



Medair

Andrea K. Höst

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The complete epic fantasy "Medair" duology, containing the Aurealis Awards finalist "The Silence of Medair" and the heart-rending conclusion "Voice of the Lost".

Time stole Victory.

Medair an Rynstar returned too late to drive back the Ibisian invasion. Centuries too late.

When friend and enemy have become the same thing, what use are the weapons Medair planned to use to protect her Empire? There is no magic, no artefact, no enchanted trinket which can undo the past.

But no matter how Medair wishes to hide from the consequences of her failure, there are those who will not allow her the luxury of denying the present. Her war is already lost, but she carries weapons which could change the course of new battles.

With the skirmishes of war beginning, and hunters in near pursuit, it is her conscience Medair cannot escape. Whose side should she be on? What is she really running from?

From the Aurealis Awards judges' report: "You can read Silence of Medair for its strong, conflicted heroine, its playful subversion of fantasy tropes, or its deep, detailed analysis of the nature of racism. If not, just read it for the beautifully crafted prose."

Medair Details

Date : Published January 1st 2011 by Andrea K. Höst

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Author : Andrea K. Höst

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From Reader Review Medair for online ebook

Becky says

This was the first of Host's novels that I read and I just finished reading it again yesterday as a refresher for this review. I've read some high fantasy but it had never been a preference of mine until I read Medair and realized that some people can do a good job writing it.

It doesn't have to be dry and boring and beyond descriptive like *The Lord of the Rings* or depressingly gross like *A Game of Thrones* where everyone is either the devil or dead.

This fantasy wasn't that cheesy type of girl fantasy where the author has written a sloppy or nonexistent plot to hide the fact that the book is really a Harlequin romance novel.

No, this book is not any of those things.

It's a beautiful story, with complex characters, a world that is authentic, and a raging internal battle the MC has to fight.

Medair's voice caught my attention immediately and was the reason I quickly bought every book Host has written. You can't fake that kind of voice. It's the reason I love Melina Marchetta too.

It seems like it must be so hard to create a character that readers can relate to, or find funny, or root for. Host's characters do that for me. They're the kind of characters I'd want to meet in real life because I just feel like we'd be besties.

Medair, waking up 500 years after the end of a war she'd been hoping to end, finds herself floating adrift and confused. She was sent by her King to find the Horn of Farak to end the War, and while resting in the magical cave that held the horn, 500 years passed without her knowledge. The country she was born to and fought for is no more, and you feel her pain and struggle against hating an enemy she cannot touch, because they all died 500 years ago. Their descendents are not so easy to hate, and the conflict that arises from Medair being discovered as the famous Herald from centuries ago keeps the story going at a break neck pace until its conclusion.

The ending! Oh, the ending, how do I count the ways I love you. Host did the same thing to me in *And All the Stars* too! It's like she knows exactly how my mind works, what I want, before I even know. I remember feeling vaguely unsettled that Medair had such a connection with Ileskar, but I wasn't expecting her to do anything about it. It would be impossible right? Not so!

She got everyone their HEA without making it seem unbelievable or far fetched, just seamless. Perfectly imperfect.

Grace says

I rated this duo a lot lower than most of the other reviewers because the first book ends on a cliffhanger leading to the second book, when it would have been better served to combine both into one longer book. In

that context, I think the second book was such a hot mess that it ended up downplaying the strengths of the first.

It is a convoluted world. Many reviewers denigrate books that start with a prologue that sets out the terms of the setting, but this world is revealed to you piecemeal and once you know all the races and what's going on, you wish that you could go back and reread what had been said previously.

Background that I hope will help potential readers

Medair is the Farakkan King's Herald, which is the equivalent of a high-level messenger, complete with a really cool messenger bag that is magically bottomless and a signature of her job. She and her senior are sent to speak with the Ibisian race -- an entire race of people who have suddenly amassed at their borders because their lands have been wiped out by a magical blight. The Ibisians are an interesting race -- they're pale, slim, tall, with white hair, and a blue line down their spine. Most of them are very adept at magic (thus leading to the blight of their lands) and they are known for being cold and expressionless, and their King Ieskar, a few years younger than Medair, is colder than all of them.

The Farakkan king offers the Ibisians refuge, but King Ieskar, in a cool, courteous fashion, thanks her for the message and replies that this kind offer has to be rejected and that the Ibisians will have to fight for what is theirs. Essentially, the Ibisians are a proud race, and not for them a downtrodden immigrant existence. They will conquer and fight.

Not unnaturally, Medair, a good patriotic herald, hates King Ieskar, but (and I thought this well done on the part of the author) there's a sort of fascination as well on a personal level since they had to deal with each other for nigh on two years, with the Farakkan court sending Medair wend-whispers (telepathic messages). She comes to know the history behind the Ibisians and the tragedy of their rigid culture, not the least of the restraints on King Ieskar, who's not allowed to touch anyone but those of the highest rank (and not even his wife, if he had any). Finally, Medair has enough of the Ibisians and requests leave. (view spoiler)

Medair's plan is this: to retrieve the magical horn of Farak (earth/land/mankind), for whoever blows on it can defeat an army. It's not important how this was done, because when the book starts, she had indeed retrieved it, along with a hoard of other magical objects that she puts in her nifty bottomless bag. The problem is that she was tired after her much-heralded journey and fell asleep in magical maze, and when she exited the next morning, found that 500 years had passed.

Thus, we come to the crux of Medair's dilemma that has interesting racial, cultural, and historical implications. Does Medair still continue on to the capital and blow the horn to rid the land of the Ibisians? How to decide? Because when Medair gets to the capital, she realizes one thing: 500 years creates one hodgepodge of a melting pot. Ibisians and Farakkans have interbred massively. Although there is still resentment, the previous Farakkan royalty had decided to integrate the Ibisian blood into their line for the sake of peace, and even the royalty is a mix. So, Medair retreats to a mountain and broods over her magical hoard.

Silence of Medair

The strengths of this book lies in Medair's journey back to the heart of mankind, after being chased from her mountain by a group of suspicious looking soldiers. Medair is as foreign to this world as the reader, and that makes it a lot easier for the reader to take things in. Pretty soon, we are introduced to the second protagonist, Illukar, who is initially magically in the guise of a 14 y/o boy. They are compelled to travel together because Illukar puts a geas on Medair before passing out, thus ensuring Medair's compliance in getting him to his destination. Eventually, it is revealed that he is a hated Ibisian. Pretty soon, Medair is stuck with a whole

bunch of Ibisians. I don't know if I would call Medair intelligent or brave, as so many reviewers did. She behaved very passively, which I guess is better than being reckless in a brand new world. Despite her aversion to the "white snakes," she seemed to relent towards them pretty fast. All I can say is that I enjoyed her adventures and didn't hate her. Things seemed to happen to her, and despite her avowed hatred of the Ibisians, she treated them exceedingly well and believed them immediately. This I found hard to credit, if you're possessed of a deep-rooted bias and hatred toward a race.

Well, by and by, it seems that Ibisians are not that heinous of a race, despite their terrible beginnings of a declaration of war. They rule fairly. They are innately courteous. If one were to be conquered, there are worse races to rule over you. So, putting this book into historical context, it's not the same as real war histories, where real atrocities occur because the conqueror treats you as less than a human being. It's even noted that Ibisians treated their prisoners of war well. Therefore I could posit that after 500 years of assimilation, it would be exceedingly rare for a huge uprising. Maybe a minority terrorist group, but not outright civil war, which usually happens due to imbalance of economics or huge human rights violations (which are usually second to economic concerns anyway). Plus, colonized/conquered lands have a history of being downtrodden and assimilated long afterwards and even developing hero worship of the conqueror's culture. This would be especially so if the conquerors treated the original people exceedingly well, which was what this case appeared to be, despite some reluctance to interbreed in the highest circles.

Be that as it may, the first book is fast-paced and adventurous.

Voice of the Lost

It is in the second book that the threads seemed to unravel. The energy between Illukar and Medair comes to a head all of a sudden, and Illukar confesses to Medair of his feelings. Well, why not? Despite all her Farakkan loyalties and occupation, she was pretty quick to hand over treasures to the Ibisians. In fact, when the capital is attacked by a nearby Desian king who wishes to restore the Farakkan dynasty (and has a hidden royal heir to boot), Medair plies her horn and saves the city. The Desian king had resorted to wild magic (which caused the Ibisian lands to perish in the first place) and called down a weird conflagration that enveloped the entire land, except for the capital that was shielded.

This conflagration is an interesting dimension to the story and added scifi aspects. It pushed all of the land, except for the capital, into an alternate dimension, whereby everyone outside of the capital's shield was suddenly changed. They would recall different things for people inside the capital, as though a completely alternate history had happened to them.

If this had been the only fantastical aspect to the second book, that would have been fine. But then Medair also witnessed King Ieskar possessing the current heir to the throne and spoke to a sentient King Ieskar. And then this happens again later on in the book. Then again, where King Ieskar says he is existing out of time. It was as though the author loved this character too much to let go of him. We get it. He's a pretty cool hero, despite how cool Illukar was. I get wanting to have him at the forefront. And then he has the power to save Illukar? And then, MINDBLOWN, (view spoiler)

But backing up, the conflagration also seemed to keep changing its rules as well. It turned out it wasn't a one-shot change. Things continued to change after the conflagration was deemed over. But the only person that changed thereafter was Ileaha, a mixed-bred poor relation of Illukar. There seemed to be nobody else who was inside the capital and who got changed after the conflagration was over. What?

It was as though the author had all these ideas for maybe a later book and decided to stick them into this second book, making the second book one hot mess and thoroughly convoluted. If I were to rate the first

book 3.5 stars, and the second 1.5, I think 2.5 stars rounded up to 3 is a pretty fair estimation of my opinion of this duo.

Lee says

Medair is one of those rare books where I felt like someone could knock me out and induce amnesia - so that I can read the book all over again! The experience was beyond pleasant and I liked how the author surprised me through the plot twists in the story. On that note, it might just be me because I put in effort not to try and anticipate what would happen next but immerse myself in the story (Hey! That's what escapism is all about yeah?). So it depends what gets you going, the pleasure of a novel experience vs. getting a kick out of knowing your predictions came true.

I liked both *The Silence of Medair* and *The Voice of the Lost* simply because the length was just right. Not too lengthy and it ended just at the right spot for the fantasy to continue its course in my own head. The story also gives me a deep sense of nostalgia. 500 years passed and what's left behind? I like how the story started by capitalizing on Medair's failure and Andrea K. Host did not hesitate to let us know how much she regrets her mistake though... I suppose if she developed a psychological disorder like PTSD or perhaps suffers from repression that manifests itself in a million tiny weird quirks would make her traumatic experience more realistic. But her honesty to being a coward was real enough for me. I also like how secretive Medair had to be, and how a particular male protagonist had subtly attempted to uncover her mystery.

I would say that the character development was mainly emphasized on Medair and it did suggest that the author put in a lot of thought when writing the book. The language use was excellent as well. I don't really appreciate what other authors do to make ancient/fantasy folk talk or behave like today's modern Hollywood. I like the subtle romance between the characters and I appreciate the cultural differences between Farakkians (humans) and the Ibisians (white skinned, blue spine humanoid beings). I appreciate the effort she put into creating this 'alien' race (didn't really mention if they were from outer space).

I also like the ending! It was one of those.. 'too much to ask for but the author made it happen' type. Probably the only unreal thing I believe existed in this unreal world! Did I give too much hint?

What I didn't like?

1. Not enough physical action (be it at self-defense, violence or in war)
 2. A time difference of 500 years would warrant A WHOLE LOT more of changes than what the author described albeit they were relevant (ie. emergence of new 'Gods' and the disappearance of some old lands)
 3. Where did the Hoard even come from?! (once you've read the book.. you'll know)
-

Linda says

One thing you have to understand is that almost everything Andrea K. Host writes is my fetish. In her books, Host likes combining a level headed heroine, interesting magic system, a stoic hero and a often a philosophical question or two. These are all things I really enjoy, but this book (technically duology) is especially transcendent.

In Mediar, a young woman who's a herald for the king rides off to find this legendary weapon that will allow her country to destroy the conquering enemy and win the war. She finds it, but dallies too long in a magical cave and when she comes back her country is conquered and it's 500 years later.

While there is constant action in this book, much of the real conflict it is Medair dealing with moral questions such as what should she do now that the conquerors have assimilated with the original people in her country, what she should do about her oath to the throne (should she support the claim of someone who's descended from the old king?), and with her own guilt, memories and personal hatred. (But all done in a realistic way and not in a prolonged-angst kind of way.) She's also a herald so she doesn't have any special powers or fighting skills minus some magical trinkets that she picked up, so she's strong in certain ways, but isn't able to solve everything with a wave of her fingers and is conflicted about the things she can do.

Also, people have made the case that creatures like elves and dwarves in fantasy can exist as a stand-in for The Other and concepts of xenophobia and racism, but in my opinion very few novels actually really explore the idea (if they ever do) in a non-trite way like this book does. Put frankly, Medair is a racist—and while you can say she has reasons for this since the Ibisians (who let's be real, are basically elves) invaded her country unprovoked 500 years ago—the book explores ideas of racial hatred and race purity from both sides.

I think the only thing in this duology that might be controversial is part of the ending. It solves one of the conflicts in the book, but in a way that was a little weird—although I think Host does pull it off as she did set up for it throughout both books.

Anna says

This is two novels in one, except it isn't really as the two read like halves of a whole rather than as two separate stories. It's one story, about hatred, forgiveness & forbearance, and I did love reading it. I docked it one star because I did get bogged down in fantasy conventions a few times (mainly far too many made up words) and the ending threw me rather, but don't let that put you off. This is a book very much worth reading. There are so many regions of our own world that are plagued by the kind of undying hatreds considered here. Places where terrible things happened long ago, and through all the centuries since there have been people trying to right the wrongs done then. But where does it stop? Can it stop? Are we doomed to fight and refight the battles of the past or can we move on into the future?

Before this book begins, the Empire Medair serves as Herald to has been terribly wronged. Their generous offer to a band of refugees had led to their Empire being conquered, and Medair had set off to find magical items to overthrow the invaders. Unfortunately a magical catch leads to her sleeping for 500 years and when she returns to her Empire ready to bring victory to her people she finds that the hated invaders have thoroughly interwoven with them. Bloodlines have merged, customs have become hybrids from both traditions, and her time has passed. Medair finds herself in a new world, but burdened with her memories of what to her was just a short while ago. She is also burdened by the expectations of people who have kept the cause of her Empire alive for all these centuries. The story of how things work out is thoughtful and interesting.

Li says

I probably do sound like a bit of a broken record when it comes to Andrea K Höst, but I have fallen in love with pretty much all of her books.

MEDAIR has adventure, magic, and love (with a healthy dollop of angst), and I was drawn into Medair's world from the start. I loved the premise of "what happens if the hero(ine) fails to save the world" combined with the Sleeping Beauty spin - Medair emerges from her version of an enchanted sleep half a century after the war. The world is much changed and the battles and Medair herself are part of history, but for her, it was only yesterday when the country was on the verge of war.

Perhaps a tad too much time was spent revisiting the debate on right v. wrong and the grey areas in between; however, that didn't stop me from being completely immersed in Medair's story and wondering how it could all end happily. The intricate world-building and the examination of complex cultures was an added bonus. And gosh, the ending - it was a surprise, but not quite a surprise at the same time. In hindsight, the seeds were laid throughout the book and I don't think the ending could have worked any other way.

Yes, I loved this one.

Sassapphras says

I would first like to say that I love this author. I was introduced to her through her Touchstone trilogy, which I absolutely adore! Wanting more of that, I picked up the Medair Duology. I admit that my love for the Touchstone trilogy surpasses this series, but these books were still really very good. I will definitely be reading more from Ms. Höst. Her writing style grabs my attention and doesn't let go.

Estara says

During the holidays I finally found time to read Medair, which I had been braced against a bit - even though I've much enjoyed all the other books of the author I've read so far - because of the basic plot of hopelessness for the heroine. This whole review is utterly FULL of spoilers:

The first book, which was nominated for an Aurealis award, introduces the action plot of a kingdom in danger from outside forces which it attempts to defeat/ stop by looking for all kinds of things which may strengthen its defence - and since it is a magic-wielding kingdom, it's looking for magic weapons or at least magic power-up stones.

Our heroine Medair not only has a whole treasury of magic weapons of ancient provenance at her fingertips (literally, as you will find out - loved that particular homage to Doraemon ^^) which she quested for in the hope of saving her empire, but - while fleeing people on the other side of the conflict who have found her in her retreat - she runs across the carnage left by a mage fight and collects a handful of those magic power-up stones (= the reason for the carnage) and a young boy who is the only survivor.

So far, so normal for fantasy - the twist that lifts the story from the average is the fact that Medair didn't collect the magic treasure for the CURRENT kingdom, but for an empire that vanished in a war 500 years ago - an empire which was defeated by the people who run the magic kingdom NOW. Having found the treasure in time to help her kingdom, she had dared to sleep for one night in its hiding place, and when she

returned 500 years had passed.

The story picks up a year later, when Medair has already become resigned and numb towards the fact that the people living in the city and palace she used to call home (she was a herald of the emperor) are now a mix of the conquerors and her own countrymen, but she still doesn't know how to connect to people again and what to do with the treasure she found.

The developments are currently moving towards war and the fact that it has become known that she is important (the current enemy side had a prophecy about her) pushes her from her safe but solitary life back into the developments of her country.

And that boy she saved isn't even a boy...

The whole first book is a fascinating intermix of retrospective memories of Medair, mostly in reaction to what she sees or talks about with her current companions, and the way that the slide into war reminds her of what happened 500 years ago.

She isn't willing to open up right away - who would be - so it's all very much a dance on eggshells. And then there's the dubiousness of her original motivation for the quest and what that might mean... and what to do now that the capital is once again under threat...

~

The second book is more action-oriented on the one hand and in some ways an exploration of Medair's situation from another point of view again: Medair, having found reasons to throw in with the current kingdom based on her old empire, becomes another victim of a massive attack spell of wild magic (something whose dangers were made clear in the previous book, because that was the reason why the mage-run kingdom invaded Medair's empire in the first place: to flee from wild magic) which is aimed at the capital.

The mages in the capital manage to shelter it from the wild magic wave, but in the aftermath it is discovered that the wild magic changed the whole history and layout of the rest of the known world - islands, where mountains used to stand, Medair's family's land completely gone, a kingdom alive which had fallen 1000 years ago in the alternate time line, magical races that never existed before - and all of them having known this kingdom and being completely surprised that no one remembers them.

A more insidious change is that the mixed children of the former conquerors and the native population look like almost pure magic wielders: one of Medair's new friends from the first book, who suffered from being bullied all her life because she didn't look like that and didn't have the power, finds herself transformed (with memories of BOTH pasts) into the person she became on this version of the world: incredibly competent and looking totally like the mage kingdom people.

For everyone in the capital - and the group around Medair, which includes people from the highest government level - the situation is exactly the same as Medair's was a year ago - they now live in a country whose past they don't know with changes that can't be taken back and have to adapt to the fact that the enemy who called the wild magic is still around and trying to take over their country, with his even more powerful magic constructs: this part is the action plot.

What to do with Medair's magical treasures? Can she allow herself to become close to one of her

companions even though he is descended from the conquerors - is this even relevant in the changed circumstances? Now that wild magic has been used, will it destroy the country again?

Actually that bit was very much stuck on at the end - I think another book would have made more sense with that, especially considering the incredible change that dealing with this meant for Medair and the man in question - and I would have felt better if I had a firm belief that she and they (^^) would cope with what happened. I have to give kudos, though, for even hinting in the first book that emotionally this response on Medair's side might have originally existed even as she didn't acknowledge it then.

ala says

It's exciting to be finally able to give a five star rating to a book -- with the explosion of paranormal and the urban fantasy genre, good ones seem hard to come by recently. But I found this one captivating. Though it builds on the potentially trite theme of forbidden love, it rises far above the formulaic, instead using the theme to probe deeper questions of anger, forgiveness, loyalty, honor and love.

Medair is a re-publishing of two books in one: *The Silence of Medair* and *The Voice of the Lost*. However neither one is even remotely stand-alone, so I recommend getting this compound volume.

The book opens about a year after Medair returns from a quest for a magical horn to save the empire she serves as a herald from the invading Ibisians. Though her quest was successful, she has returned 500 years too late. Her side lost and the once-invaders are now as much a part of the new country she comes home to as the indigenous population is. She struggles to lay down the cause she fought for, the resentment she feels for the Ibisians and understand her new role -- what does it mean for her to serve her empire so long after the one she swore allegiance to was drastically changed?

(Warning: possible spoilers below)

Events throw her reluctantly in with an Ibisian nobleman, one who reminds her too much of the king who conquered her people. Host uses Medair's ambivalent dealings with both men, the one from the present and recollections of Ibisian king to probe feelings of loss and anger and the possibility of forgiveness and acceptance. I love how Host moves between present and recalled events to unfold both current and back-story. No info dumping here. Instead dramatic recollections are skillfully woven into the story thread and serve explain Medair and her issues.

Medair is a real and likable character, trying hard to do the right thing in a situation where the choices are no longer clear. Her struggles and moral dilemmas seem real to me (if perhaps a touch repetitive, but I can overlook this). She is a strong heroine, but avoids the superhumanness that's can be an annoying trap in this genre. I especially like how she tries to be honest with herself when she probes her motivations -- how shame, desire for the approval of others, mixes with her sense of duty, her desires. She has some blind spots, but these are also developed in interesting ways -- the-lady-doth- protest-too-much sort of thing.

I also love the world created, with complex cultures and traditions. I also have a soft spot for authors who make up enough new words that they offer the reader a glossary. (I personally hate having things over-explained in the story itself. Just enough is given in context to make most aspects understandable here.)

I should admit that this book has a number of flaws, some of them I would complain about bitterly in the case of most books. But this one has so much going for it, I would almost prefer to ignore them... I kind of

felt that too much went on in the second book -- we go from one dramatic change to another. This was primarily a character-driven novel such that the action served to put the characters in situations where they might change and grow. This was done masterfully in the first book, but the second I felt like a number of things were over-the-top and served more as a distraction from what the characters were doing, unless this was supposed to be a prequel to another series or something. Toning it down would have made for a more believable and powerful backdrop for the character development. I also have a beef with the secondary characters. Though not as one-dimensional as often is the case, they were done a disservice by the Medair-only POV. Their problems were not focused on enough to make them truly compelling. Finally, the Decian uprising was entirely unconvincing to me. Why were they so unhappy again if the Ibisian rulers were so just? How did the king know how to use wild magic if no-one else knew how? Why now? Way too many loose ends... And finally, how was it that Medair's invisibility ring was destroyed in one chapter and then remarkably was used again 4 chapters later??? -- think this is a sign that a better editor was in order.

In spite of these problems, this is the best book I've read in a long time. The love story is masterfully told. Starting so subtly you hardly see it coming. It grows so gradually you almost don't notice. And then there is a twist that's like -- holy crap I totally didn't see that coming but explains so much! Amazing. Antithesis of Bella-Edward insta-love BS.

Anyway, this one really stuck with me. I finished it and had to go back and re-read a bunch of parts of it (I almost never do that) and it was even better the second time through. Highly recommended.

Sherwood Smith says

A year or two back, Estara told me that I really ought to try Andrea K. Höst 's work, as it invariably starts with a lone female protagonist flung into an interesting situation. This is one of my favorite story tropes, and Estara hit right on target.

Both the character and the world building grabbed me right from the start. Medair is a Herald who rode off to save the world, found the means, lay down to take a nap, and woke up to discover that the war she was trying to end had been lost half a millennium ago. She's practical, wistful, insightful, stubborn, independent, starved for love, and determined to do the right thing. If she can figure out what that is.

I am not going to recount the plot points. There are plenty of reviews, and some of them skate too close to spoiler territory: there are, like in one of my other favorites, *And All the Stars*, twists that caught me by surprise—and made a second reading a different book.

This second read made me really appreciate the world building, and the way magic was developed, doing breathtaking things with space, time, and memory. The cultures were sketched in with a broader brush, but when details were provided they were effective, from foods to animals to the religions.

The tone is more elegiac than any of her other works, something that appeals to me when there are moments of humor as well as the numinous; action as well as reflection. In this book, the past matters as much as the future. Life five hundred years ago is not slapped down in front of the reader while the present-day story is halted.

Instead, the reader learns, bit by bit, about Medair's past through personal memories, which have more emotional impact than descriptions of superlatives –thousands and thousands of warriors, horizon to horizon,

the total destruction of the world. And yet the stakes were exactly that high.

I appreciated the balance between political stakes and personal stakes as well as the tension between past and present. Every single decision had enormous consequences, and because of the personal relationships the reader can feel them. There is a great deal of debate about morals and ethics, but because these dialogues are never neutral—the personal cost is so high, as well as the magical and political—they are compelling.

I also loved the complexity of the villains; one of those relationships remains a high-wire tension line almost to the last word. Making me want to read it all over again.

Marcel says

Medair is another great book by Andrea K. Höst. It combines the two books *The Silence of Medair* and *Voice of the Lost* in one. The story flows well and you don't want to put the book down once started. The story centers on Medair and the difficult choices she has to make and how along the way she finds love. There is a lot of action and adventure. The story shows how mixing two cultures and letting them mould together over a few centuries you end up with something new which maintains elements of both. But it also shows that those who have maintained their original culture who once were the friends and foes have become the extremists to fear. At the end of the book you wonder what became of Medair, Illukar/Ieskas and all the others.

Chachic says

April 2015 reread: Medair was one of the titles I included in my last Top Ten Tuesday post and that made me want to reread it so I did. Such a good read.

February 2014 review: Originally posted [here](#).

Having previously loved Andrea K. Höst's sci-fi novels *And All the Stars* and the *Touchstone* trilogy, I picked up her *Medair* duology when I needed to be fully absorbed by a good novel. It's funny because out of all of her books, I wanted to read this epic fantasy duology first but I didn't get the chance to read them until recently. Once again, I would like to thank the author for providing a review copy of the omnibus edition which contains both *The Silence of Medair* and *Voice of the Lost*. I feel that both books have to be read together so I'm glad I got them in one edition.

I was completely immersed in Medair's world right from the start. I read the whole thing in just one weekend because I couldn't get enough of the story and just *had* to reach the end as soon as I could. I wanted to be swept away into a wonderful world filled with magic and adventure and I'm happy to report that *Medair* lived up to my expectations. Having had prior experience reading Andrea K. Höst's other novels, I knew there would be surprising twists and turns in both *The Silence of Medair* and *Voice of the Lost* and I was right. I was immediately intrigued by the premise - Medair is a Herald of her kingdom, tasked with finding a powerful magical object that will help her people win the war. She succeeded in finding what she was

looking for, but she stopped to rest in a place outside of time and when she woke up, she discovered that 500 years have passed. Not surprisingly, Medair feels lost, with no idea how to move forward. A large part of the reader's enjoyment of *Medair* would depend on whether one will be able to sympathize with her and the issues that she faces. Her narration is very introspective, going back and forth from the past to the present, and trying to reconcile the differences between them. There's a lot of reflection on her part as she reluctantly becomes involved in making decisions that would irrevocably change the world she found herself in. I loved Medair's character, I understood her hesitations, her feelings and her worries. She's an intelligent and resourceful woman, loyal to her liege and her country, and inherently a good person. But completely at a loss with how much has been altered in her world. I do admit that there could have been less of her thoughts going around in circles, even Medair was self-aware enough to realize that she keeps doing that, but I wasn't really bothered by it. I can see why the narration wouldn't work for everyone but I'm delighted that I was completely engrossed by it. Aside from Medair, I was also invested in several other characters in the story and I loved seeing her interact with them even as she tries to keep a distance.

There's a whole lot of history and political intrigue intertwined with the story, partly because of the invasion centuries ago, and also because of the alliances of the various governing bodies around the region. I enjoyed these aspects and how magic was also involved in all of it. I like that there weren't any lengthy explanations on how the magic works but it never got confusing for me. I felt that it was seamlessly woven into the story. I believe that this review wouldn't be complete if I didn't talk about the romance in these two books. While I could see it coming, it was how the characters got there that mattered. In keeping with her personality and the situation she's in, Medair doesn't take her attraction to a certain someone lightly. As a result, there's tension and ambiguity. I really had no idea how things would unfold between them. Andrea K. Höst has consistently surprised me with how she builds and develops relationships in her books. While I wasn't exactly able to predict how things would end, I can say that there was a nice build up and I couldn't see Medair's story ending any other way. Similar to the *Touchstone* trilogy, I can see the *Medair* duology will be a very good reread. I look forward to finding the time for it. In the meantime, I need to work on convincing more readers to pick up her books because I seriously find it surprising that they're not as well-known as they should be. I had a book hangover after reading these two books and the only solution I could think of was to start on another Andrea K. Höst title.

Felicity says

"When we accord them less than that, merely because we hate them, we truly do become less than them."

What a way to start the New Year with finishing this duology...and what a brilliant duology it is.

I have not read a story like that in a long time. Sure I have had the pleasure to recently read books such as *The Bird and the Sword* recently which totally blew me away...but even the feeling in that book pales in comparison to the absolute truths of the *Medair* story. This one made me cry. That doesn't happen, or when it does, it is rare.

Medair is an interesting if somewhat unconventional heroine for a fantasy. She has failed, and it is evident from the beginning, but her failure becomes so much more than what it initially is. This book challenges the shape of human nature. That is, what is war and what is peace? What is right or wrong? Sometimes there is a

gray area, and this book *is* that gray area.

It is believable. It is complicated. It is touching.

Regina says

I really loved Medair as a heroine. She has plenty of flaws but she is always in control of herself and understands her own shortcomings. Medair struggles with making choices that are neither right or wrong and I love that part of the book. Illukar was an interesting love interest. Even Kier Ileskar grew on me by the end of the book. The ending threw me for a loop there but I liked it. I wish there was a short story somewhere that details their life after the ending. I really want to see how they live with the "situation" that happened in the end. As a fantasy lover this book really came through with the setting. The world building was great and the politics were fascinating to read.

Mallori says

3.5

This duology was enjoyable, but a bit confusing for me. I enjoyed the first book- The silence of Medair- immensely. It had great and credible world building, the idea of Heralds with their satchels was fascinating, and I loved the idea that the heroine was not a hero, but simply a loyal Imperial messenger driven to desperation. What a heartbreaking and intriguing place to pick up a story- the complete failure of an everyday person in her attempt to save all that she knew due to an ill-fated twist of magic.

I really liked that the set up allowed Host to ask interesting questions about hanging onto the wounds and prejudices of the past, and whether you can hate a culture that has become your own.

However, the reason I have reservations in my love for the Medair duology is twofold- I felt that it started like an adventure fantasy, but the second book ended like a love story. While I was somewhat satisfied with the emotional arc that Medair went through and the resolution of her relationships, I was frustrated because I felt like it just ended with "And they lived mostly happily ever after..." I wanted more- the world is left in a pretty messed up state and I would have liked to have seen some resolution there.

Which highlights my second point - Host made some pretty strange choices in plotting the direction of the story. What starts as an interestingly twisted fantasy gets twisted and then twisted again and then twisted again, so that the story was somewhat random and almost out of shape.

Again, it allowed Host to ask and explore interesting questions- would your life be different or better if you didn't let other people's opinions shape your self worth? - but I felt more like the author was pulling random levers than taking me on a carefully plotted journey with Medair, and that was at times uncomfortable.

Don't let my reservations stop you from reading these books though- I did enjoy and would definitely recommend it as an entertaining and truly interesting take on a fantasy story, but I didn't enjoy it as much as the later Touchstone series, which had just as many twists but was maybe better plotted. I plan to continue reading Andrea Host's catalogue since I have enjoyed the interesting stories she tells.
