

***Graceling* (Graceling Realm #1)**

**Kristin Cashore**

**Reviewed by: Marissa Klippenstein, 21**

**Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity**

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Since the age of eight, Katsa has been able to kill a man – not due to strength or stealth, but because she is a Graceling, one of the rare people in her world born with an extreme skill. Even though she is the king’s niece, she does not live a life of luxury. Graced as she is with killing, Katsa is forced to work as the king’s thug, ordered to do his dirty work.

One night on a mission, Katsa meets Prince Po, Graced with combat skills. Katsa has no idea how much her life is about to change. She does not expect to become Po’s ally, and she never expects to learn the truth about her own Grace or about a dangerous secret hidden far away...

This is one of the first books that introduced me to the young adult fantasy genre. I fell in love with the series not only because of its unique world, but also because of its strong female protagonist. Katsa is strong because of her strength and determination. She is a wonderful fictional role model. Though she decides to indulge in romance, she does not let it rule her head. Katsa is still her own woman, and her romantic interest sees and respects this as well. The idea of the “Graces” also really intrigued me throughout the series and it was fun guessing who had what Grace. One thing that I did not prefer about the character of Katsa is her disgust with marriage. This would be okay if her character just simply didn’t prefer it, but it almost seemed like the author was trying to push this opinion on her readers. This is the only factor I did not care for.

I would recommend this book for ages 14+. There is obvious violence associated with this book and the premise – nothing too graphically described. There are also sexual themes throughout.

This book would be a great gift to anybody interested in high fantasy, engaging plot, and detailed world-building!

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