



The Black King

Kristine Kathryn Rusch

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One of fantasy fiction's foremost creators concludes the epic black throne saga with this magnificent tale of a world coveted by a ruthless spirit, returned to life in the mind of an innocent monarch.

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For Gift, who has renounced the Black Throne to become a Shaman, the news from Blue Isle is disheartening. There his sister, Queen Arianna, once a proponent of peace, has begun to prepare for war. For unknown to Gift, Arianna has been possessed by the dark soul of the Black King who nearly destroyed the Fey Empire generations before in his mad quest for power. Through darkest magic he has returned to life in Arianna's body to finish what he started--while the queen's true consciousness has been hidden away by her most ardent supporters. Now Gift must somehow avert the tragedy that threatens his world. But looming above all is the ancient curse of Blood against Blood, forbidding one member of the Black Family from taking the life of another. Yet what choice does Gift have? If the Black King is allowed to assume the Throne he will plunge the world into a terrifying cataclysm that could destroy all who inhabit it.

The Black King Details

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Mathew Walls says

I can't fault the story in this one, though I feel like Rugad really doesn't come across as the cunning and experienced leader he's supposed to be, but it really feels like Rusch grew way too attached to her characters.

One thing I really loved about the early books in the series is how no one was safe; Any character could die at any time, and often they'd be built up, we'd get to know them, they'd make plans and then suddenly die having achieved nothing. Or they might survive for ages, you'd get to like them, and then they'd die. It made it really unpredictable and made it feel like there were real stakes.

Around book four it starts going downhill, with the protagonists starting to pull off unlikely escapes and even minor characters being in less danger. It's also where there started to be fewer characters I cared about one way or the other, so even if they had died it wouldn't have had as much impact.

The Black Throne sub-series is still a good read, but it lacks the elements that originally made the series unique and made me want to keep reading past the first book. It also seemed like some of the characters (particularly Rugad and Bridge) just weren't consistent with how they'd been in earlier books (though to be fair, Bridge never actually appeared in those earlier books).

Rain says

Engaging right through to the ultimate happy ending.

Rachel says

In general, I like Kristine Kathrine Rusch - and I am liking this second series on the Fey better than the first one. There are several unresolved plot lines that aren't resolved yet, so I assume this will be a 3 or 5 novel series. One of the interesting ideas this book explores is power - where does it reside and with whom does (or should) it reside.

Lois says

Hope she finishes this series at some point.

Dorothy says

18hrs:9mns

