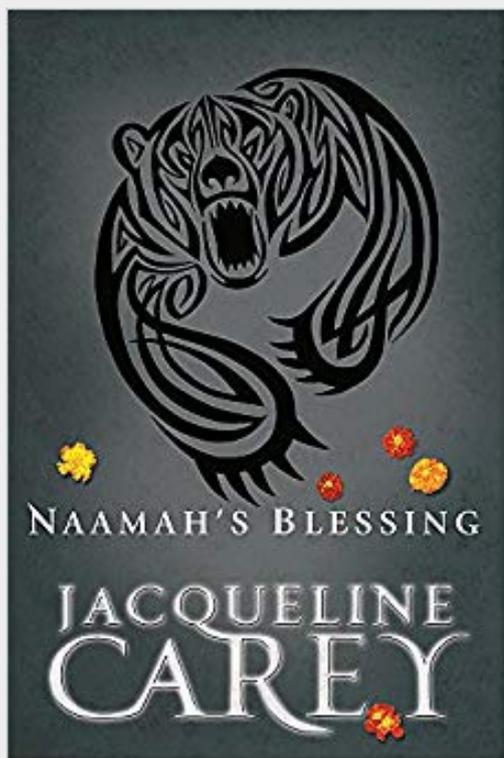


Naamah's Blessing (Kushiel's Legacy 9) by Jacqueline Carey



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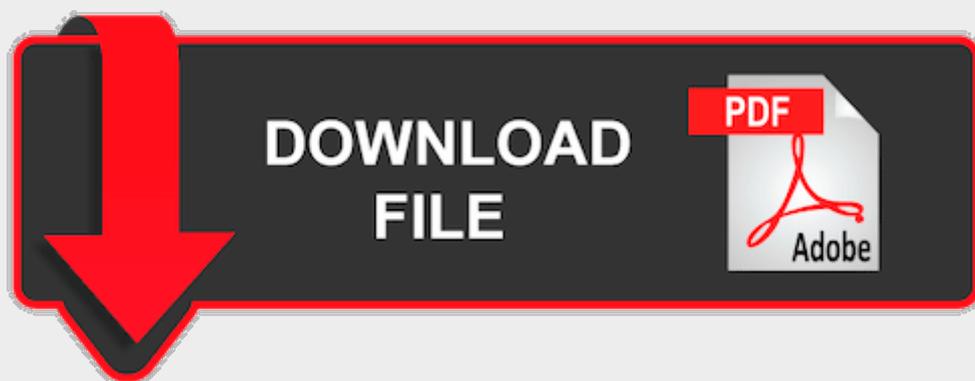
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Reviews of the Naamah's Blessing (Kushiel's Legacy 9) by Jacqueline Carey

1. Minnai

Note: This is the third book in the third trilogy set in the Kushiel's Legacy series. However, this last trilogy is set a few generations later and stands on it's own. This book, as the third in this trilogy, works best as the finale to the trilogy.

This book opens with Bao and Moirin heading back to Terre D'Ange from the far east. They've been on a ship for months and are just coming upon Marsilikos where they learn that Raphael de Mereliot's sister has passed away. From there, it's on to Terre D'Ange and the royal court where things are not well on many fronts.

King Daniel has been thrown into a deep funk by the death of his second beloved wife, Jehanne. Even though they have a toddler, Daniel can barely stand to spend time with her because she so resembles her deceased mom. Moirin and Bao can see right away that Desiree is suffering from neglect. Meanwhile, Prince Thierry, Desiree's much older half-brother, went on a trade and exploration voyage to Terra Nova. Word reaches the court that Thierry has disappeared but Moirin is convinced he's still alive.

Leaving the D'Angeline court in a bit of a disarray, Bao and Moirin make their way to Terra Nova on a quest to seek out Thierry and bring him back to set things aright. Of course, it's not that straight forward. There's plenty of hazards and Moirin and Bao have their doubts from time to time.

Terra Nova adventuring was deadly dangerous, thrilling, and so very well done. There's human sacrifice, deadly ants, sorcery, Aragonians, native allies and enemies, betrayal, old loves, new friends, and gods that demand to be satisfied. I was impressed with how the blood sacrifices were addressed in this story. Human sacrifice was part of more than one culture in Terra Nova. While this is difficult for Moirin to wrap her mind around, she does try and eventually she and Bao have to make a hard choice on this front.

The jungle scene was great too. So many insects, reptiles, and plants! There's plenty of reasons the Aragonians want a monopoly on trade agreements with the local government. Terra Nova offers not only riches but novelty goods that Aragonia has never seen. However, the Aragonians have not been fully honest with the first Terre D'Ange expedition nor have they treated the local population with respect. Moirin, always the polite young lass, offers much in the way of mutual respect and the Nahuatl king recognizes this.

The ants! Oh my! The ants were terrifying. We run into them perhaps half way through the book after the group has survived more than one betrayal along with flooded rivers and illness. Raphael had traveled with Thierry on the first ill-fated expedition and in the heart of the jungle, Moirin and her companions finally come across him. Their joy at finding him alive is short lived as they soon learn the state of things.

All of Moirin's powers are put to use in this tale. Cloaking herself in Twilight serves her well in more than one instance. Then her ability to quicken green growing things saves plenty of people. She also puts her

linguistic skills to use as more than one culture makes up this adventure in Terra Nova.

One of my favorite scenes is with the Nahuatl King. He offers Moirin vital info and a skilled guide to help track Thierry in exchange for a night with her. He also offers his youngest wife to Bao for one night, claiming that is more than enough honor for any man. Moirin's counter was awesome. She lays out her own great deeds and skills and declares that one night with her is more than enough honor for any man. It was a great scene.

In the end, Bao has to do one last thing to prove himself. There's some loss in this tale but much happiness. New ties have been made and a strong foundation laid for Moirin's future. I definitely enjoyed this book a bit more than Book 2, Naamah's Curse. This was not only a solid, satisfying ending for this trilogy but also for the entire Terre D'Ange Cycle.

The Narration: Anne Flosnik brings us home as Moirin in this final book of the series. I think I say this every time, but Flosnik has got some skills on her! Yet more accents are added to her repertoire as we explore Terra Nova. Also, there's some strong emotions in this book, what with human sacrifice and what not. Flosnik does a great job expressing these often nuanced emotions. Her male voices are believable and all her characters are distinct. A most excellent narration all around.

2. Quashant

This is more a 3.5 star, but I'm rounding up to 4. I liked this book much better than the second Moirin book. It was nice to see Terre d'Ange again, and the journey to Terra Nova was a fun adventure.

I usually love seeing the gods at work in the characters' lives, and that's something that drew me to the books in the first place. However, I fear that Moirin's saga relies a bit too heavily on deus ex machina. Moirin is always following her diadh-anam or Naamah's urgings or true dreams. She seems to have very little real agency, and we get the feeling that she, like us, is just waiting around to see how everything will turn out. I wish we saw her with a much more active role in these amazing stories. When she does, it's always through a gift from some god anyway. I guess I would have liked to see more of Moirin the (possibly fallible) human heroine and less Moirin the vessel waiting to be used.

Still, the story was fun, and I liked the way it closed the Circle of Shalomon, so to speak. I loved seeing Terra Nova and meeting their people and gods. The climax seemed to be missing something for me, but I'm not sure what. It may just be that deus ex machina bit. Still, the ending was solid and a great conclusion for this trilogy.

3. Steep

Not quite as perfect as Kushiel's Dart, but I really enjoyed the Naamah trilogy and her finale (Naamah's Blessing) was a beautiful way to wrap up this wonderful trilogy. I will definitely re-read again and again as I like the main heroine and her travels, struggles and growth throughout the trilogy. Carey uses vivid descriptions to create a beautiful alternate reality that can still be recognized and connect with today. Her characters are well portrayed and REAL, each with unique personalities and lifestyles that don't feel forced or outlandish.

On a side note, while I adored the original Kushiel trilogy (K. Dart, Chosen and Avatar) and HIGHLY recommend it, and I really enjoyed this trilogy, I have not read the trilogy in between that connects the two trilogies. You do not have to read either previous trilogies to understand this trilogy, although it does make some references to the previous books. Obviously, as this is the third book in the Naamah trilogy, you DO have to read the first two books (Naamah's Kiss, Naamah's Curse) to understand this book.

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