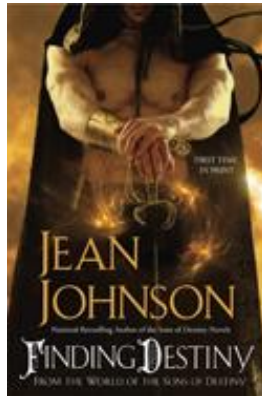


Review by: Heather
December 16, 2010

Pros: Fun, silly, sexy, with great world-building detail
Cons: The silly, playful style won't suit everyone; the details of world-building might be a bit slow for some folks
Rating: 4.5 out of 5



Jean Johnson's [Finding Destiny](#) is a collection of four tales of romance, erotic sex, and playful intrigue in a delightful fantasy setting (the same setting as her "Sons of Destiny" series). The stories are interconnected, but each one focuses on a different couple and a different country's traditions and rituals.

Jean Johnson has a unique style and a strong authorial voice. It won't suit everyone; it took me a while to get used to it, but I absolutely love it. Her lovers aren't afraid to be playful and silly, and to try new things. This is quite unusual among romance authors, and does away with a lot of the overwrought drama seen elsewhere. Instead these stories are just plain fun. An infectious excitement rings clearly through the words on the pages, even during explicit bedroom scenes.

Jean also clearly has a great love of world-building; her stories might be a bit slow for those who have no interest in the same. If you love exploring the customs and politics of new lands, I think you'll find them fascinating. Don't let this make you think that there's no action, however; it just doesn't dominate the stories.

The characters are highly individualized. Each one is quite different, from a freed slave to a holy knight. There are seer-kings and humble farmers, dutiful guardsmen and fiery pirates. Each one is very *human*, even down to the inclusion of little vocal tics like “um” in some dialogue spots, which few authors can make work. Like I said, Jean has an unusual and strong authorial voice.

Now hear me out on this next part before scoffing. I’m going to hazard a guess that Jean is a roleplayer. Do NOT make the mistake of thinking that this means the stories fit the negative stereotype of what people think of as “gaming fiction.” I simply think I recognize a couple of the basic concepts behind some of her detailed world elements (hmm, I’m thinking those Arbryn Knights started out as Paladins...). The stories are fresh, original, and delightful—the written equivalent of playful, seductive laughter.