

Of the Persecuted

Angie Brashear

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Laila Pennedy awaits death by hanging. For the Rendow Clan rules the Woodlands Region, aiming to slaughter the Faithful. And she deserves to die. But Lars Landre, the man destined to lead the Faithful out of persecution, has other plans hidden behind his rare and mysterious blue eyes. Rescue.

Following the daring escape, Laila seeks the path of a warrior and vows revenge against the Rendow Clan. She embarks on a dangerous journey with Lars, one in which they endeavor to reach the promised safety of a magical village, to train for battle, and to ultimately assure freedom for those with faith in the Maker.

Clashes of weapons and souls. Brutal loss of lives. Unrequited love. How in all the Woodlands will Laila survive?

Of the Persecuted Details


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From Reader Review Of the Persecuted for online ebook

Trinity Rose says

I won this book on a facebook promotion party. I was thrilled to win.

Of The Persecuted by Angie Brashear is an excellent book. I really enjoyed it and look forward to the next book written by Angie Brashear.

Of The Persecuted starts out as Laila and her brother are about to be hung for being a Faithful. Very exciting way to start and it only gets better through the book.

They are saved, also a young boy, Finney, by a man named Lars Landre. In this book two forces are against each other, the Faithful and the Rendow Clan. Your good/evil, followers of God against the followers of the devil.

Many of the scenes in the story are very beautiful, but also war is very ugly. While Lars is leading Laila and Finney back to the city he calls home two other people come along claiming to be Faithful members also. Find out who they are and what happens to all involved. Also this book is about trust, faith and believing in the Lord.

I find this very interesting because they don't claim to be from the earth but some other place. Really intriguing. Highly recommended.

Thank you to the Author/Publicist for providing this book for review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255

Shantelle says

Oh, all the different variations of fantasy! <3 *Of the Persecuted* by Angie Brashear was another of those variations that just thrilled and touched my heart!

Laila is one of the Faithful. Persecution of the people who still follow the Maker is raging. Danger for them is everywhere. After meeting a mysterious, blue-eyed rescuer, and a young one with the same eyes, Laila finds herself on the run. Fleeing from slayers, nightmares, and the noose. Lessons are learned ... the unexpected is everywhere ... the Faithful strive to keep their trust in the Maker, but who will survive the wicked attacks of the enemies?

Of the Persecuted starts with utmost drama. I was pulled in at once, and filled with excitement for the tale and where it was going to go. The fantasy aspect was wonderful. The concealers, fairies, dragons, gemstone, and all else! Ooh, and Lars's "camp". I can't tell you how neat that feature was ... so "fantasy/fairytale-ish"; I loved it! *smiles* Imaginative and interesting, all of it. I can't wait to explore everything more in the next book (there must be a next book, right??)

A Christian allegory was very evident in this story. There was the Maker—the God of the universe, and then there was the Master of Lies, who led unresisting hearts down dark paths. *Of the Persecuted*, as the title suggests, has a main theme of persecution for believing in the one true God. It also explores God working in us, faith, and other such things. I found it to be a poignant tale.

... Though, I had a hard time figuring out the whole "Chosen" thing, and why everybody says the Maker really works through this one guy. Why would He work more through one person than the others? Because that one person was more willing to be used by the Maker? I didn't know quite what to make of it; still don't ... But perhaps the next books will explain more!

Laila, Lars, and Finney ... such great characters, all of them. Finney was so funny and cute. Lars was a bit swoon-y. Haha! *grins* A wonderful young man, though hard to understand at points. I connected pretty well with Laila. Her awkwardness ... I totally understand you, dear! Zander was a pretty good guy too, though I was tempted to become really angry at him a lot, because I believe he made a triangle out of the romance. And if you know me, I'm not a fan of love triangles, especially when the girl is oblivious and/or doesn't know how to handle it. But the whole situation worked out pretty smoothly in *Of the Persecuted*, without ruffling my feathers too much, haha!

Overall, I felt Angie Brashear did a really good job with her character, main, secondary, and everybody else. They were all very interesting!

The main romance was utterly sweet. So fun. My heart just sighed at certain moments ... you'll know them ... it was just so precious. There were some kisses and slightly heated moments, (and sometimes following those, a word of wisdom of two). Also, there was some talk about men "having their way" with a girl; and a brief scene were a girl is getting attacked. I would recommend 16 or 17 and up as for audience.

The violence/ghastly scenes were definitely there. I was a bit surprised at some of the dark features this book entailed. There were "demon fairies", shadow beings, ghoulish nightmares, and some beheadings even. Also, in battles, there was some graphic detail. I certainly could have done with less of all that for certain; but it did add a depth to the message Angie Brashear had to tell, I think. At least some of the things. Others, I'm still not yet sure what to think of. I will insert in here that I'm still reeling over what happened to a certain black-haired lady ... don't know what to think about that! So yes, a big warning. This book is not for everyone. I would recommend to older teens at least.

Of the Persecuted could feel a little slow at points. Sometimes I wondered where things were going, and when were they going to get there? I feel this book needs a sequel; the story ... it just has to continue! I want to know more. I need to see how everything turns out. The story hasn't concluded yet.

So yes. Wonderful new fantasy. I really liked it! I recommend that you try out this book (only if you can handle some ghastly violence), and just be tugged into this amazing world! Intriguing. Captivating. Thrilling. Heart-melting. I can't wait to continue the LEGENDS OF THE WOODLANDS series!

Rebecca (whenallotherlightsgoout) says

Read in September 2015

WARNING: I did not read past page 40, so you are free to dismiss my opinion as ignorant and move on to other reviews. But herein lies the reason I could not bring my self to continue this book.

Love At First Sight

This annoys me more than love triangles. From the moment Laila laid eyes on Lars she has gone on about how incredibly handsome and perfect he is. Even more annoying is the fact that Laila spends too much time convincing herself that Lars finds her weak and annoying when it is painfully obvious that he likes her too.

Gah!

Laila is Annoying

60% of her thoughts are about how utterly amazing Lars is. 30% is convincing herself that Lars won't like her and finds her annoying and weak and pitiful. (He obviously does like her) 10% is sorrow over losing her family.

Forced Dialogue

I have rolled my eyes so many times at the dialogue.

Strong Characters

If you have to repeatedly tell your reader that these characters are strong, smart, resourceful, etc., then they probably aren't.

DON'T TELL ME. PROVE IT TO ME.

Show me the character's strong actions, smart decisions, resourceful actions. Make me believe it through showing, not telling.

Laila is Clueless

The archery scene is the thing that pushed me over the edge. I quit reading after that.

First off, I am an archer. I know how archery works. The instructions Lars gave were accurate yet completely basic. If you have seen archery at all, you probably know to do them without being told. My problem is with Laila. She is fretting over the many steps and things to remember, which would be fine except the only thing Lars has explained is how to nock an arrow. *facepalm*

On top of that the scene focused on Laila thinking about how close Lars was standing and trying to figure out if he was breathing abnormally because she excited him.

Conclusion

I was hoping for an amazing fantasy adventure. Instead I got a lot of romance with a fantasy backdrop. Now, keep in mind that I only read 40 pages. It might change. Maybe. But since they were the 40 longest pages of my life, I don't really care to find out if it gets better.

Bill Tillman says

A Tale as old as man & beast. Thrilling and wonderful in so many aspects, a truly Christian adventure. One summer in the life of Lelia and the world turns on its ear. Dragons, Unicorns and magic abound, a hidden sanctuary of life and light. A must read.

Gina Coulter says

I'm just starting to dip my toes in the Christian Fantasy genre, and stumbled across this novel while browsing book reviews and giveaways. A near-death-by-hanging scene featured in a blog interview caught my interest, elevating "Of the Persecuted" to one of my most anticipated reads of the year, despite my inexperience with the author's work.

From the cover and chapter excerpt, I expected a Medieval-flavored romance, full of action/adventure, and

steeped in faith values that explore the challenge of enduring suffering for one's beliefs. The story both met my expectations, and disappointed. It delivered the romance and faith focus I expected, but more of an original Fantasy world than a Medieval lookalike, with a definite YA bent. Magic and mythical creatures abounded, such as a dragon, unicorn, demon "faeries", and a walled city invisible to evil hearts. The world building offered just enough to tease my imagination, but left me wishing for more vivid descriptions. The persecution element identified in the title wasn't near as central to the plot as anticipated war between "Faithfuls" and the evil "Clan of Rendow".

Many of the scenes were characterized more by "filler" than plot-driving action, e.g., mundane survival tasks/lessons featured during what was supposed to be a suspenseful trek through woodlands, and upon arrival in the Faithfuls' city, the scenes turned into tours, dinners, dragon rides, and festivities, the only conflict being the characters' tug-of-war with romantic feelings. I did enjoy the increased action/suspense toward the end.

Laila is a strong yet vulnerable character who struggles with desire for revenge, and a love for her leader/guardian that she believes can never be reciprocated. I wish I could have gotten to know Laila on a deeper level, as the story is told through her third-person POV from start to finish, but I didn't get a clear idea of her deep-set fears (other than those brought about by the circumstances), or her likes/dislikes. Stilted dialogue emphasized my distance from her and other characters, which may be why I remained unaffected during pivotal scenes. I did enjoy her and the hero's chemistry—it was a favorite aspect of the novel.

A creative, enjoyable story overall, "Of the Persecuted" will appeal to young readers who love Christian-themed Fantasy (C.S. Lewis/J.R.R. Tolkien), and will appreciate fun scenes with a dragon and unicorn.

Pauline Creeden says

4.5 Stars - A band of unlikely characters must learn to band together in this mixture of fantasy and dystopian. The characters have to learn who they can trust, and the importance of each person in their group. For those who love a strong Christian worldview with their fantasy, with the addition of the oppressive governing structure of a dystopian society will enjoy this book immensely. Fans of Hunger Games and LOTR would not be disappointed by picking this one up.

Camilla says

A fantasy-romance that had definite allegorical meaning to it. Of the Persecuted was a very real adventure of the soul that entertained, encouraged, and prompted me to step out past the confines of reality into the world within the pages. It wasn't a fluff story, but the kind of story that made me see, hear, feel, and think more deeply; To really evaluate where I am, where others are, and the true meaning of life and beyond, into Eternity. Original characters, with very real issues; plot twists that just raged the reader onward, fantastical creatures to satisfy speculative fiction readers; and a journey of love. This book could easily make a wonderful film.

Upon completion of the book, the ONLY complaint I had was the swiftness of the romance that occurred. I was a little critical of how quickly the affection and care turned to feelings of love. Being that the book is in

a YA category, there is a definite sense of insecurity; a desire to find purpose and a solution to the evil taking over their world; and some immaturity in decision-making, also due to raging feelings; but I think that is pretty accurate. I would have liked to know more about the land, its people, scenery, and history there. The story, characters, and plot were unique and intriguing, including some very unusual plot twists that kept me involved and interested.

The story flowed well, and it was creatively enjoyable. A great beginning, a fast-flowing middle, and a satisfying end. I would recommend this for YA as well as adults. It has elements that would be enjoyed by ANYONE who enjoys fantasy, romance, Christian allegorical writing. I look forward to the next book in the series.

Jerusha Agen says

With an unusually gripping beginning, Angie Brashear grabs the reader instantly, drawing them into a world of danger and intrigue that, in the end, is surprisingly similar to our own. Brashear's strength is targeting the teen readers for whom this book is written. Teen girls who pick up this book will be comforted by the heroine's struggle with the self-doubts and insecurities that plague most girls, while being challenged to grow with the heroine in courage, confidence, and strength. The fact that the book is packed with action and romance won't hurt the story in young readers' eyes either.

Of the Persecuted stands out among other books in its genre, however, by keeping the story clean and uplifting. Though violent in several medieval-type battle sequences and hanging executions, the story is otherwise a refreshing change from the standard YA fare that often does young readers more harm than good. Brashear's book is an option that will make both kids AND their parents happy. I look forward to more books from this talented new author!

Michele says

Of the Persecuted (Legends of the Woodlands #1) by Angie Brashear is an imaginative story that captivated me from the beginning. Pulling elements from fantasy, christian fiction and romance, there was a lot to like about Laila's tale.

Written from main character Laila Pennedy's POV, we follow from her time on the execution block and her amazing escape, to her journey as she follows Lars Landre and joins the other Faithfuls in Tuveil. Although much of the dialogue and Laila's thoughts/actions are in reference to the Maker, I didn't find this story to be overtly religious. To me, it mostly felt like a fantasy story based on the tone, as well as where we meet some incredible creatures, both good and evil.

'What greater purpose did he serve? To defeat Vatten Rendow and the Clan? Whatever the answer, the Maker united her with Lars for a reason. Whether leader, friend, or more, the union captivated her.'

I thought the personal relationships that grew over the course of this book seemed believable and were quite heartwarming. From young Finney who was full of energy and curiosity, to Lars, the one said to be the

Chosen who would lead the Faithfuls to victory over the evil Rendow Clan, each character was well developed and made an impact on the story. Lars in particular played a huge part in Laila's life as she fell in love with him more and more as they grew to know each other.

Lars brushed fingers along her cheek. "I'm drawn to you. Your breath is my breath now. From the instant our eyes met at the gallows. No matter what circumstances brought us together, we must appreciate where we are now."

The only issue I had with the story was very mild and to do with Laila's lack of self-esteem. It seemed that even when people's feelings about her were staring her right in the face, she downplayed it and wouldn't believe herself to be good enough, over and over. Thankfully Laila did grow emotionally and mentally as a young woman and gained more confidence by the end of the book, owning those feelings and actions a bit more. It was lovely to finally see her blossom into an adult and take charge.

Book one in the Legends of the Woodlands trilogy was exciting and had of a wonderful cast of characters. If you're looking for a unique story to lose yourself in, this would be a great choice.

Jaime K says

Marked as DNF about 10% in. The lead Laila is rescued by a dude named Lars and she immediately wonders if she could love him. His BLUE EYES (because apparently those are rare?) affect her immensely and she's DRAWN to him and OMGZ she doesn't know something so now she'll look STUPID.

No thanks. I won't waste my time.

Laura A. Grace says

What an excellent novel! From the very beginning I was drawn into the world of Woodlands and it just continued to pick up momentum as the story progressed.

Now I have to admit that at first I honestly didn't like Laila because of the constant way she seem to berate herself, but she undergoes an amazing change throughout "Of the Persecuted." I was stunned by how much she changes from such a self-doubting girl to a brave woman who is not afraid to die for the Maker. I was definitely inspired by her transformation to say the least!

My favorite part of this entire novel is the story line. I already mentioned how Laila undergoes an epic transformation and loved being with her on this journey as she met awesome people like Fin, experiences Lar's "camp," and draws closer to the Maker through good and hard times.

The message really struck me in how the characters put their faith in the Maker to always provide. They may have struggled in wondering if He would, but they ultimately trusted Him despite what they felt or the situation.

I definitely enjoyed reading "Out of the Persecuted," but will only be giving it 4 stars because there were a few violent scenes that were a little bit too gory for me. If it had been toned down some I would have definitely given it 5 stars and the story itself deserves all that and more! It's because of the story and epic transformation of Lalia that I recommend it to YA fantasy readers, but with a warning of violence.

(I received this novel from the author in exchange for an honest review. All thoughts expressed are my own and was not required to write a positive review.)

Danielle says

I have never read a fantasy book before. Not even LOTR or The Hobbit. My daughter loves them, and we've attended some author FB parties, so I really wanted to read this one after "meeting" Angie Brashear online.

I read this in three days, which means I really enjoyed it, since I am a bit busy with 7 kids at home. One aspect of fantasy that intrigues me is the setting: you aren't in either a historical or contemporary setting; everything seems plausible, except maybe some of the creatures :) I do enjoy Christian speculative fiction, so I now see that fantasy isn't too far off. I appreciated how the terminology paralleled ours such as "The Maker" for God, and "one true match" for the person you'd marry.

The only issue I had with this book, which keeps me from giving it five stars, is the romance. No spoilers here, but it was enough to make me a bit uncomfortable in what I thought was inappropriate for a couple not yet married.

Angie Brashear's *Of the Persecuted* is a unique story, and I will definitely read the rest of her *Legends of the Woodlands* series.

Kara says

re reading in June 2015 because I forgot the story and now have the sequel.....this book is SOOOOOOOO good, NICE debut book and GREAT story <3 <3

Wow, what a great book!!! This is Christian YA at its finest starting with an amazing cover that I can't stop looking at :) I loved everything about this story and it kept me up well into the night because I couldn't put it away! Laila got on my nerves a few times with her insecurities, but she does endure a lot and her faith keeps her going. She wants revenge against the villains throughout most of the book, which I didn't agree with, but the intense battle she goes through at the end made sense to me and made me eager to see the conclusion.

Brashear DOES NOT DISAPPOINT with her DEBUT novel and I CAN'T WAIT to read Book 2-Of The Coldblooded where Laila is the hunter instead of the hunted- later this year...HIGHLY recommend this book for those who enjoy clean fantasy (yes there's a REALLY cool dragon in this one-reminded me of Valcor from Neverending Story except this one is deadlier and really shiny-also LOOOOVED the stone that turned color connecting Lars to Gus), speculative, and/or YA stories.....this one is NOT TO BE MISSED! I'm truly blessed with authors like Brashear who write stories like this one and it's Christian YA (LOOOOVE); you got my attention, inspired me, and compelled me to hang on with such a great adventure!

Lydia Thomas says

I give *Of the Persecuted* by Angie Brashear 3 out of 5 stars.

First of all, Brashear is to be commended for presenting a Christian worldview in a fantasy world. It's hard to do, and while I didn't agree with every conclusion at which the characters arrived, I thought it was well-handled throughout the story.

That being said, *Of the Persecuted* was not what I expected.

From the synopsis, I really expected a tight, action-packed plot. While the plot picked up considerably towards the end of the book, I wanted to see more conflict and action throughout. I also wanted to understand and explore Laila's bent on revenge, but it wasn't terribly developed. The plot focused instead on other things.

Of the Persecuted is classified as young adult fantasy-romance, but I felt the romance element outweighed the fantasy aspect and believed some of the content was mature enough for an older audience. I enjoy a story with elements of romance (who doesn't?), but I came away from reading a few times feeling that the plot focused too much on a build up to romance, and not enough on the struggle between the Rendow Clan and the Faithful, or even Laila's feelings of revenge.

I enjoyed the cast of characters, from the good to the downright nasty. I've got to say, my favorites were Moyna (you'll know why if you read the book) and Jolene (a Faithful who knows her desires and commits them to the Maker: "He's the perfect match for me and I plan to implore the Maker for our union as long as it takes.") There were a couple of great twists at the end too.

Aside from the story not being what I thought it would be, or that the romance element was not my cup of tea, I can sincerely recommend *Of the Persecuted* to fans of the Christian Romance genre.

Shannan Williams says

This is a gripping fantastic story of faith, sacrifice, and adventure. The author pulls you in from the very first line of the book. I was truly captivated with this story and read it all the way through in one sitting. It is an amazing and suspenseful book that compares the things the characters went through to the Bible in a fantasy sort of way. I just absolutely loved this book and I can't wait to read more by this author.

This book gets 5***** from me and I am highly recommending it to anyone and everyone. It is a must read story of faith, determination, adventure and suspense. You will not be disappointed.
