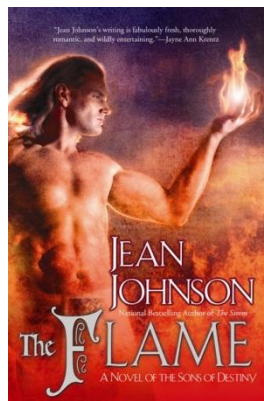


Review by: Heather
March 4th, 2009

Pros: Awesome fantasy world building; fascinating plot;
delightful characters; delicious sex

Cons: Overused italics during dialogue;
lead characters a bit slow on the uptake this time

Rating: 4.5 out of 5



Series Note: I started reading Jean Johnson's *Sons of Destiny* series with book five, [The Cat](#). I read it without reading the first four books and enjoyed it quite a bit, with only mild confusion—the author goes to some lengths to ensure that you can start out with any book in the series. That said, it's an incredibly good series and I highly recommend starting from the beginning.

The eight brothers were born in four sets of non-identical twins. An old prophecy foretells the arrival of their Destined brides in order from the eldest brother's to the youngest, and it's now the turn of the seventh-born son, Koranen. The prophecy is also wrapped up in the reemergence of the brothers' new home, Nightfall, as an inhabited land, and so there's much more at stake than love and sex!

Koranen is a Pyromancer, and his affinity for flame and heat is so strong that he's dangerous to everyone around him. The more his emotions get whipped up, the more heat he puts out. The only times he tried to get "friendly" with a woman, he burned her. Now

his sexual frustration just makes him all the more dangerous to be close to. He's desperate to see his verse of the prophecy come true. The family has already figured out that the woman referred to in his verse, water to his flame, must be one of the Aquamancers coming to Nightfall to help fix the artifact that provides the island with fresh water. But which one of the four lovely young ladies is the one?

It doesn't take Koranen all that long to eliminate two of the four when they find his touch too hot to bear. But things get a little trickier from there. Danau, the most powerful of the Aquamancers, has the complementary problem to his—she can't control the freezing cold she produces when she becomes emotional. She's clearly his mate—but it's only clear to the two women he's rejected, women who envy Danau's status and powers and despise her as a social outcast. Danau goes to such lengths to hide her "affliction", and to keep everyone at arm's length, that Koranen completely misses the fact that she's perfect for him. And the rejected two are only all too happy to help with that impression, pushing him toward the fourth Aquamancer and undermining Danau at every turn.

I love the fact that each couple in Jean Johnson's delightful "Sons of Destiny" series has their own unique dynamic. This is hardly one of those series that exists solely so the reader can experience virtually the same romance over and over again with mildly different characters. Koranen is fully aware that one of these women is his destined Bride and extremely eager to seal the deal, but afraid of hurting another woman by making a mistake and picking the wrong one. Danau has resigned herself to a life alone and thrown herself into her work, closing herself off and leaving Koranen with the impression that she's hardly the one for him.

Because it's immediately obvious to the reader that Danau is the right woman, the length of time it took for her and Koranen to figure things out seemed mildly overkill to me. Only mildly, however—by and large it was well-done.

As always, I absolutely adore the world-building in Jean's novels. The fixing of the artifact was pretty interesting, although perhaps mildly less compelling at times than some of the other topics that have been broached in this series. This is the perfect series for the kind of person who reads a fantasy novel or watches a movie and finds themselves picking apart the bits that aren't realistic, or for the reader who loves imagining *what if*. The family is trying to build a kingdom from the ground up. They have access to the ruins of a previous city, a lot of magic, a bunch of knowledge imported from our modern-day universe, and a limited set of physical resources. It's fantastic to see how they use these things to solve various physical, practical, and political problems.

I know I mentioned a couple more complaints above than I did for the previous two books, but I want to stress how mild they are. If anything, they're ways in which the book mostly suffers in comparison to its own series' high standards, and they aren't a big deal.