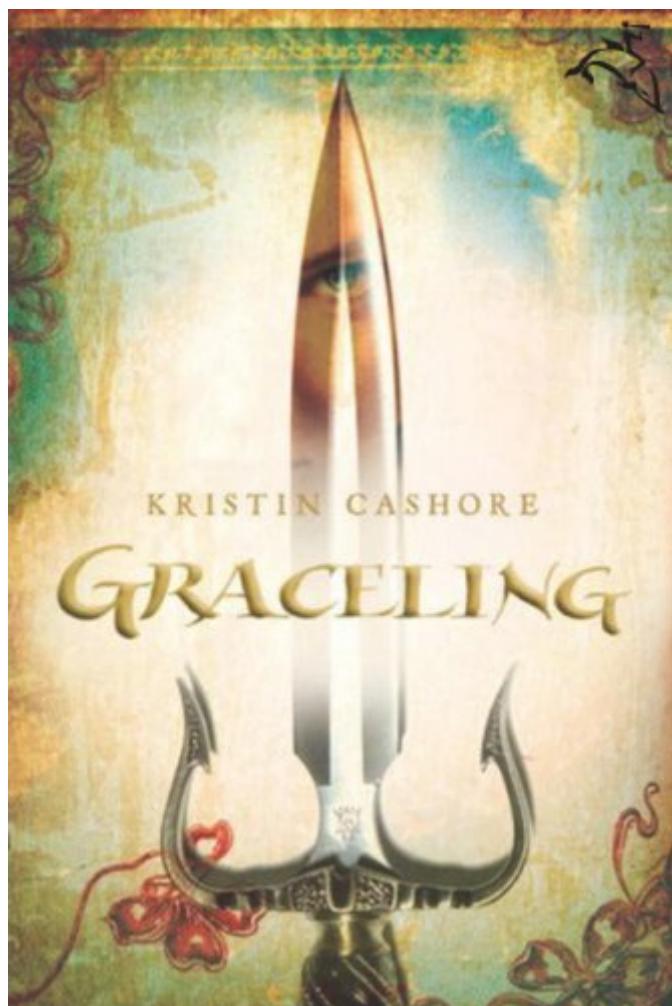


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Graceling (Graceling Realm Book 1)



Synopsis

Kristin Cashore's bestselling, award-winning fantasy *Graceling* tells the story of the vulnerable-yet-strong Katsa, a smart, beautiful teenager who lives in a world where selected people are given a Grace, a special talent that can be anything from dancing to swimming. Katsa's is killing. As the king's niece, she is forced to use her extreme skills as his thug. Along the way, Katsa must learn to decipher the true nature of her Grace and how to put it to good use. A thrilling, action-packed fantasy adventure (and steamy romance!) that will resonate deeply with adolescents trying to find their way in the world. This ebook includes a sample chapter of *BITTERBLUE*.

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Customer Reviews

(This review can also be found on my book review blog sparereads.blogspot.com) I'm happy to say that I have been making some real progress with my TBR pile lately. *clap*clap* *Graceling* has been on my radar for quite a long time due to its widespread popularity, though it is only now that I finally stepped into Kristin Cashore's intriguing Medieval world - the realm of the Seven Kingdoms - and got to know these Gracelings who bear different colors in their eyes. With high expectations in mind,

I started it off anticipating great things from Ms. Cashore and I'm glad that not one of them was left unfulfilled. Katsa is a Graceling - someone who is exceptionally gifted in a particular skill, may it be dancing or swimming. But Katsa's Grace is far more unique than just mundane talents; she is Graced with the mastery of killing. With this unparalleled skill comes the neverending fear people project upon her, constantly reminding her that she is nothing but the King's royal thug, bent to his every will to torture and threaten whomever he wishes. As conflicting as it may seem, Katsa is also a rebellious soul who would go against cruelty and injustice time after time in hopes of saving those who suffer from the tyranny. It is when these two sides of her collide and crash into each other that we witness her evolving into the free and independent spirit we come to love even more. No longer bound by her uncle's orders, Katsa sets destination for Monsea. There she intends to solve the mysterious kidnapping that prompted her and Po's first meeting. It is not easy to remain untouched by Po's charms. His kind and considerate nature, always able to find its way to soothe our nerves, traps us in his loving presence. Our affection towards Katsa and Po grows stronger as the distance between the two lessens, but not even the tenderest moments can take our minds off of the deathly encounter that would lie ahead - something much more frightening than the secrets they each hide beneath the surface. Among all the spectacular pieces that compose Graceling as a whole, romance is the one that stood out the most for me. There can be no one who is more appropriate than Po for Katsa, I'm sure of it. He understands and respects her in a way no one else can (okay, maybe also Raffin). He knows what freedom is like to her, so much so that he would never dare to hold her back from anything, not even in the name of love. He is not just Katsa's lover or admirer, he is her source of support and tranquility. There was a time that I felt Kristin Cashore was planning to seriously injure or even kill Po based on where the story was going. As a result, I basically held off reading for a couple of days because I was simply not ready at all, both mentally and physically, to process something like that, not to mention accepting it. Though luckily for both you and me, Ms. Cashore picked another path instead, one that is equally heart wrenching but a hint less devastating. While the two main characters in Graceling are portrayed superbly, the rest of the crew are a lot less fortunate. Although I enjoyed their company at the time, they didn't leave me any memorable impressions with Raffin being an exception. Another minor complaint I have with Graceling is that the ending isn't as grand as I expected. Considering the buildup is so irresistibly compelling, it felt way too anti-climatic and convenient in comparison. I have often seen people labeling Graceling as "feminist propaganda" and I agree to that in some ways. However, even though there are indeed opinions and stances immersed in this book which I do not approve of, they did not stop me from enjoying this excellently-done high fantasy novel and you shouldn't let them stop you either. The

story of Katsa and Po ends here, but Kristin Cashore has much more to offer in the realm of the Seven Kingdoms. I'm eager to see what other incredible heroines and stories she has sprung up for us readers, and I will make sure to keep you all in the loop :)

This is a really enjoyable read. There is a level of detail that makes this world come alive, but the descriptions aren't endless. The characters are all well-developed, and the plot moves along. Katsa is a strong protagonist who grows and changes over the course of the novel, but never becomes a "classic" princess desperate for Po to tell her how pretty she is, or who suddenly decides she does want to be a wife and a mother. The characters stay true to themselves, and though this is the first book in a series, it does have a real conclusion. I've read it a couple of times now, and still really enjoy it.

I read the third book in this series, *Bitterblue*, and it was so good that I was immediately compelled to read this one. I was not disappointed; *Graceling* is the incredible story of a strong-minded woman named Katsa, who is Graced with the ability to kill. I was interested in the way the author presented her, as a stubborn but good-hearted young woman who had an ability that estranged her from others, an ability that others took advantage of. I liked how she had to make a choice; whether she would let herself be controlled into hurting others, or if she would take control of herself. I was hooked by the time Prince Po came onto the scene. I enjoyed finding parts of the story that coincided with the third book, *Bitterblue*. You don't have to read these books in any order, but it was nice to go back and have some backstory. I haven't read *Fire* yet, but it's next on my list!

Rating : 5 Stars I was very intrigued from the first few paragraphs. By the end of the first chapter I was enraptured. The author writes beautifully. There were so many quotes in this book that I loved and spoke to me. Some of her writing was almost lyrical. Katsa is a Graceling. Gracelings are people that have an almost superhuman ability. It can be anything from fighting or killing to something useless like climbing a tree or dancing. Gracelings have two different colored eyes that indicate to people that they are Graced. They are discriminated and ridiculed against in Katsa's kingdom. Katsa's grace gives her an amazing ability to kill anyone that might be attacking her or even threatening her in any way. She is known throughout all of the seven kingdoms and she is greatly feared. "She practiced every day. She learned her own speed and her own explosive force. She learned the angle, position, and intensity of a killing blow versus a maiming blow. She learned how to disarm a man and how to break his leg, and how to twist his arm so severely that he would stop

struggling and beg for release. She learned to fight with a sword and with knives and daggers. She was so fast and focused, so creative, she could find a way to beat a man senseless with both arms tied to her sides. Such was her Grace."I loved that she was the ultimate badass tomboy. She had no plans to ever marry or have children, and she was happy that way. She didn't even realize one of her dear friends was in love with her until someone pointed it out; she was so oblivious to these things. When he asked her to marry him so he could protect her, this was her thought... "A man who thought himself her protector-when she could outduel him if she used a toothpick to his sword."I loved her friendship with Po, their easy conversation and mutual respect, the way he truly saw her and totally accepted her. Their banter is hilarious! The more they came to know each other the more I loved their story.The further into the book I got, the more stressed out I became because of the character's dire situation. It seemed that they just couldn't catch a break. I would start to lose faith and then something would happen and they would escape by the skin of their teeth.I loved when she decided to teach Bitterblue how to defend herself. She thought something that was very truthful for women in many societies today and in the past..."How absurd it was that in all seven kingdoms, the weakest and most vulnerable of people-girls, women- went unarmed and were taught nothing of fighting, while the strong were trained to the highest reaches of their skill."I can't think of anything I didn't like about this book! I loved the author's writing style and the way the story unfolded.

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