in the beginning. I stuck it out though, since I like her a lot. The final battle was by far the best part of the story. I will probably pick up the third book to see how things go.

My recommendation? If you've never read Asaro pick up her Skolian series. SO good. If you're wanting a casual read, then you might like this book.

I didn't read the first one, and only felt slightly lost about the spells, but Asaro does a good job of explaining it so the first book isn't necessary to read this one.

Julia says

The Dawnfield family returns in this second book of magic and political conflict in the fictional land of Aronsdale. Chime and Muller's daughter Melody (Mel) has grown into a beautiful, headstrong young woman. To prevent an army from the neighboring Misted Cliffs from invading her homeland, she agrees to wed Cobalt Escar, son of Varquelle, ruler of the Misted Cliffs. Despite the cruelty and darkness in the Escar family, Mel is able to find a seed of good in Cobalt and begins to nurture it. Varquelle and Cobalt, however, are not satisfied in their desire for conquest. I recommend this book to fans of romantic fantasy. However, many of the characters are quite two-dimensional and predictable.

Diana says

18 years after Varquelle tried to invade Aronsdale, Melody Dawnfield is Muller and Chime's daughter, the current heir to the Jaguar Throne of Harsdown. When Cobalt the Dark frees his father Varquelle and threatens invasion to regain the throne, Melody agrees to wed him in order to save her country from war.

I much enjoyed the Charmed Sphere, so I was excited to read this book. Melody is a typical heroine, kind and able to charm her way into her husband's good graces. What I found more interesting, however, was Cobalt. Abused and isolated by his grandfather, Cobalt has long-simmering issues of anger and ambition. He is determined to build an empire through conquest, to finally prove himself a worthy heir. I found it very interesting how love did NOT conquer all; Melody still struggles to try to temper his ambition and is unable to convince him not to move against his targets. This is very unusual and made it a very interesting book. Things are left hanging, and continuing the series is a necessity.

Elar says

It was a little bit better than first book, but still same patterns appear - arranged wedding, husband who is more emotional and better than at first sight. New things in this book where even more tortured soul who needs to fight between dark and light. Scratch that we had this pattern too in the first book as a grandson of old king and surprise, surprise our tortured soul in this book is in same position. I take this as a very light listening (fantasy soap opera) and progress to next level in my own personal purgatory.

Angela says

This is just the 2nd book in a series of currently 5books. Great continuance from The Charmed Sphere, you pick right up as if you had never left the story yet its several years later. Loved it.

My favorite character so far has shown up in this book and since I've read the entire series, he still is my favorite. Cobalt is just so intense and goes from one extreme to the other. His love is almost deadly it's so extreme. I love him.

This was my Cobalt, Sam Horrigan

Jessi says

Much like The Charmed Sphere, I found it difficult to put this book down. I loved seeing how the beloved characters in the first book aged and raised families. I would have liked to know more about Jarid and Iris though.

There were some definite differences between the two. The first thing I noticed was that the sex scenes were more graphic. It didn't bother me too much, but I can see how this could get out of hand if the author gets even bolder in the next books. At least there was nothing written about a quivering love pudding, which, yes, was in a real published book. Yikes.

To me, this is more a story about redemption. It had less of that good vs. bad feeling of the first book. But I do have to say that Stonebreaker and Varqelle were so much more fleshed out. I could really see them as the instigators of a war this time around.

After reading Lawhead's The Pendragon Cycle, the battles just didn't seem realistic at all, I mean, besides the whole mage business. Of course, I'm not a big fan of the overly detailed war, so it's not really a plus or minus to me.

The good characters also were nicely depicted which isn't much of a change from book 1. Melody was so real to me especially. She was helpless and strong and courageous all at the same time. I really felt that I could understand her. Cobalt was so confused all the time, which added depth to his character.

The thing I didn't understand was all the talk about heirs and raising children between Cobalt and Varqelle. I understand that Cobalt was trying to probe his father to find out the reason why his mother left him, but it seemed like too much to me. They're talking about an heir that hasn't even been conceived yet.

It would've been difficult to read this book without having the first one under your belt, but I do think that the author spun this tale a little better than the first one.
