



The Silver Sword

Angela Elwell Hunt

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The auburn-haired O'Connor women share a bond far deeper than their striking physical appearance. These courageous, high-spirited women all push against societal limits in this exciting historical, romantic novel that spans generations and countries from 13th-century Ireland to the excitement and mystery of 15th-century Prague.

It is said that as Cahira, daughter of the great Irish king Rory O'Connor, lay dying of a wound from a Norman blade, she beseeched God that others would follow her calling. To Kathleen O'Connor, Cahira's story was nothing more than a fable--until research divulged that the tale was true. As a stunned Kathleen realizes that she herself bears the mark of Cahira, she wonders if she is destined to continue the legacy.

To uncover the answers, Kathleen delves into the past to find the truth about the Heirs of Cahira O'Connor. It is a journey that carries her across generations, from the battlefields of 13th-century Ireland to the castles of 15th-century Prague. It is a past filled with peril, courage, vengeance, love, and sacrifice beyond anything she has ever known.

The Silver Sword Details

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From Reader Review The Silver Sword for online ebook

Colleen says

I'm sure not a lot of people have heard of this book. But you should. This is the first book in the Heirs of Cahira O'Connor series, and each of the four books is set in a different century. I guess the closest genre for these books would be historical fiction, but they're so much more. I was given this series while I was in middle school, and I was so excited, because these books would be the first adult novels I ever read. Now I can't even count the times I've reread all four books, but I've had to buy new copies.

There are strong female characters, some action, some romance, and they have a strong message. More specifically, The Silver Sword is great for people who love reading stories about lords, ladies, & knights. And it's great to read about a female character that is strong and has a purpose. The author does a great job setting the historical scene and developing the characters. The writing style is somewhat contemporary, with some influences from the time period in which each novel is set. Each book also has some historical accuracy which adds to the realism of these novels. Because each book is set a couple centuries apart, you get a variety of settings beginning in the fifteenth and ending in the twenty-first century. And each book starts with a prologue & ends with an epilogue about Kathleen O'Connor & her research project, which is the thread that connects all four books. I would recommend these books to anyone who enjoys a little history with their well-developed characters, action, & romance.

Nan says

I love this series. I love time travel books, well researched christian fiction and anything Irish. I think this is my third time reading through the series...at least. I own them.

Melissa says

This was definitely an intriguing story, well-researched and always full of interesting historical detail. It was fun to hear about Jan Hus and all of those problems with the church during the 1400's ... but sometimes I felt like there was too much history. It often felt like a long history narrative of event following event and they sometimes dragged on. Those were mainly the events that had nothing to do with the principle characters, more with the whole general idea of the Hussite Rebellion. And at the same time I wish there would have been more history... there was so much droning narrative, but the 1400's is such a fascinating time! I would have loved to see more period detail, just about daily life and rituals. She did have some of that, especially about knighthood, but often it felt like it didn't go very far beyond the surface.

I loved the story itself. The whole idea of the Cahira O'Connor legacy is fascinating and so unique! And Anika's story was great ... but I always felt like character development was lacking. All of the characters seemed so one-dimensional, never getting more complex or behaving or thinking differently than the one reason they were supposed to behave and think. I never really got that interested in Anika as a person, she just didn't seem that interesting. She liked to write, she followed Jan Hus, she made a vow against the cardinals, and she liked Lord John. But what about her personality? What about deeper things about her, what about her struggles and her doubts? Looking back, I also can't really think of any deep relationship she had with God. It was more her fascination with Hus, and what she thought God should be. And Lord John felt really un-complex. He was just always so boring, so indifferent, and never reached any depth past his

feeling of failure as a husband and father and even sometimes as a lord. I didn't feel like his feeling for Anika ever reached any depth, either. So this book was okay; there were things I really liked, and things I would have liked to see taken farther. In the end, there were some really great theological points and inspirational moments.

Anya says

This is a historical novel set in early 13th century Bohemia, which is the area of our modern day Czech Republic. This makes the book unusual right off the bat because this is an era and locale rarely written about by modern day historical authors. The medieval context is interesting as we don't often get to learn about knights and conduct of chivalry.

Though the author draws you in with a fictional heroine, Anika of Prague, the book's most important actual figure is Jan Hus (aka John Hus), a forerunner of the Reformation. His writings were of great import to Martin Luther, of whom Hus prophesied from his executional pyre:

"Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon me." Among his dying words he proclaimed, "In 100 years, God will raise up a man whose calls for reform cannot be suppressed."

The unique twist to this novel is the main character's assumption of male disguise. At the age of sixteen she dresses and takes the part of a young squire in a country castle to safeguard her from evil men who would take her captive and use her ill; an effective way to hide to be sure. It creates interest for the modern reader, who lives in such a very different world than that of this 13th century young woman.

The themes of justice and forgiveness are present here with a strong biblical world view, as is the lesser known concept of martyrdom for the present day American reader. When combined with such rich church history it makes for a winning combination. I highly recommend this book and look forward to the others in the series, a great example of true Christian fiction.

Nonners says

They story was very well written. My heart jumped from disappointment to surprise to not so surprised to thankfulness of the outcome. Novels like these are encouraging during times of self doubt, especially when you know that you are fulfilling a calling. It's still a novel, but I sincerely believe you can learn a lesson from everything you read. There is always something to take away, whether it be what not to do or what to do or new ideas or old ideas forgotten (which is usually the case).

I would give the plot 5 stars: Especially because it's based off of a historical event; a martyr of a great man. And then was developed fictionally around the facts. I know that takes a lot of effort. So Kudos to the author.

I would give the romance 5 stars as well: Because it was subtle but still obvious. And ended in a very good way. Plus the whole book wasn't simply a romance between Man and Woman but all man kind and God.

For the violence I would give 5 stars: There wasn't anything in detail, which is great. here isn't really any reason to go into depth in a story like this.

I would give the character development 4 stars: I would have liked to know more about each character, I still had question pertaining to the past of each essential character. But this may be because I'm so use to reading classic books which generally go into great depth and detail as to the past of the main character (I mean GREAT detail).

What I took away from the story is this:

Revenge is worth nothing if you know the truth, that God is just and good and does not tolerate sin. And that When you trust in God's truth, there is nothing to fear, not even death.

I also took away a different perspective on justice. If God poured all the wrath upon you that you deserved, you be much less than even a memory. God knows this, and again cannot tolerate sin because He is perfectly just. Which would be why He sent His son. I guess it's not that it's a different perspective, just a refreshed one. When I feel like someone was not justly treated (meaning punishment wise) I will think a bit more carefully.

Brandie says

Very well written and entrancing. Looking forward to reading the next in the series.

Alycia Morales says

It took me a chapter or two to get into this book, but once I did, I couldn't put it down. I love the story line, which starts with a college student being approached by an unknown professor. He recognizes a particular streak in her hair, and the rest is history. As she researches the ladies she may be related to, she brings their stories to life. I am currently reading the fourth book in this series and have thoroughly enjoyed every one.

Christine Davage says

Didn't love it. Great idea for a story but I just couldn't get into it.

Kickarse Reviews says

Kathleen O'Connor is an arts and literature student trying to research for her last paper at college when a history professor asks if she is aware of her family legacy for she carries the family physical genetic trait of others in the O'Connor family tree. In an effort to figure out what the older gentleman is all about, Kathleen discovers four women, 200 years apart, who have had a hand at sculpting history through their faith and courage.

The Silver Sword is Kathleen's account of a scribe called Anika O'Connor who lived in 15th-century Prague. Anika lost her mother early and was raised by her copyist father. But when a wealthy lord in the city decided to take Anika for his son's play thing, her father loses his life defending her honour and Anika is forced to

run and hide.

She ends up at the estate of Lord John of Chlum as a squire, hiding her womanhood, and training to become a knight so she can take revenge on the lord who killed her father, and the Catholic Cardinal who allowed it to all happen.

In an era set before the Hussite Crusades in Bohemia, Anika O'Connor's story sets her apart from everything that society believed women were capable of in that time. Hiding her true nature caused a few mishaps and a whole lot of mischief, but she finally she was able to stand up for what she believed in, help set free those oppressed by the Catholic Church and fought along side her Lord and Master, John of Chlum.

I liked Anika, really enjoyed her story but found there could have been less historical information and politics involved in the story and more of Anika's character development.

It reminded me a whole lot of The Song of the Lioness series written by Tamora Pierce.
4 stars for the first book in the Heirs of Cahira O'Connor Series.

Debbie says

This Christian historical romance novel is a good, light read. At times, I felt that the story was more about John Hus than Anika since Anika played a very minor role during those sections. Since Hus was a preacher and Anika avidly listens to his sermons and acts as a scribe to help spread his teachings, the story is almost by definition "preachy." Hus' views on the problems with the Catholic church and on the corruption present in the church at that time might turn off Catholic readers.

While, to my knowledge, the information about Hus was accurate, there were a myriad of details wrong with the "knightly" aspects of the story. (For example, in the novel, the knights wear full armor every waking moment, even when eating in the safety of the castle. The knights practice foil-style fencing while using long swords and wearing jousting armor.)

I also felt there were several logic flaws, like Anika has a burning desire to kill one man responsible for her father's death and yet she's horrified by the idea of killing the other man responsible (who also wants to rape her). I also couldn't understand how Anika was so beautiful and girlish (based on comments by friends to her father and by the lustful noble's son) and yet the moment she needs to fit in as a squire, she's described as boyish in figure and no male questions her disguise.

The characters were likable, the heroine spirited, and the plot enjoyable enough, especially if you're interested in the reformation. There was no sex or cussing. Overall, it was good, clean fun.

Tiffany Jones says

I really enjoyed reading The Silver Sword and am looking forward to reading the rest of the series. I found the entire premise behind the series to be very interesting. The characters are incredibly well written and I found myself empathizing with them at various times. I loved that they weren't just flat, static characters but well rounded and dynamic. I particularly enjoyed seeing the transformations in Anika and John. I loved the plot line and all the historical details that the author included.

Carol says

This was a very good historical account of Jon Hus, follower of Wycliff and precursor to Martin Luther.

In the prologue, we're introduced to someone doing research in the library. Someone interrupts Kathleen O'Conner, and introduces himself as Henry Howard, professor of European history. He was inquiring about Kathleen a streak of white in her hair that wasn't inherited from any of her known relatives. What did he want from her? He told her about Cahira, the daughter of King Rory O'Connor, who had defended herself & her attendants with a sword and prayed that would use her descendants to right the world of men. Cahira had also had a streak of white hair. Kathleen had been teased all her life about the white streak in her hair. Professor Howard believed that Kathleen was a direct descendant from Cahira O'Connor and gave Kathleen his card in case she had any questions. She was researching piebaldism, and decided to do a search for O'Connors with piebaldism. While waiting for the search results she considered the Professor's story. There were four results to her search, the last king of Ireland's daughter, The Hussite Crusades, Exploring & seafaring, women at sea, and Civil War, women in battle. She started to imagine the scene of Cahira's death, had God allowed her descendants to grow strong to restore right? The four women had lived 200 years apart under very different conditions, and had red hair with a white streak like hers...was she the next one? She decided to change her semester project and research the women. If Professor Howard were telling the truth it could change her life. She would start by searching for Anika of Prague.

The story starts with six year old Anika searching for her Mama. They were moving to Prague, where her father planned on going into the book business. Anika noticed the smells around her & tried to keep the attention of the dogs. One of them took the hem of her dress & led her downstairs, where one of the men noticed a fire in the barn, she watched the confusion. Someone carried her outside. The innkeeper pointed out men holding a ladder for a man in red to climb down. Ernan O'Connor tried to get the ladder to use to get his wife and some other women down out of the fire. Since the men refused to relinquish the ladder, Father encouraged his wife to jump. Anika's mother moved to jump, the fire was hot! But when she landed her neck broke, and it was the cardinal's fault. She heard her father weeping and closed her eyes, telling the man in the red robe to go away.

Anika's father woke her up. She had had these dreams for years. Her father rocked her back to sleep.

Anika had a book she was reading hidden under the parchments. Archbishop Albik visited her father's bookshop. There were other copyists, but none of them were close to Jan Hus. He asked what Ernan was copying, but he had not had the parchment prepared for writing yet. Eventually the archbishop and his attendants left. He probably didn't think that Anika would be allowed to copy Hus's sermons. Anika's father went back to getting the parchment ready, but she knew that he knew what she had been reading, "The Art of Courtly Love."

Sir Petrov, one of the family friends, came to visit and asked why the archbishop had visited them. Their shop was busy because of their closeness to the university. Petrov enjoyed telling stories about his service as a knight, but had left his master's house when he died. Anika knew that he was lonely. Jan Hus was a master at the University of Prague, but he was friendly to everyone. Petrov offered his services to Jan Hus. There were three popes, and Ladislav, king of Naples, had threatened Rome, so Pope John had announced a crusade against him. Hus refused to make the announcement because he was trying to lead people to peace. Pope John had been a murderer & a soldier before becoming the head of the Church by shrewdness. Anika had read about such things. Although the O'Connors copied Hus' sermons, God provided for them. Hus wanted to talk to Ernan privately, so Anika was sent on an errand. Petrov went with her and continued his story,

although she wanted to stay & hear what he had to say. Eventually, she & Petrov went through the streets of Prague.

Petrov also wanted to know what the conversation was about, so he left Anika at her destination and returned to the copy shop. Hus was of the opinion, as most were, that a woman in a trade was unacceptable and Anika wasn't trained for domestic pursuits. Anika's strength was in reading and copying books. Ernan felt that Anika didn't need to marry, that he was providing for her. Hus was glad that Petrov had returned because he knew the nobility. There was a nobleman who was interested in Anika, but not as his wife. Ernan wanted to know who the person was, but Hus wouldn't tell his identity, but encourage Ernan to make plans for Anika's future. When Hus & Petrov left the copyist, Hus wanted to know where she had been left. Hus told Petrov that the young man was Miloslav, the son of Lord Laco of Lidice, who was expecting Anika to need to seek employment as a serving maid. Petrov promised to keep the identity of the man from Ernan O'Connor.

Madelyn says

FULL REVIEW AT LITERARY CAFE:
(<http://literarycafe.weebly.com/home/t...>)

"If revenge is sweet, why does it leave such a bitter taste? In disarming Peter, Christ disarmed every knight. Turn the other cheek."

The Silver Sword, by Angela Elwell Hunt, author of more than 100 titles, is one of the few books I can legitimately say I not only enjoyed, but also learned valuable historical details from that I won't soon forget. Many historical novels either focus on the individual fictional lives or only the historical aspect of the times, both of which tend to become dull. However, this author craftily weaves the novel to have an adequate mixture of both fiction and historical accuracy.

The leading plot in this first book is the battle the Hussites waged against the Catholic church. Although it is centered around a female protagonist, it's definitely not chic-lit. Actually, it's quite the contrary. Anika must disguise herself as a man and join knights in service. As you can imagine, her situation is not very feminine. That being said, although the main character is a woman, that doesn't mean it will only appeal to women. (If you've read the Blood of Kings series by Jill Williamson, you're familiar with this set-up. It's very similar.) ?I think all book lovers will enjoy this message-packed Christian fiction, which focuses primarily on revenge and God's grace to forgive.

If you enjoyed this, please check out the full review and blog here!:
(<http://literarycafe.weebly.com/home/t...>)

Barbara says

Probably closer to 3.5 stars, I enjoyed this book, but it wasn't one of my favorites by Ms. Hunt. Set during the 15th century crusades against the Hussians, it was farther back in history than I am used to reading about. There was a tie in to a present day college student at the beginning and the end, which was intriguing and will probably cause me to read the rest of the series, but it was also hard to read about some of the horrible things done at that time in the name of "religion." Learning about a time in history I am not as familiar with was a plus.

Jeni Enjaian says

For about half the book, I thought this book might actually survive the purge. Hunt created an intriguing premise on which to begin the book and series and then delved into a compelling narrative with a dynamic protagonist.

That lasted until just after the halfway point. From here until nearly the end of the book, the narrative becomes bogged down in the trial of Hus, a minor character until this point. While history confirms the story of Hus and his martyrdom, the fictional characters of Hunt's narrative have no basis in history. In fact, their story nearly disappears in the political machinations that I do not believe Hunt actually understood, at least not to a level at which she could communicate clearly to her readers.

This book, and the remaining books in the series, do not survive the purge from my personal collection.
