



The Copper Sign

Katia Fox (Translator), Lee Chadeayne (Translator)

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“A vital, evocative novel with a female protagonist who not only forges swords but also our vision of the middle ages.” – Javier Sierra, author of *The Secret Supper* and *The Lost Angel*

England 1161: Ellen, a blacksmith’s daughter, wants to become a swordsmith, but for a girl this male profession is unimaginable. Forced to run away from home, she disguises herself as a boy and has the opportunity to accompany a famous swordsmith to Normandy, where the sons of the greatest barons are trained to be knights. Under the assumed identity of Alan she learns the trade and becomes familiar with court life. When she falls in love with Guillaume, a young noble man, she can’t divulge her secret for fear it will endanger her dream of fame and recognition. Across countries and time, Ellen struggles to achieve her dream and find her place, always in fear that Thibault, an evil knight who tracks her every move, waits around the corner. Full of tension, intrigue, and treachery, *The Copper Sign* is a passionate tour de force that will leave you breathlessly awaiting book two.

The Copper Sign Details

Date : Published December 6th 2011 by AmazonCrossing (first published 2006)

ISBN :

Author : Katia Fox (Translator) , Lee Chadeayne (Translator)

Format : Kindle Edition 652 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fantasy, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Copper Sign for online ebook

Mae McDonnell says

There was something about Fox's writing that I just didn't like, a certain lack of emotional depth and an overuse of exclamation points in the dialogue. When I read the author bio at the end, I realized that it had been translated from German, which made the strangeness of the text make a little more sense. But despite the writing style, this was a book that I had trouble putting down.

The Copper Sign tells the story of Eleanweore, the daughter of a common blacksmith, who is drawn to the art from a young age. Being a girl, there is little hope that she'll be able to follow her dream until she discovers the local lord having a liaison with her mother. With little explanation as to why this is such a tremendous problem, Ellen is forced to flee for her life. She is disguised as a boy for her safety and then takes to the road, where she quickly finds work as a blacksmith's apprentice. It becomes quickly evident that she's a natural, with the potential to become a swordsmith, the highest art of smithing. Being uniquely gifted, she quickly masters what he can teach her and moves on to a bigger town and a her master's master, a legendary swordsmith. When her new master is forced by the king to move to Normandy, she goes with him and quickly becomes involved with the life of the squires who are training to be knights in Toqueville.

Among the squires in Toqueville she meets William Marshall, the real life Mohammed Ali of the Norman England jousting circuit. (For a great read about William Marshall, read *The Greatest Knight*, by Elizabeth Chadwick). From the beginning, William is making enemies with his success and as he befriends the little blacksmith and teaches her how to fight, his enemies become hers. The plot is often driven by a rather shallow enemy who is obsessed with Ellen and driven by jealousy of William to be a bad guy. He is, of course, her secret half-brother, but she cannot prove it. He has no qualities other than being the weak-willed menace to Ellen and nearly destroys the novel. His characterization is the weakest part of the novel, but it's a very weak part.

The Copper Sign is a typical journey novel, with one adventure following another with somewhat loose couplings, but atypically has a female lead. While she is, of course, beautiful and her sexual appeal is the primary source of her problems, but she also struggles with being taken seriously as a swordsmith. This struggle with balancing her work with her family and dealing with the responsibility of being the primary breadwinner in a man's world is a modern problem, which is a big strength of the novel. And for all of the flaws of the shallow plot line and lack of any deep introspection from any of the characters, the characters are unusual and you do want to know where Ellen is going to go next. One of the big strengths of the novel is that the secondary characters are really interesting; the world is deep and detailed and in her travels, the reader experiences peasant life, an apprenticeship, the noble tournament circuit and a brief brush with the rising middle class. You walk into their homes and experience the problems of a whole cast of characters that would make for a great movie, but are somewhat disappointing in a book, because you want to know them better than you get to.

All the same, this is the first book of a trilogy that I suspect I will have to finish reading. The history may be better than the characters or the plot, but the history is very good.

Rosa Chacón García says

Una muy entretenida ficción histórica. En mi opinión se pasa un poquito con el romance y ese tipo de historias pero bueno tampoco molesta excesivamente.

Katy says

3.5 STARS - This is a really good story for someone who has the patience to read a long book and take in a lot of information. But the book dragged, and the writing was dull - though I'm not sure much of that is due to the language lost in translation.

I have mixed feelings about this book because I was really intrigued by the storyline from Ellen's ambition to the hardships she has suffered to the romances she had experienced to the outcome at the end. But I also felt like I was reading a whole saga and not just one book. SO much happened, and it was a lot to take in - with some parts that I really liked and some parts that I didn't like and even some parts that disgusted me.

Overall, it wasn't a bad read - and one I actually liked. It was just a bit of a beating to get through the whole book.

Lolly's Library says

Research - 5 stars (at least as far as blacksmithing goes)

Execution - 1 star

Writing ability - 2 stars

Originally published in Germany in 2006, **The Copper Sign** was picked up and translated by Amazon.com's AmazonCrossing publishing imprint. Now, I don't know if it's the fault of the translator or if it's the fault of the original prose, but despite the book's history, it still reads as a self-published work. There's a good book in here and a competent editor would've brought it out. As it stands, though, one has to wade through a lot of chaff to get to the few kernels of a good story.

First off, there's the length: over 600 pages. And this is just the first novel of a trilogy. This book could've been cut down into a trilogy all by itself. That said, most of those 600 pages are devoted to a whole lotta nothing. I give credit to the author: It's obvious she loves the art of blacksmithing and it's just as obvious she's studied it in a great deal of depth. However, like many authors, it's just as obvious she had a hard time deciding what research to cut from her story and so decided just to put all of it in. As a result, we get many passages detailing (and I do mean detailing) the work put into creating a medieval sword and other ironworking skills. After a while, the book begins to read as a treatise on medieval metallurgy, which, in context, would be fascinating, I'm sure. But not in the middle of a fiction novel. A few brief passages here and there, highlighting specific points of the process would've given the reader plenty of insight into how medieval craftspeople worked without bogging the narrative down.

Speaking of the narrative, to be honest, there really wasn't one. There was no over-arching plot, just a series of vignettes in which the main character, Ellen, moves from one location to another. Ellen would change location, there would be a small conflict, she'd move and the cycle would begin again. There was no great growth of character and no building of the story towards a great conflict to be resolved in the final act. Speaking of those multiple small conflicts, after a while they became tiresome and quite ridiculous. Though news didn't travel as far or as quickly in that time period, stories of criminals and people wanted for crimes would've been grist for the gossip mill and would've nearly flown through the network of merchants,

tinkers/peddlers, jongleurs/minstrels and others who traveled between towns and villages. Ellen, who during the tale is accused of murder and a few other crimes, simply moves to the next town when, pardon my language, the shit hit the fan, and manages to set up shop as a blacksmith, a female blacksmith, mind you, which was no ordinary thing. Every time she moves, she manages to avoid ever being recognized or charged for the crimes--for which she's innocent, but that's beside the point--with nary a bailiff or magistrate sniffing around her shop to harass or arrest her. I'm sorry, but that stretches the limits of reality. No one is that lucky, especially when Ellen is equally unlucky in having all these tragedies occur in her life, tragedies which spur her nomadic movements and fuel each vignette. The whole novel just didn't flow properly, never mind the fact that it was just so one-dimensional. However, what really struck me about the plot was just how little the characters interacted with the times in which they lived. As the reader, you never got a sense of the history, of what was going on with the politics of the time. Sure, kings were mentioned and war campaigns were talked about, but it was in a secondary, off-hand way. Even though Ellen met with Henry, the Young King (son and crowned heir of Henry II), the whole scene felt as though she was simply meeting with another character and not an actual historical personage. There was no sense of place to the entire novel. It could've been set in any time, in any country. About the only details of life in that particular time period which permeated the story were details concerning the middle/lower classes and even those details were limited to narrow section of the population, that of the craftspeople which populated the towns and countryside.

Then we come to the characters, none of which I ever identified with or sympathized with or even particularly liked. Ellen herself was bipolar: One moment she would be stubborn and proud and so very, very prickly; the next she would be meek and pious. Most of the time, though, she's either mean or disparaging to those around her, which means she spends the rest of the time wondering why they're angry with her or sad because of something she said. And, of course, every man who met her fell in love with her in some way, even when she was disguised as a boy. Puh-lease! That particular angle drove one of the characters, Thibault, the villain of the piece. Thibault first meets Ellen when she's disguised as Alan and apprenticed to the local blacksmith. Thibault finds himself attracted to this "boy" and flagellates himself for his dirty desires. When he eventually finds out Alan is Ellen, he loathes her with a dark rage even as he still desires her, which drives his actions throughout the book. His rage/passion drives him to perpetrate dark deeds, including murder, all to clear the way for him to make Ellen his woman. (view spoiler) Basically, Thibault is a one-dimensional pig; a cad, a rapist, a bully, a loathsome man. He's a standard, black hat wearing villain with no depth. You hate him because he's hate-able and that's it. The remaining characters were either your standard archetypes or ciphers, placed in the story for Ellen to find or interact with, but that's about it. About the only one with potential was Isaac, another blacksmith we meet towards the end of the novel and, naturally, another love interest for Ellen. His personality actually progresses and develops some depth, making him quite unique.

Fox's writing is passable, though obviously in need of editing, as with the rest of the book. There was a sense of awkwardness to the whole thing, especially as concerns the dialogue, and this occasional inelegance would be enough to jar me out of a scene and make me wish the passage had been written in a more pleasing fashion. To be honest, until I read the author bio at the back of the book, I would've sworn Katia Fox was a young adult. Her use, or should I say, over-use of exclamation points reminded me of a teenager's journal. Characters, in their speech, would enthuse! About the smallest things! Things which weren't exciting at all! After a while, 'Find the Exclamation Point' became a game, though not a drinking one; I would've been hammered after a page or two.

I doubt I will read the other two books in the series. Firstly, because I didn't find **The Copper Sign** all that enthralling or leaving me breathless for book two, as the back of book claims one will be upon finishing the novel. And secondly, I honestly can't see any of the characters having much left to say or do; they didn't do that much in this book. The concept behind this novel is intriguing and with a competent editor, **The Copper Sign** (and subsequent novels) could've probably been something spectacular. As it stands now, though, I would be hard pressed to recommend it to anyone. Sorry.

Rebecca H. Cooley says

READ ME

READ this book, I feel like I was taught a lot of things from this book. Well worth reading for all!

puppet of a star . says

I read this book when I was in elementary school, and I really loved it! (If your thoughts right now equate to something like "How did a 9 year old get her hands on this and what were her parent doing"; I read my mom's copy in secret because she wouldn't let me read it. Which, in hindsight, is understandable)

One thing I especially liked was how detailed the process of making a sword was written in. It was super interesting, and Ellen learning about it was my favorite part of the book.

Charlotte says

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La Fuente De las Musas says

¡La musa Terpsícore ha reseñado El símbolo de cobre!

--> Leer la reseña

Sarah says

Didn't finish, so I won't officially rate it, but based on what I did read, it's a 2 out of 5. Some good descriptions of the setting and of sword-crafting, but the writing reads like a rough first draft. Alas.

Melissa says

I was really interested in this book and wanted to finish, but the content of the book is not what I would read. I skipped around a lot especially when the book focused on the "Bad guy" who was sexually obsessed with our main character. I felt so bad for this girl her life was just one tragedy after another. There was a point in the book she was living in a safe place with people who loved her but her need to be a blacksmith drove her into more bad situations. I just couldn't read about anything else happening to the girl and put it down. This was a long book with descriptions about forging and goldsmiths that lasted for pages and I ended up skimming over a lot of the detail of her making her swords. The writing was well done and it did take you back in time, I'm just thankful I didn't have to live in.

Sara Diane says

I got this one because it sounded remotely interesting and it was on a great deal for the Kindle. I ended up returning it because the content was so slimy that I didn't want to touch it.

There is nothing elegant or even pretty about Fox's writing skill, and her storytelling leaves much to be desired. It's hard to pin down the main character's age, yet we have sex scenes right and left, including an incest-rape. Fox has no sense of pacing, skipping whole years and then rushing through the interesting parts

where her character might actually develop. With so much better writing available out there, there's no need to waste time on this one.

Aleshanee says

Klappentext

England 1161. Die 12jährige Ellen, Tochter eines Schwertschmieds, möchte nur eines: ebenfalls Schwertschmiedin werden. Doch das ist für ein Mädchen undenkbar. Als sie nach einer ungeheuerlichen Entdeckung von zu Hause fliehen muss, verkleidet Ellen sich als Junge und nutzt die Chance: Sie begleitet einen berühmten Schwertschmied in die Normandie und lernt dort als Schmiedejunge Alan das Handwerk ausüben und das höfische Leben kennen. Doch die Lüge, auf der sie ihr Leben aufgebaut hat, wird ihr zum Verhängnis, als sie sich in einen jungen Ritter verliebt, denn sie darf ihre Identität nicht preisgeben. Zu spät erkennt sie, wem sie vertrauen darf – und dass sie bei Hofe einen Feind hat, der zu allem bereit ist ...

Meine Meinung

Das Buch hatte ich jetzt schon länger auf dem SuB und ich hab mich echt drauf gefreut, weil ich viele positive Meinungen dazu gelesen hatte und ich zwischendurch ja immer gerne mal was historisches lese. Wie ich gesehen habe gibt es noch drei weitere Teile, die aber alle in sich abgeschlossen sind und jeweils von den Nachfahren der Protagonisten handeln.

Leider hat mir der Schreibstil nicht wirklich gut gefallen. Recht einfach gehalten und nicht wirklich angepasst an die Zeit, in der die Geschichte spielt, hat die Autorin die ganze Handlung nur oberflächlich skizziert. Dadurch liest man sich natürlich recht flott durch die Seiten, aber ich konnte überhaupt nicht in Geschehen eintauchen. Alles passierte sehr schnell, ohne wirklich gut durchdacht zu sein, die Protagonistin Ellen wurde mit Problemen konfrontiert, für die sie immer und überall sofort und zufällig eine perfekte Lösung gefunden hat.

Die Charaktere wurden alle nur kurz angeschnitten, was aber im Prinzip auch gereicht hat, denn man wusste sofort, welche Rolle welche Figur spielt und ich konnte mir recht schnell zusammenreimen, wie es weitergehen wird.

Nachdem ich mich nach 200 Seiten immer noch nicht begeistern konnte, hab ich leider abgebrochen.

Fazit

Ein etwas oberflächliches Abenteuer der jungen Protagonistin Ellen, das mir zu flüchtig und ohne überraschende Momente zu reizlos war. Habe es nach 1/3 abgebrochen.

© Aleshanee
Weltenwanderer

Band 1: Das kupferne Zeichen
Band 2: Der silberne Falke
Band 3: Der goldene Thron
Band 4: Das Tor zur Ewigkeit

Shanna says

I loved this story it was love, war, failure success etc.

Rea says

Inhalt:

Ellen ist die älteste Tochter des Schmieds Osmond. Zu gern hilft sie ihrem Vater in der Schmiede beim Halten und Verarbeiten der Eisenklötze zu wertvollen Schwertern. Doch bedauerlicherweise wächst Ellen in einer Zeit auf, in der es Frauen nicht erlaubt ist Männerarbeit zu verrichten. Von ihrer Mutter bekommt sie deshalb einen Tadel nach dem anderen, weil sie mal wieder nicht ihren Pflichten im Haus nach kommt. Als Ellen eines Tages mit dem Gerberssohn Simon unterwegs ist, und sie sich auf die Suche nach Himbeeren machen kommen die beiden an einer Kate vorbei. Ellens Neugierde ist geweckt, als sie mitbekommt, dass unabhängig voneinander eine Frau und ein Mann diese Kate betreten. Ellen beobachtet die beiden heimlich, und was sie sieht lässt ihr das Blut in den Adern gefrieren. IHRE Mutter mit einem anderen Mann. Der kein geringerer als Sir Miles ist. Da sie von den beiden erwischt wird rennt sie schleunigst auf und davon und bittet die alte Kräuterfrau Aelgava um Hilfe. Diese hat nur eine Lösung für sie, raus aus den Frauenkleidern und rein in die Kleidung ihres verstorbenen Mannes, Haare ab, und ab sofort weit ab der Heimat als Mann leben. So kommt es, dass Allan ab sofort auf sich allein gestellt ist. Einen Lehrplatz bei einem halbherzigen Schmied bekommt. Doch, als sie bald darauf besser ist als er, und er ihr nichts mehr beibringen kann schickt dieser Ellen weiter zu seinem Ziehvater, da nur noch er ihr neue Handgriffe beibringen kann. Donovan erwies sich als harter Brocken, doch Ellen schaffte es einen Platz bei ihm zu bekommen. Gemeinsam mit Donovan und seiner Familie reist sie auf Geheiß des Königs in die Bretagne um dort beim Bau zu helfen. Als sie bei der Überfahrt nach Frankreich auch die junge Pastetenverkäuferin Rose wieder sieht findet sie in dieser eine Verbündete und Vertraute. Doch auch hier wäre ihr Glück nicht ewig, Rose plappert das gemeinsame Geheimnis aus und bringt Ellen damit in größte Gefahr. Ihre vorerst letzte Flucht treibt Ellen zu den Gauglern, mit denen sie von Tunier zu Tunier zieht und sich ihren Lebensunterhalt als Frau in einer Schmiede erarbeitet. Wie lange wird ihr Glück diesmal anhalten?

Schreibstil und Charaktere:

Katia kann mit ihrem Schreibstil Menschen bannen, wenn diese sich die Zeit zum Lesen nehmen. "Das Kupferne Zeichen" ist ihr Erstlings Roman, und wenn ich das nicht eben wegen der Rezension gelesen hätte, ich hätte es nicht dafür gehalten. Der Roman klingt so gut recherchiert. Die Charaktere so wirklich. Nicht um sonst habe ich mir das Buch mit nach Lissabon genommen, um es hier ein zweites Mal zu lesen und mit meinen Neuanschaffungen von "Der Silberne Falke" und "Der Goldene Thron" die Reihe komplett zu machen.

Fazit und Empfehlungen:

Ein gelungener erster Roman, der Lust auf mehr macht. Ellen, Jean, Rose, Leofric, ich freue mich sie alle wieder sehen zu dürfen. Habt ihr Lust auf einen Ausflug ins 12 Jahrhundert in England und Frankreich? Dann lest Katias Buch. Zu haben in Deutsch und Englisch, und viele andere Sprachen. :)

Storm says

Too much violence for my taste.
