



## The Poison Priestess

*Karen Azinger*

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## **The Poison Priestess** Karen Azinger

While Kath and her companions chase the Mordant into the far north, the southern kingdoms erupt in Flames. The Lord Raven marches south, unleashing a holy war against Lanverness. Vastly outnumbered by a ruthless enemy, Queen Liandra spins desperate gambits in a dire struggle to save her kingdom.

New alliances and new awakenings hatch deeper levels of intrigue. The Oracle Priestess and the Lord Raven form a tenuous alliance, while deep in the Southern Mountains the Kiralynn monks stir, revealing more than prophecy.

Armies clash, battles rage, and cities fall, as lives, loves and crowns hang in the balance, but swords are not the only way to wage war. Treachery, deceit, assassins, and the power of seduction will face-off against steadfast courage, forgotten magic, and the power of truth. The Poison Priestess is the fourth book in this epic tale of Light versus Dark.

## **The Poison Priestess Details**

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Author : Karen Azinger

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# From Reader Review *The Poison Priestess* for online ebook

## **Jennie Kemhus says**

Once again Karen has created a brilliant book. They keep getting better and better. This book takes us back the Liandra, Jordan, Stephan, the Priestess, Stewart and some other colorful character.

The plot of this book takes place at the same time that *Skeleton King* was happening.

As everything comes together Karen has managed to create a living chess board where the next move is anyone's guess.

Brilliant writing, seamless chapters, and an amazing flair for intrigue; Karen knows how to keep a readers attention perked and hungry for more.

*The Poison Priestess* is a fascinating character that was introduced in earlier books. The Priestess has a different kind of agenda that has you chomping at the bit to see what is up her sleeve. This book takes passion and deception up a notch.

You won't regret picking up this saga. Never boring, full of twists and turns, heartache and passion, power and subterfuge, dark and light... Who will make the next move and who will ultimately cause check mate! Keep reading my friends for the road is a place of discovery.

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## **David says**

The *Skeleton King* was always going to be a difficult book to follow. This book was good, but not as good as the previous books. The tale moves south and follows the events in Lanverness. The Lord Raven is a great creation and thoroughly dislikeable. You know there is a comeuppance coming and to be honest, it can't happen too soon. There's more intrigue and courtly goings-on in this novel. It's worth reading and does take the tale forward nicely, but there's less action and magic than in the earlier books. Duncan is another good character. I did find some oddities in the tale, but they didn't detract too much.

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## **Robyn says**

### **Wonderful story!**

I cannot put these books down! Rich in detail and amazing characters. This book kept me up late into the night.

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## **Seregil of Rhiminee says**

Originally published at Risingshadow.

*The Poison Priestess* is the fourth book of *The Silk & Steel Saga*. It satisfyingly continues the complex and entertaining story, which started in *The Steel Queen* and then continued in *The Flame Priest* and *The Skeleton King*.

I have to say that I was very impressed by *The Poison Priestess*, because Karen Azinger clearly loves to write fantasy and is devoted to this series (the story arc which spans five books is quite an achievement, because in this series everything is connected and all the happenings mean something). If I had to use only one adjective to describe this book, it would be "amazing", because this book is simply amazing and highly entertaining.

Karen Azinger has a wonderful talent for surprising her readers and fans with fresh and exciting plot twists. As a big fan of fantasy literature, I can mention that it was easy for me to see that Karen Azinger loves writing and wants to write an unforgettable fantasy adventure which both entertains and surprises her readers. Her descriptive writing style adds lots of charm to this book, because readers are able to immerse themselves to the story by reading about well-constructed and vividly portrayed characters, exotic places and magic.

Because it's been a while since the two previous books (*The Flame Priest* and *The Skeleton King*) were published, here's a bit of information about what happened in them (these synopses are as spoiler-free as possible):

In *The Flame Priest* Queen Liandra faced the threat of the Red Horns. Kath and her companions travelled north and faced several problems along the way. Samson and Justin tried to find a way to free Coronth of the brutal religion of the Flame God. Duncan's secret was revealed. Steffan created an army and wanted to set it free. The Priestess got new responsibilities from the Dark Lord. The Mordant sowed hate and mistrust across the realm and made his way toward the north.

In *The Skeleton King* the events took place in the northern part of the world. Kath and her companions were on the steppes and faced several problems. Kath was poisoned. Blaine met the Painted Warriors who offered help. Duncan was captured. The Knight Marshal, the king and the Knights of the Octagon prepared for the war. The king suffered losses. The Mordant reclaimed his throne and started a war.

Here's a bit of information about what happens in this book:

In *The Poison Priestess* the events take place in the southern part of the world. Liandra fights a desperate fight to save her kingdom from the army of The Flame God. She also has to deal with things which are happening inside her kingdom, and she receives visitors from a distant place. Danly, Liandra's son, faces cruel justice and meets persons who want to "help" him. Steffan wages a brutal holy war against Lanverness and wants to take the throne away from Liandra. Stewart fights against Steffan's army. Jordan leaves the monastery. She sees horrible visions and doesn't know how to deal with them...

(That's all I'll write about the plot, because I want to avoid writing spoilers.)

In my opinion it's great that Karen Azinger has decided to write about the southern kingdoms. By writing solely about Liandra, Danly, the Priestess, Steffan and other characters, the author develops and deepens all of them. Each of these characters feels realistic and believable, which is very nice, because there are lots of fantasy series which tend to have lifeless characters (not to mention simple plots).

*The Poison Priestess* is a book of strong female characters. Although there are plenty of male characters and minor characters in this book, the main characters are the Priestess and Queen Liandra, because they're in the middle of several happenings.

This book raises the character of the Priestess into the spotlight. She is an interesting and mysterious

character who uses sex, seduction and poisons to get what she wants. She shamelessly uses sex as a weapon and seduces men with her voluptuous body. She's a ruthless and intelligent woman who wants to please the Dark Lord. The way she uses poisons to further her goals is simply brilliant, because she is the master of the art of poisoning and knows what she's doing. It was great to read more about the Priestess, because she's been one of my favourite characters in this series.

Queen Liandra is one of the most interesting and complex female characters in the fantasy literature, because she's a strong queen and a brilliant strategist who never gives up. Although Liandra is a queen, she's also a woman who has feelings and needs of her own. She has to maintain a public image of royalty and power, but at the same time she struggles with personal problems.

I enjoyed reading more about the Kiralynn monks, because they've been enigmatic people who have been keeping secrets for a long time. The mysterious monks offer help to persons, but they almost always hide their help in riddles and never fully reveal their knowledge to outsiders.

It's amazing how fluently and believably the author writes about honour, duty, treachery, destiny, love, hate, friendship and treason. The characters have to make difficult decisions, which will affect their lives - they have to think what is best for them and all the others, because every decision has consequences and some of the consequences may not be easy to live with.

The character development works well and each character has his/her own feelings. It's interesting to read about the personal problems of the characters and how they cope with difficult things. For example, reading about the personal tragedy of Queen Liandra was interesting and touching.

The different point of view characters make this series good and add complexity to the story arc. One of the best things about this series is that the author writes just as fascinatingly about the evil characters as she writes about the good characters (this is one of the reasons why I love The Silk & Steel Saga).

One of the most interesting things about this book is that the author explores if duty is more important than love when you're a queen. When Queen Liandra teaches Jemma and observes how she acts, the author writes about how they feel about duty and love - to Liandra duty comes first, but Jemma thinks that love is also important.

The Poison Priestess contains several deliciously macabre and brutal scenes, which will delight readers of adult fantasy. For example, the death by a fetish scene was amazing. I also enjoyed reading about what happened to Danly and how the evil characters wove new plots to get what they wanted.

The battle scenes are interesting, because Karen Azinger shows how brutal war can be. She writes about a holy war in which almost everything is allowed in order to annihilate and conquer Lanverness (the holy war in this book is as nasty and immoral as possible, because Steffan knows what he wants and wants to please the Dark Lord as much as possible by doing dark deeds). It's great that the author writes about what happens to Stewart during the war, because it gives her a chance to reveal how ruthless and immoral the enemy is. His thoughts reveal how he feels about the war and what happens to his men.

The worldbuilding is excellent, because the author reveals more things about the southern kingdoms. The author has created a huge fantasy world and in this book the readers have a chance to read more about the different places from Lingard to Salmythra. It was nice to read about the new places and what happened in them.

Magic has been an important part of this series from the beginning and in this book the author writes more about it. Reading about magic and all things related to magic has always been of interest to me, so I was thrilled to read about these things. I think I'd better not write more about these things, because it wouldn't be fair to reveal everything in this review.

Karen Azinger writes entertainingly and boldly about sex and different kind of sexual situations. The scenes in which the Priestess has sex with her partners are highly erotic and sensual. I think that these scenes will please several readers of adult fantasy, because they're an important part of the story and the author uses them to illustrate how the Priestess behaves and how she makes men do what she wants. The sex scenes with Steffan are also handled well, because the character's evil nature is perfectly reflected in his appearance and manners (Steffan is a man who uses women for his own pleasure).

I love the amount of small details in *The Poison Priestess*. Just like the previous three books, this book contains lots of small and important details which are gradually revealed to the readers. I won't mention what these details are, but I think that readers will notice that Karen Azinger has an eye for certain details that are often overlooked by other authors.

In my opinion *The Silk & Steel Saga* is without a doubt one of the best traditional fantasy series ever written, because it's a shamelessly entertaining series and the story keeps on getting better and better with each new book (at this moment *The Poison Priestess* is the best book in this series). I'm sure that *The Silk & Steel Saga* - and especially *The Poison Priestess* - will remind readers of how good traditional fantasy can be at its best.

It's wonderful and also amazing that Karen Azinger has managed to keep all the plot threads in her hands. She handles multiple plot threads perfectly and adds more depth all the time. Her vision about the war between good and evil is stunningly entertaining and surprisingly complex when compared to other new traditional fantasy series (you don't normally find this kind of complexity in entertaining traditional fantasy books).

I'm sure that all fans of Karen Azinger will be more than pleased with this book, because it's everything you can expect from her - interesting characters, treachery, action, magic, surprises etc. I can hardly wait to read what happens in the final book, because when I read this book, I noticed that the story is building up towards a superb and powerful climax. I think that everybody who reads this book will want to know when the final book will be published, because the story is so good that you just want to keep on reading it.

Excellent entertainment!

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### **Avidreader100 says**

Another fabulous book. I am so pleased that each book in this series somehow manages to get better. I love the character of the priestess. She is evil incarnate, but somehow very sympathetic. Azinger lets us inside her plots and stratagems, and it is impossible not to admire her brilliance. She turns what is usually the disadvantage of being female to her ultimate weapon. You find yourself saying "You go Girl", all the while appalled at her agenda. WOW!! What a series. I have no clue how Azinger is going to end this, because as of Book IV ( *The Poison Priestess*) the bad guys seem too untouchable.

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## **Lacey says**

I hit the 51% completed mark on this one and just had to stop and take a break for a while. I really enjoy these books but at this point I was just feeling overwhelmed by the pure evil of the bad guys. I mean, really, how does one fight against pure evil. But, once I came back to the story things got interesting again. There were some real plot twists I didn't see coming that sparked my interest in the series as a whole again. I think it was a good idea to focus on other characters for a while also. We get to see what Jordan is doing while Kath is chasing down the Mordant. Looking forward to reading further now.

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## **Astrokid says**

"The Poison Priestess" more than lives up to its cover! The Priestess has to be my favorite "bad" character in this series so I was pleased to see a book dedicated to her exploits. It did not disappoint! The story gets better, more complex, and more interesting with every book. I especially enjoy the different points of view, the character development, and the history and motivations of all the major characters, both good and evil. I know the Priestess is "evil" and I want "good" to win, but the author has made the Priestess so captivating a character that I actually find myself cheering for her and reveling in her successes. The author does an excellent job of weaving all the players and plots together into an awesome story in a wondrous world. This series is the best fantasy saga I've read in ages and I can't wait for the next book to come out!! Highly recommended!!

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## **Zak Oglesby says**

"Desire is often the greatest poison."

One of, I think, the greatest lines I have read in any book. In addition to providing a fantastic commentary on our world it perfect serves to sum up Ms. Azinger's most recent book. Please understand, I don't mean to say desiring the book to much poison's the experience, but that the book itself perfectly blends poison and desire into one of the best fantasy books I have rad in the past twelve months.

Every time I pick up one of the Silk and Steel books I do so with a certain amount of trepidation. Could this book possibly be as good as the past one/two/three have been? And each time I have been happy to answer that yes, yes they could. This time I can say that this book is in fact BETTER than those which preceded it, something I never expected to say.

The Poison Priestess begins during the same time frame as the Skeleton King, except where that book focused on event to the north or Erdhe this book contains itself to the south. For fans of the stories of Liandra, Steward, and Jordan this book will strike a perfect cord. The action is fast past in all the right parts, while slowing down at some places to allow the depth of the vents which just happened to sink in. Azinger's miraculous use of pacing and tone are in full display in this book and it shines because of them.

The story of Liandra especially fleshes out in this novel. Torn between emotion and duty her character deepens and anneals into something completely new and amazing. I must say that although she has long been my favorite character she definitely came into her own this time.

The other stories are just as rich and rewarding, from the darkly sinister Lord Raven's march towards Laverness and Pellamor to the Priestess's seductive personality. Each is peppered with surprises and plot twists so shocking that I often found myself rereading passages to make sure I was right in what I thought was going on. Hints of foreshadowing also are woven into the story so numerous that I doubt any reader could ever catch them all on a first try. One detail especially sticks in my mind as one of the best hidden bits

of foreshadowing I've read to date.

In totality if you've already begun down the path of the Silk and Steel Saga prepare yourself for a return to Erdhe which, while darker than any of the preceding books, most definitely deserves its place in the series. If your new to the series stop reading this moment and go buy the first book, it is most certainly a series which gets better with every book and is well worth the investment.

As Erdhe girds for war readers wait in anticipation for The Battle Immortal.

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## **Skip Crust says**

So here's my thing. I love this series. Love, love, love. This book? The most difficult to get through, IMO.

Pros: There are many. It continues on with my favorite set of characters: Liandra - The queen heroine that always seems to be one step ahead of the next treacherous plan. Steffen - the perfect villain, the one I love to hate. Daly - the rejected and bitter son, vowing for revenge. These characters (and more!) make this a story worth investing in. I care not only for the characters, but am completely wrapped up in the storyline. Ms. Azinger can really pull you in and not let go.

Cons: The Poison Priestess (I won't say more about her background, for spoiler reasons) has but two tools at her disposal. Both, she wields with excess: poison and sex. Dang, is there a lot of sex in this book. I get that she's sultry, curvy, conniving, manipulative, sexy, and seductive. Ho-ly cow, is it ever over the top. My strong opinion is that this character could have been written in the same way without the soft-core scenes. I also understand that I'm probably in the minority here. However, for this reason, I have to downgrade my rating.

If I could give this book 3.5 stars, I would. Despite my concerns about this book, I will absolutely keep reading. This book focused upon the title character, and I expect that the next will do the same.

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## **Liz C says**

### **Excellent series**

This is good. I think the best of the series so far. I love the characters, the spider queen and the priestess are excellent. It was a nice twist with one of these characters, no spoilers from me. I think the author has distilled all the elements of a good fantasy novel into this and I can't wait to download the next. I heartily recommend the series to anyone.

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## **Sandra Crow says**

### **Absolutely Riveting**

This is another well crafted story in this series. This story kept me on the edge of my seat. The author weaves a detailed story. Layered with intrigue and action, I could not wait to turn the page to see what is happening next. I can not wait to read the next book in this series.



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**Paddy O'callaghan says**

I'm not really into fantasy at all, but I loved this. The protagonist is evil but you still like her in a way. A sort of love to hate character. This book is beautifully written. Read it EVEN IF YOU DON'T LIKE FANTASY GENRE.

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**Carlos Jr. says**

This is my kind of book! Tons of fantasy in it!

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