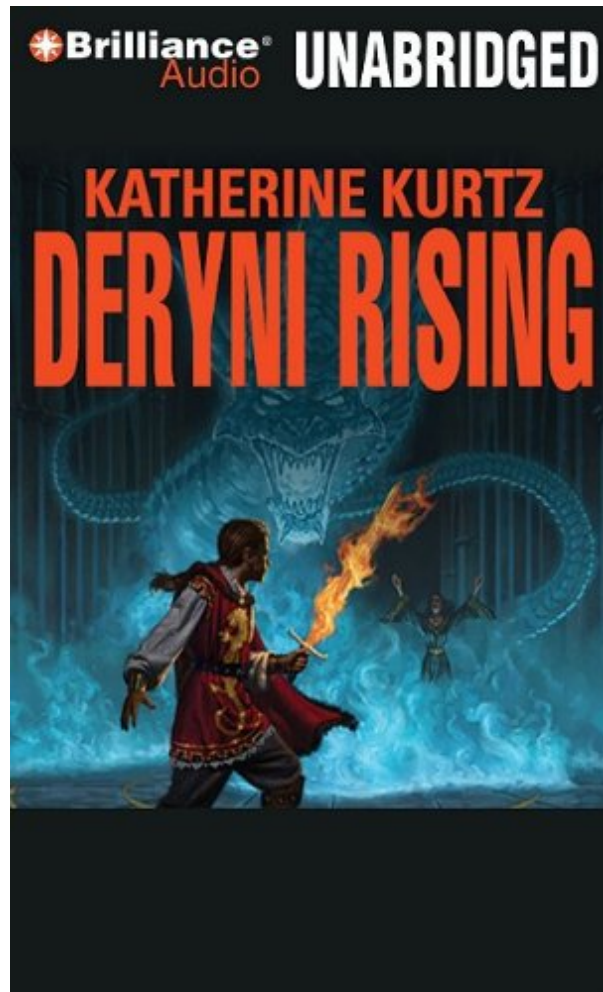


DERYNI RISING (CHRONICLES OF THE DERYNI) BY KATHERINE KURTZ



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From the Publisher

The late Lester del Rey had a theory about the biological seat of Deryni power, a theory that he could have related in astonishing specificity. I just remember that he said it must come from somewhere in the nose, something related to the olfactory senses. I always thought that was a very glamorous way to look at an exciting, epic sweep of fantasy. But after all, magic has to come from somewhere.

--Veronica Chapman, Senior Editor

From the Inside Flap

In the kingdom of Gwynedd, the mysterious forces of magic and the superior power of the Church combine to challenge the rule of young Kelson. Now the fate of the Deryni -- a quasi-mortal race of sorcerers -- and, indeed, the fate of all the Eleven Kingdoms, rests on Kelson's ability to quash the rebellion by any means necessary . . . including the proscribed use of magic!

About the Author

Katherine Kurtz has been writing fantasy novels for well over three decades. She is married and until last year made her home in Ireland, in a mildly haunted gothic revival house called Holybrooke Hall. She and her husband have recently returned to the United States and taken up residence in a historic house in Virginia, with their five Irish cats and one "silly-looking" dog.

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In the land of Gwynedd, the Haldanes have long ruled and have long kept a dangerous secret: there are those of their blood who possess the magical powers of the Deryni. To be Deryni in a land ruled by the all-powerful Church is to be branded an outcast. But now, young Prince Kelson is about to assume the throne after the mysterious death of his father. He must be told of his magical heritage. For his legacy is being challenged by a woman who does not hesitate to lay full claim to her Deryni powers. And to face her in magical combat, Kelson must learn a lifetime's worth of magic in a few short days. If he loses, he dies as his father did. And if he wins, he is King?but all the world will know that he is also Deryni...

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Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Slightly dated but still enjoyable launching book for the Deryni universe.

By JJAamazonShopper

This book was the first one Kurtz wrote nearly 40 years ago, and there are moments when the book does reflect that. There is usage of "magical" terminology and actions (like poetic spells) that aren't used in her subsequently written books.

Plot: The young heir to the kingdom of Gwynedd (an alternate universe equivalent to Britain, essentially), Prince Kelson, watches helplessly as his father dies of an apparent heart attack during a hunting expedition. In short order a rival heir to Kelson's throne (from a usurping dynasty who'd ruled Gwynedd centuries earlier) threatens his life and those of the rest of his family, the Church (and Kelson's mother) want his father's best friend killed because of his magical heritage, and Kelson comes to realize some surprising things about his own heritage.

This book and its two sequels in this trilogy (Deryni Checkmate and Deryni Rising) were both re-released a few years ago with some minor edits and plot adjustments to reflect later-written books.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

25 years later... still a strong (if imperfect) novel!

By Bluejack

You know the experience of going back to something you loved as an adolescent and discovering it to be completely execrable garbage?

Fortunately, that's not the case with Deryni Rising.

It's not without flaws, however. One reviewer gives it a one star review for the absolute good / absolute evil characters, and I can't dispute the criticism. Nuance of motive is not, at least in this first volume, in Kurtz' repertoire.

In fact, breaking things down stylistically, there is a lot to be disappointed in with this novel, so it is a testament to the power of her narrative that it is, in fact, a real page turner.

Kelson Haldane's father, the King, is killed in the prologue, and the subsequent novel covers the days to Kelson's coronation. Surrounded by treachery, ignorance, and general political scheming, there's a lot that can go wrong. It doesn't help that Kelson's most trusted advisor, Alaric Morgan, is a half-breed member of an almost-outlawed race with magic powers, and that virtually everyone is working on Morgan's downfall. This includes Kelson's mother, who is the most viciously anti-Deryni activist in the book. And, of course there is a usurper in the wings, herself a full Deryni sorceress, sowing discord and preparing for the restoration of a Deryni evil empire.

Reading this you can see influences into both Harry Potter and Game of Thrones.

Kurtz' style improves over the course of subsequent books: this is not just a first novel, it is a first novel sold-before-written, dashed off in a time when the bar for quality fiction in fantasy was non-existent.

Some things to gloss over: one dimensional characters. Frustrating and willful ignorance. Characters consistently jumping to untenable conclusions. Deus ex Machina solutions. Over-the-top descriptions (everyone is apparently astoundingly good looking in this world).

Some things to notice: great descriptions of ecclesiastical protocol. Beautiful descriptions of clothing.

Gradual revelation of deeper mystery.

And yet, it is immensely readable. Gripping. Fun. And sets the stage very well for the books that follow.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

A Classic from the 70s that doesn't hold up

By Andrew

Kurtz' Deryni novels were considered top notch when they were written in the 70s, but they haven't aged well. The characters are thinly drawn and rely heavily on stereotypes, with motives thinly sketched, and character development, such as it is, told rather than shown. The main characters never truly seem to be in danger, because every time they are, one of them suddenly manifests new magical abilities that save the day. Even the climactic duel at the end is resolved with this sort of deus ex machina device. It's her first novel, and it shows.

Kurtz claims to have done graduate work in history, but wouldn't know it from the novel. Ostensibly set in a high medieval society, the world is actually a pastiche of generic fantasy Europe with details drawn from as late as the 20th century (such as overstuffed chairs and crystal decanters). Details like that were acceptable when fantasy literature was still maturing, but today it reads like second-rate young adult literature.

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