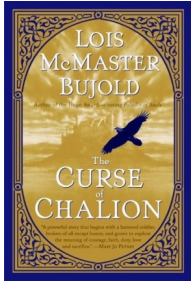




Lambda Sci-Fi
DC Area Gaylaxians



The Curse of Chalion
By Lois McMaster Bujold
Discussed August 2004

Discussion Questions

1. *The Curse of Chalion* is a fantasy retelling of the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella and the unification of Spain in 1492. Fantasy histories are becoming a bit more commonplace and popular. How does Bujold's work compare to others you might have read? You might want to compare her work to *Across the Nightingale Floor* one of our more recent reads. A more interesting comparison may be to Guy Gavriel Kay's *The Lions of Al Rassan*. This is Kay's own retelling of the unification of Spain also a previous pick by our reading group. Does she create a good feel for the period she is recreating in a fantasy settings?
2. One of the strengths of Bujold as a writer is the type of characters she chooses to be the heroes of her fantasies. This can be seen both in *The Curse of Chalion* and her 2nd book set in the same world, *Paladin of Souls* (winner of the Hugo Award for Best Novel in 2004).

What did you think of the main hero Cazaril? What did you find attractive or off putting about him. In what way does the character of differ from those usually found in fantasy tales? In what ways is he similar?

3. Gods and religious systems always seem fair game in fantasy works. Is there anything different in the way Bujold approaches the relationship between the gods and their followers? How similar or different is here portrayal of the belief and institutions of the family of the five gods similar to or different from what actually existed in Spain (i.e.Christianity) or in other fantasy works. What does she say about the way humans and gods work with each other? Is too much of the plot gods driven?
4. Bujold has put Gay and Lesbian content in several of her other works. See *Ethan of Athos* for example. Is there any Gay or Lesbian content to *The Curse of Chalion*? If so what did you think of it?