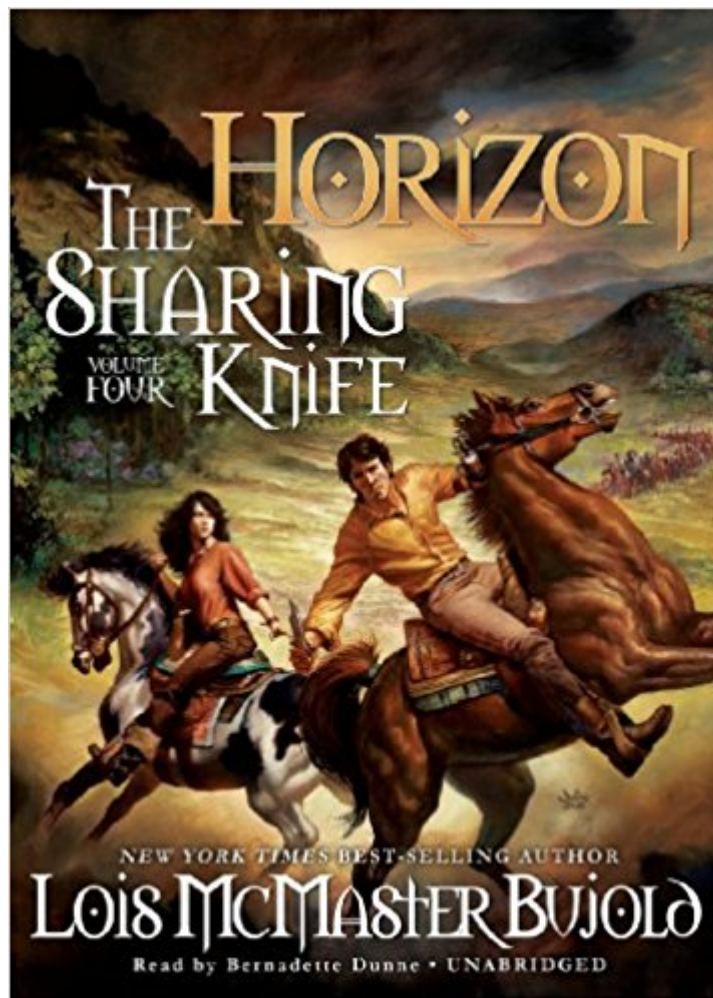


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Horizon (The Sharing Knife: Vol. 4)



Synopsis

[Read by Bernadette Dunne] In a world where malices, remnants of ancient magic, can erupt with life-destroying power, only soldier-sorcerer Lakewalkers have mastered the ability to kill them. But Lakewalkers keep their uncanny secrets - and themselves - from the farmers they protect. So when patroller Dag rescued farm girl Fawn, neither expected to fall in love, marry, and defy both their kin to seek new solutions to the split between their peoples. As Dag's powers have grown, so has his frustration with the Lakewalkers' rigid mores. Fawn and Dag see that their world is changing and that the traditional Lakewalker practices cannot hold the malices at bay forever. Yet for all the customs that the couple have challenged, they will soon be confronted with their worst crisis yet. When the old traditions fail, can their untried new ways stand against their world's deadliest foe?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"[Bujold's] eventful conclusion to [The Sharing Knife] series proves that her talent for storytelling persists regardless of genre." --Library Journal "Bujold develops the characters and their relationship skillfully enough to please romance as well as fantasy fans." --Booklist"(Audiobook narrator) Dunne's narration is good, with all of the large cast of characters given distinctive voices. She uses variations in tone and pitch, paired with a 'down-home country' delivery where appropriate among the more rural characters; thus Fawn sounds fresh-faced, breathy, and young, while her much older spouse, Dag, has a low, raspy voice . . . A solid performance."

In a world where malicesâ "remnants of ancient magicâ "can erupt with life-destroying power, only soldier-sorcerer Lakewalkers have mastered the ability to kill them. But Lakewalkers keep their uncanny secretsâ "and themselvesâ "from the farmers they protect, so when patroller Dag Redwing Hickory rescued farmer girl Fawn Bluefield, neither expected to fall in love, join their lives in marriage, or defy both their kin to seek new solutions to the perilous split between their peoples. As Dag's maker abilities have grown, so has his concern about whoâ "or whatâ "he is becoming. At the end of a great river journey, Dag is offered an apprenticeship to a master groundsetter in a southern Lakewalker camp. But as his understanding of his powers deepens, so does his frustration with the camp's rigid mores with respect to farmers. At last, he and Fawn decide to travel a very different roadâ "and find that along it, their disparate but hopeful company increases. Fawn and Dag see that their world is changing, and the traditional Lakewalker practices cannot hold every malice at bay forever. Yet for all the customs that the couple has challenged thus far, they will soon be confronted by a crisis exceeding their worst imaginings, one that threatens their Lakewalker and farmer followers alike. Now the pair must answer in earnest the question they've grappled with since they killed their first malice together: When the old traditions fail disastrously, can their untried new ways stand against their world's deadliest foe? --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

First off, this is the second half of the second story in a two story, four book series. So no, don't start here. The book does not (and is not intended to) act as a standalone novel. So from now on I'll assume the reader of this review has read the other three books. I loved this whole extended story. And I'm glad to say, the final book does not disappoint. It neither wraps up all the problems of the whole world nor leaves a bunch of messy unfinished business. It continues the story of characters we've come to know and love, and it introduces still more of them (not always loveable). It also completes the "there and back again" story of Fawn and Dag's trip to the sea. The main message of the book seems to be that when you can't see a way to solve your problems from where you are standing, sometimes it helps to stand in a different place. That's true geographically, and also metaphorically. Dag, who has been patroller and maker, healer and killer, Lakewalker with a Farmer wife, as well as boatman and camp dweller, ends up finally having a diverse enough viewpoint to start seeing the answers. But he can't do it alone. The marriage of Fawn and Dag had been a shocking breach of the wall between Lakewalker and Farmer societies, up north. But in the south, where malices are few and Farmers are many, it seems the interactions between Farmer and

Lakewalkers are much more common. Dag rightly realizes that he is seeing the future of the north in the current south, and they haven't solved any of the problems he had spotted brewing back home. But at least the problems were more visible to other people, and that leads to a bit more support from them. The key break comes when he and Fawn are accepted (provisionally) into a Lakewalker camp so that he can apprentice with an expert maker. But that doesn't continue forever, and eventually Dag ends up shepherding a mixed bag of Farmer and Lakewalker pilgrims up the "Tripoint Trace", the road/trail that runs from the south back to the north. Just as the rivers are thinly disguised versions of the Mississippi and Ohio, the trail is a version of the famous Natchez Trace. Along the way they must solve problems both domestic and magical, as Dag continues on his quest to find some way to protect Farmers from malices. At the same time he continues to try and figure out how Lakewalkers can live with Farmers without either becoming their gods or their demons. And then, as you knew would happen from the time Dag made the sharing knife in the last book, they encounter a malice. But the malice is running from something else. What could force a malice to flee? In a conclusion featuring bravery and treachery, wisdom and ignorance, plus well-honed skill and lots of luck, they find out. And then we see that the end of the story does not mean the end of all stories, just the beginning of others. (That's not to imply there is any sort of cliffhanger ending. I would doubt there will be any direct sequels to these novels. My suspicion is that Bujold has now told the tale she wanted to tell.)

I picked up the first two books of this 4-book series in a used book store last fall. I finally got around to reading them and enjoyed them enough to order books 3 and 4 so that I could finish the story. I found Book 4 to be the best of the series. Dag and Fawn approach a Lakewalker camp that is a bit more flexible than Dag's home camp, and Dag finds a healer willing to teach him. More importantly, the healer and a few others in the camp are willing to learn from Dag and Fawn. When staying at the camp doesn't work out some of the members support Dag's efforts in their own interminable ways. There are new discoveries about each other and the enemy. I am not a fantasy fan but having recently read some that did excite me and being a big fan of Bujold's Vorkosigan series, if you love Miles and are not a fantasy fan, you probably won't like these. If you are a fan of character development and enjoy romance, you will like these. The writing style, clash of culture, and underlying themes are very much Bujold, which I find enjoyable.

If you are looking for a rousing tale, adventure galore, wonderfully fully fleshed characters and to be transported to view a potentially, gloriously together world..... Look no further. This writer is so great

it beggars the imagination. Whether you like fantastical alternate worlds or not this series is uplifting and exactly what you need. And you will recognize a transformed Mississippi and our own history throughout. Purchase and read the first one to check if you wish but 99% of you will end up owning them all. Indeed a treasure and Lois McMaster Bujold I thank you from my heart and soul for the extreme pleasure you have thusly afforded me.

Good story. Well crafted. I just finished a story by another author and, although I enjoyed the story, I was puzzled that it didn't really satisfy me. The book was disjointed a bit and the characters a little confusing. Not so with Lois McMaster Bujold. Great premise. Great characters. Well constructed and well organized plot. I particularly like that Lois has the ability to make the mundane fascinating within the path of the story, but doesn't make it ponderous like David Weber (at times, David, at times ;>). Malices, sharing knives, ground sense - where do you get these ideas, Lois. Another fascinating world.

Great book if you enjoy witty ensemble dialogue and exploring magical systems. The first book in this series feels very small, dry, and mostly a romance novel, by the end of the series the magical system has evolved a lot of depth and you get to sort of discover it for the first time with one of the protagonists. Like her Vorkosigan series, one of the charms of this series is watching a culture (in this case two cultures) evolve and adapt over time as some event catalyzes isolated cultures to start interacting, but in this case the evolution happens much more rapidly. If you were bored with the first book, I encourage you to try to finish the series, they get progressively better as the world is expanded.

Each book in the series built on the last to show us first the Lake patrolers and the farmers and their distrust and Fawn and Dag's harrowing adventures with a Malice. It shows their courtship. As the books progress we see Fawn and Dag's cultural background and knowledge base compliment each other. It also show the rigidity of lack of knowledge and distrust for other cultures. The third book adds the journey down the river and Fawn and Day's accumulation of patrolers, farmers and river people and they are working together, not always understanding each other. The final book ties it together as Fawn and Dag and company meet their greatest challenge. Will they survive?

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