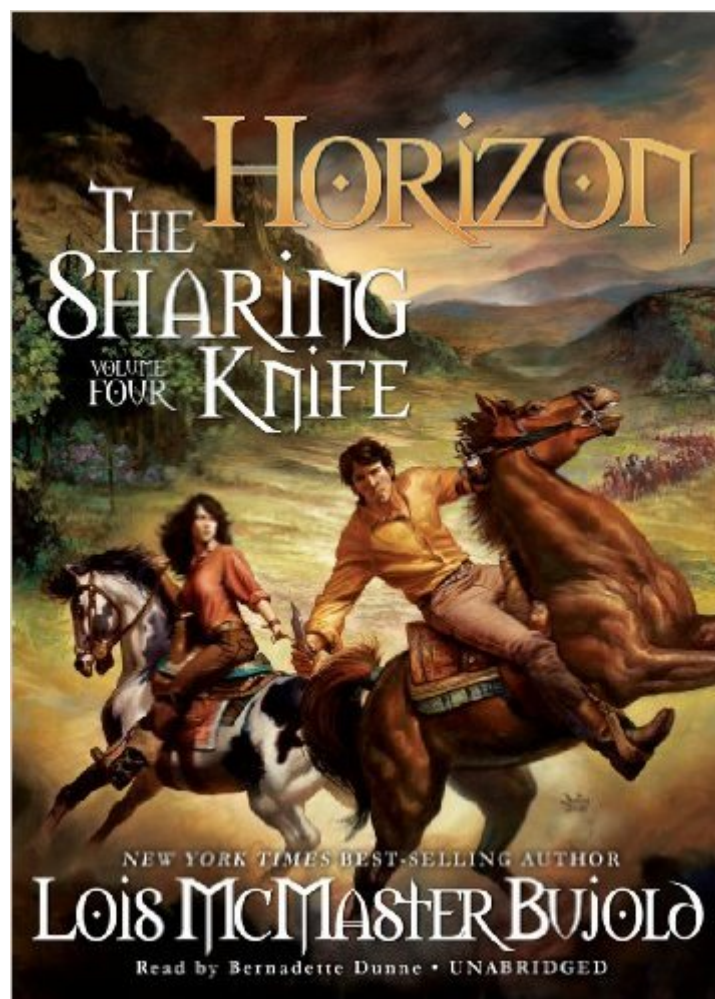


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Horizon (The Sharing Knife: Vol. 4)



Synopsis

[Read by Bernadette Dunne] In a world where malices, remnants of ancient magic, can erupt with life-destroying power, only soldier-sorcerer Lakewalkers have mastered the ability to kill them. But Lakewalkers keep their uncanny secrets - and themselves - from the farmers they protect. So when patroller Dag rescued farm girl Fawn, neither expected to fall in love, marry, and defy both their kin to seek new solutions to the split between their peoples. As Dag's powers have grown, so has his frustration with the Lakewalkers' rigid mores. Fawn and Dag see that their world is changing and that the traditional Lakewalker practices cannot hold the malices at bay forever. Yet for all the customs that the couple have challenged, they will soon be confronted with their worst crisis yet. When the old traditions fail, can their untried new ways stand against their world's deadliest foe?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First off, this is the second half of the second story in a two story, four book series. So no, don't start here. The book does not (and is not intended to) act as a standalone novel. So from now on I'll assume the reader of this review has read the other three books. I loved this whole extended story. And I'm glad to say, the final book does not disappoint. It neither wraps up all the problems of the whole world nor leaves a bunch of messy unfinished business. It continues the story of characters we've come to know and love, and it introduces still more of them (not always loveable). It also completes the "there and back again" story of Fawn and Dag's trip to the sea. The main message of

the book seems to be that when you can't see a way to solve your problems from where you are standing, sometimes it helps to stand in a different place. That's true geographically, and also metaphorically. Dag, who has been patroller and maker, healer and killer, Lakewalker with a Farmer wife, as well as boatman and camp dweller, ends up finally having a diverse enough viewpoint to start seeing the answers. But he can't do it alone. The marriage of Fawn and Dag had been a shocking breach of the wall between Lakewalker and Farmer societies, up north. But in the south, where malices are few and Farmers are many, it seems the interactions between Farmer and Lakewalker are much more common. Dag rightly realizes that he is seeing the future of the north in the current south, and they haven't solved any of the problems he had spotted brewing back home. But at least the problems were more visible to other people, and that leads to a bit more support from them.

The story of Farmer girl Fawn and Lakewalker Dag has been building through three books to this fourth, as the two of them continue their efforts to find a place in the world where they can live and have the family they want while also finding a way to deal with the crisis they see coming between their peoples and the ancient menace that threatens the whole world. This is not a stand-alone book; for those new to the series the preceding book *Passage* is a prerequisite at the minimum. Warning - possible spoilers ahead. The first two books, *Beguilement* and *Legacy* are much more focused on the relationship between Dag and Fawn. How they met, how they fell in love, and just what the two very different worlds they come from are like. Farmers and Lakewalkers do NOT ever marry each other - or so their two respective societies would have it. Lakewalkers are set apart by their groundsense, an inherited ability to perceive the world in a different way that allows them to work what seems magic to Farmer eyes and fight an ancient foe. The enemy is Malices which emerge at random from the land and threaten to use their vastly more powerful groundsense to drain ground from the world until it all crumbles. Only Lakewalkers can resist the mind-enslaving, ground-ripping power of Malices. Farmers are little more than fodder for Malices - yet they fear and distrust the powers of their only protection, the Lakewalkers who ceaselessly patrol looking for the threat. Only Lakewalkers can kill Malices with their sharing knives, made from the bones of their own dead and primed by the death of a Lakewalker as his or her final gift in the centuries long war against their deadly foes.

I'm not sure what it is I like most about Lois McMaster Bujold's writing: her characterization skills, her prose, the fascinating world-building and plotting? Maybe it's all of the above. One skill she

definitely has, though, is adaptability. In all four books of the "Sharing Knife" series, she has used a different style, even as she keeps everything consistent between the books. The fourth book, Horizon, fully illustrates that as Bujold adds a bit of action to the mix, with some wonderful magic, menacing forces, and the gradual softening of attitudes among the two very distinct societies that she has created. It's a wonderful culmination to a series that has captivated me from beginning to end, despite a couple of rough patches in the first book. The first year of Dag and Fawn's marriage has been tumultuous, a honeymoon journey to show the Farmer girl a world that she's never seen. She's also learned a lot about how Dag's people, the Lakewalkers, aren't truly as scary as most farmers believe. Dag is learning more and more about becoming a "Maker," someone who specializes in working with the "Ground" that inhabits all human beings, and he harbors dreams of becoming a liaison between Lakewalker and Farmer, a bridge of understanding between the two peoples that will end the distrust that keeps them apart. As the newlyweds make their journey from the mouth of the river they have explored back home, with companions both Lakewalker and Farmer alike, the threat of a new kind of Malice (evil remnants of ancient magic) erupts in front of them. Old and tested ways may not be enough, and the true joining of Farmer and Lakewalker may be put to its ultimate test.

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