

SHARON SHINN

THE AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF
ARCHANGEL AND JOVAH'S ANGEL



THE ALLELUIA FILES

"Triumphant."—Publishers Weekly

"Inventive and compelling."—Library Journal

"Each of these books is better than the last."
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The Alleluia Files (Samaria, Book 3)

The Alleluia Files Details

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From Reader Review The Alleluia Files for online ebook

Lynee says

Interesting premise and well-developed characters.

Sarah says

Much better than Jovah's Angel and better than Archangel. For once, I couldn't entirely guess which people/angels would end up together and how the end would turn out. The beginning, however, was sloooooow. The characters were each well drawn, save for Jared, whom I kept expecting to get overthrown by his own relatives and/or Bael since he was never home. Also, Lucinda's characterization seemed a little inconsistent towards the end of the book.

The oracles' method of passing down the secrets only on their deathbed seemed ridiculously ineffective, and indeed the secrets were not surprisingly lost after only 2 generations. Why wouldn't they have an apprentice?

It is curious given what we learn about the Jansai and what Gabriel did about them in Angel Seeker, hundreds of years before this book, that they do not improve from said spanking but rather apparently develop into the Taliban. It would be interesting to see another book written during that time period to develop the logic.

Despite the questions, the last half of the book was very compelling.

Jen says

I was trying to explain this book to my boyfriend and after I got through: world colonized way into the future by earthlings, the satellite aka "god/jovah" in the sky, and angels with wings grafted onto their backs to control the weather... he was like, "Will you listen to yourself?! This sounds crazy!" And, it is reactions like this, my friends, that makes me love sci fi/fantasy EVEN MORE.

Christine says

4.5 stars

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and found myself so unwilling to put it down that I'm writing this a little bleary-eyed this morning. Like the previous book in this volume, I found the characters to be well drawn, complex, and likable. Also like the last two books, I enjoyed the imaginative world.

Tamar was my favorite of the 3 point of view characters, although I did find her a little overzealous. Her romance with Jared was the best of the series to date. I got a little impatient in Lucinda's point of view and never got a particularly good sense of her character, but it basically worked and kept me reading.

The book fell shy of 5 stars on only a couple of points. First, after spending a book with Allelujah and coming to like her, I simply couldn't believe she would be so stupid as to decide to pass down the information about Jovah from oracle to oracle via a deathbed visit. Yeah, that wasn't going to last long. The second someone doesn't die peacefully in their bed, it's all done. I never understood why the oracle couldn't share the information with an acolyte at some reasonable point in their training, when they determined who their successor would be. It was a small point, but it grated my nerves largely because it was not only a stupid thing to do, but the decision seemed to be made more to suit the plot than anything else.

very minor spoiler

The other reason this fell just short of 5 stars is that the denouement barely touched on the aftermath of the events. I found myself wanting more, and unfortunately, the next two books in the series are both prequels, so this is as far into the future as I get to see.

end very minor spoiler

I continue to recommend this series.

Rachel says

This is a continuation of the Samaria series. Now there is a small sect that teaches that Jovah is a ship, not a deity, and they are being persecuted by the current archangel. The female romantic interest is part of the sect; the male is an angel.

Shinns' portrays the "atheistic" cult as bitter, angry, distrustful and arrogant. They do have some of the technical facts regarding Jovah's identity right, of course, but we find that those who believe in Jovah as deity tend to be more generous, helpful, loving, courteous, etc, etc.

At the end, there is a grand conference on the general theme of "What do we do now; what specifically is our theology?" A conversation goes as follows:

"We can all believe as the Edori do, believing in one great nameless god who watches over the entire universe. . .He hears every prayer, though he does not always answer -"

"Because he does not exist!" Conran shouted. (why's he so threatened, anyway?)

"No, I believe he does," Tamar (formerly of the sect)said. . . "I have been raised to deny the existence of Jovah - of any god. And yet, when I was at my most desperate and most afraid, I prayed. . . I think we need a god so greatly because some god has created us, and he left behind that deep desire." (p. 468)

The story here was interesting because the council was trying to decide on what the religious tradition should be going forward, and some at the council were adamant that any belief in a god was wrong and dangerous.

Being religious myself, I've never read books by avowed atheists that attempt to disprove the existence of God, although I know that there are definitely authors who strive to demonstrate that much of the evil that has arisen in the world has religion as its root. I wonder if those atheist authors would make that same point: that belief in God is actually dangerous. I wonder if they believe that people would suddenly be more generous and courteous, more peace loving and considerate, if they would only stop believing in God?

Lin says

Third book in the sci-fi/fantasy/religious/romance series.

100 years after Alleya found out the truth about God there are only a few who are considered heretics, the Jacobites, that suspect the truth. The Alleluia files could change all that, but nobody has been able to find them and the archangel doesn't want them found.

The narrative switches between 3 characters: Jared, Tamar and Lucinda.

Each of the 3 has their own narrative merits and an interesting story that leads them to each other. Jared is as loveable as Caleb. Tamar reminded me of Rachel from Archangel in her cynicism. Lucinda is more on par with Alleya.

After the big revelations of the second book this one falls a little flat, nor does it have the explosive ending of the first. Perhaps too much time is spent on travelling from place to place without any real story advancement. It does have great characters though and a suitable villain. There is romance and (of course) rebelling against those feelings. Science vs religion comes to the masses.

Hints to Alleya's and Caleb's lives are strewn through the story which is a nice insight into what happened to them after book 2.

The Alleluia files raises interesting questions as to what happens next, though the author hasn't written anything past this (yet?).

Anne says

Oh dear, they need a more exact rating scale. This book was fun, silly, and entertaining, but by no means great literature. A good brainless read about angels and such. And yes, I would like to point out that I am just diligently working my way through my list of books that I've read in the past while. I'm resisting the urge to edit. The urge to try to make it look like I only read smart books. But NO, I will proudly display my less than high-brow reading habits. Yes, there is a half-naked, beautiful winged man on the cover of that. Take that.

Alyssa Nelson says

Sharon Shinn wrote the Samaria books before angels were even a popular subject. I'm a big fan of Shinn, and after reading the first book in this series, Archangel, I fell in love with the world she has created. This is very much a science fiction series, with the inhabitants of Samaria being descendants of people from Earth who left to escape the destruction of the planet by technology. In The Alleluia Files, the people of Samaria have become much more technologically advanced -- some think this is a good thing, others think they are traveling the path that their descendants had tried to escape from.

The book starts off with Tamar, a woman who has grown up with the Jacobites, a group of people who believe that the "god" the angels sing to for help is in fact a spaceship designed to respond to aural cues (music). I loved Tamar. Strong female heroines always win me over, and this girl has some fire in her! Despite being persecuted, hunted down, and beaten down by people from all over, she refuses to give up. She doesn't even complain about her lot in life; she just accepts it and does what she can to survive. If there's

anything I hate, it's a whiny character, so I fell in love with Tamar rather quickly.

As all the Samaria books, *The Alleluia Files* has multiple viewpoints, so we don't just get Tamar's version of events, though I consider her to be the main character. We also get Lucinda, an angel who grew up on an isolated island, and Jared, a high-ranking angel who goes against the norm. They are all wonderful characters, but I think that Tamar was my favorite, followed by Lucinda.

While it was very good, I don't think this one was as good as the first two books of the series. For some reason, the romance didn't seem quite as satisfying. Also, the plot was fairly predictable. Although, I have to admit, once the climax hit, I couldn't stop reading, even though I was pretty sure of what was going to happen. This book is exciting, humorous, suspenseful, and heartwarming. Shinn's greatest talent is getting the reader involved in her characters' lives and their stories -- by the end, I felt like I had just gone through what they had gone through, and found myself sharing their emotions. For me, that is the sign of good writing.

The Samaria books are all connected; however, they are written in a way so as to make them stand-alone. On the one hand, I hate how we don't get to see characters from previous books, but on the other hand, I really like seeing how the world changes and progresses throughout the centuries. Obviously, reading the previous books will help your understanding of the finer points of the world and its history, but it's not necessary.

I recommend this series for any science fiction or romance lover. Keep in mind that there aren't hot and heavy scenes -- it's a sweet romance -- but the characters' interactions will make your heart flutter and put a smile on your face.

Also posted on Purple People Readers.

Marianne says

I really enjoyed *The Alleluia Files*. Jared, Tamar, Lucinda, and Reuben were great "main characters", and the secondary/supporting characters (especially Gretchen) were also quite interesting. I also really liked how the world (and beliefs) have changed over the three books of the series. I might have rated the book five stars if not for some e-book formatting issues (wrong words, misspelled words, misplaced character names. random capital letters) that pulled me out of the story and made me wonder if the gentry had even bigger secrets from the angels.

Sean says

Halfway through I expected to give this four out of five stars because the premise, characterization and plotting seemed tighter and more compelling than in the previous two volumes, but then Shinn pulled her usual tricks with dysynchronous POV and sexist male characters that just drive me nuts. And then the dénouement never seemed to freaking end. So it gets three out of five. Are you happy, Sharon Shinn?

Juushika says

The persecution of a small group who believes Jovah is not a god but a machine may finally expose the truth of Samaria's origin. This runs a risk in rehashing so much of the previous book's revelations--it's difficult to be invested in the protagonists's discoveries and doubts when they're not only obvious to the reader (as they've been throughout the series) but also when they're so familiar. The social implications of these revelations is more interesting, and can fill a book--but would benefit from less hammy antagonist, to compliment the ambiguity of the larger world. And yet, despite caveats, I still find this & the series compelling. The part of me that hoped for a queer romance (the first "spark" is between two women--sisters, of course) is forever unsurprised but disappointed; still, while I don't especially care for the romances, the speculative-cum-romance combination creates an emotive personal focus within an engaging wider world; it's consumable stuff.

Christy Stewart says

In this book, Shinn features her best leading male ever, Jared. He is a man with great power and responsibility...and he evades it at any cost to do...nothing at all. Even as news that will shake the very world down to it's core falls into his lap. He waits years to act on it, and even then he just tries pushing it off on the leading lady, Tamar, who is charmingly schizophrenic.

Mei-Lu says

So I wasn't going to write a review of this book but reading other people's reviews made me decide I must. I just can't NOT address some of the comments that have been made. First let me talk about my own experience with the Samaria trilogy. (And, really, you should not even consider reading this book unless you have read the first and the second - it will not be near as satisfying on its own.) Initially, I was disappointed to discover that the Samaria books didn't follow the same group of characters and almost felt a little bit like "well it's not a trilogy then, is it?". Without giving any spoilers I can say: it IS a trilogy. The arc that the society on this planet goes through is... very satisfying. I can't remember the last time I enjoyed a series so much. The Samaria books definitely remind me of the Anne McCaffrey books because before I read them I thought they were going to be "cute" fantasy (which I tend not to enjoy) and they ended up going in an interesting sci fi direction. Similarly, I thought the Samaria books were going to be straight up paranormal romance but they are so much more. Sharon Shinn has clearly thought very deeply about the relationship people (not just humanity but sentient beings) have to religion and while this book doesn't have, say, the eviscerating insight of Maria Doria Russell's novels (and, truly, how many books do?), it is still thoughtful, intelligent and well-written. I think Sharon Shinn uses language beautifully and it was a pleasure to read her writing. (Something I can't say for every writer whose books I otherwise enjoy.) I'm surprised to read that other people here thought of these books as trashy. That is not my interpretation at all. I read all over the map from the aforementioned paranormal romance to more serious or challenging fare like Neal Stephenson (fascinating, wonderful, and a bit of a slog to get through, honestly), Nabokov and Shakespeare. To me a trashy or a hacky novel is something that has nothing to say and has no thought behind it beyond pushing emotional buttons that all humans have. A trashy novel is not saying anything, it is just selling sensation. (Like, say, a tired romantic comedy or action film sell "wedding porn" or the occasionally cheap thrill of blowing things up. Which is NOT to say that there can't be satisfying and intelligent romantic comedies or action films.) Too many people make the mistake of thinking that just because something has fantastical

elements or is "genre" it isn't thoughtful, intelligent or worthwhile. Which, I think, is why the Oscars sometimes seem to celebrate the most depressing movies of the year rather than the best-made ones. Some of the greatest works of literary art, the giants whose shoulders all writers stand upon, were genre or speculative, fantastic fiction. I'm talking about Dante, Shakespeare, Voltaire, even Homer (though we are not at all certain that Homer was an individual, the supernatural content in those two great epic poems can't really be avoided, can it?).... The list goes on and on. ALSO, I do NOT know what people are talking about when they say these books are sexist. (Neither do I think Shakespeare, or even Rabelais, are sexist. Or the Bronte sisters, or Jane Austen.) Any time a character is believable or authentic, then regardless of their attitudes or beliefs they are not sexist. (Because people come in all shapes, sizes, colors and belief systems. We are complex, we are human.) The Merchant of Venice makes me quite uncomfortable in a number of ways but I think it's still performed because despite the anti-Semitism inherent in the text (which, let's not forget, strongly echoes the values of its day), Shakespeare STILL gives Shylock one of the most extraordinary and memorable speeches he has given any of his character (EVER) and at the end of the day the play seems to be a plea for remembering that we are all, after all, human and therefore deserving of mercy. I think Sharon Shinn's characters are all very authentic, strong, believable and flawed and I applaud her for writing them. I only hope that my novel, when it is written, is half so good as hers have been.

Chachic says

Originally posted here.

As with the other Samaria books, this one revolves around certain characters, namely Tamar, Jared and Lucinda, and their interactions with each other. Tamar is a feisty and fiercely determined woman, brought up by Jacobites. She has been on the run her entire life and has a hard time trusting people. On the other hand, Jared is a happy-go-lucky type of angel. Even though he's technically the leader at Monteverde, he's never been passionate about anything. Tamar and Jared are total opposites, even in their beliefs, and it was such fun to watch them get on each other's nerves because it's so obvious that they admire each other underneath all the arguments. I have to admit, Jovah comes up with the most unlikely pairs but they end up suiting each other nicely.

While all of that is happening, the angel Lucinda is having her own adventures. Lucinda was brought up by her Aunt Gretchen in an isolated island called Angel Rock. Lucinda is an interesting person because you'd expect her to be shy and reserved, having grown up in an island with a population of twenty, but she's not. She's open-minded, eager to learn new things and does not back down when she's being intimidated. At first, I kept thinking about what was Lucinda's connection to the other characters and I only realized it around the middle of the book. I was so excited to finish reading to see how it will all unfold. I'm sorry to be so vague but I don't want to mention spoilers.

The Alleluia Files is another excellent installment in the Samaria series. This series has become my favorite when it comes to books featuring angels. Although to be fair, there aren't a lot of angel books out there. I highly recommend this series to fantasy fans out there.

Myridian says

This is third novel in the series about Samaria and the socioreligious struggles of the world. This story takes

place 100 years after Jovah's angel and the main characters are women who are twins separated at birth. One is an angel and the other is mortal. The angel becomes the religious leader of the society, and the mortal belongs to a group of atheists that the angels are trying to exterminate. I continue to have reservations about the way that women are portrayed in these stories. While they do have responsibilities and powerful roles, they do seem to fall into stereotypical ways of responding to events and get saved by men a certain amount of the time. Since listening to a recent Diane Rehm show about trends in American bestsellers I've felt a bit sensitized to this, which feels inconvenient but good. Because the characters shift are not consistent across the novels, I found myself reading the stories not so much for the characters, but for the world itself. When Shinn describes the white city of Semorrah, or the craggy beauty of the Eyrie, her descriptions feel so vivid that I truly believe in the setting as a "real" place.

Althea Ann says

Samaria Series

If all romance books were like these, I might consider myself to be a fan of romance novels in general. The 'Samaria' series is primarily romance - but it's balanced with enough other plot elements that it doesn't get too tedious. They're even frequently... romantic!... in a way that doesn't (usually) make me want to strangle the characters! (They're never explicit/erotic, though.)

I did read all five books back-to-back, which meant that some of the elements did get a little repetitive. Obviously, to a certain degree, Shinn found a formula and stuck with it. It wouldn't have bothered me at all if I hadn't been doing a Samaria marathon, though.

They are undeniably wish-fulfillment-based books. These are designed for women who think that having a drop-dead-gorgeous, preternaturally strong, winged lover who can pick you up and fly you through the sky is a super-sexy idea.

In tone and feel, I thought these were actually very similar to Anne McCaffrey's Pern series. They've got the nominally sci-fi setting, the fantasy 'feel,' and the character-based plot elements, with a similar mix of action, politics and personal drama.

All of the books are fully stand-alone stories.

Archangel

The angel Gabriel is set to become the next Archangel, as decreed by the voice of Jovah. However, before he ascends to his position of leadership, he must find the wife determined for him by his god - a woman named Rachel. Without an Angelica (the female counterpart to the Archangel), the complex acappella musical concert known as the Gloria cannot occur, and Jovah will rain destruction upon the land.

Being named Angelica is an honor that all girls dream of - so what could possibly go wrong? Plenty, if your destined bride belongs to a persecuted ethnic group, and has been sold into slavery - and bears no love toward angels.

Jovah's Angel

Set around 100 years after the first book. In a dramatic beginning, the well-respected Archangel Delilah is crippled in a storm, her consort killed, and Jovah names a most unlikely successor to replace her: a shy, studious angel named Alleluia (or, informally, Alleya). Like in the previous book, Alleya must find her predestined mate - but Jehovah does not know his name, identifying him only as "son of Jeremiah." Things are further complicated by Alleya's growing feelings for the inventor Caleb (who makes a bunch of steampunk-y stuff). But Caleb cannot be her destined mate... can he?

Meanwhile, Delila must deal with her feelings of resentment, and learn to live without flying. But of course,

she'll find someone too - a man of the Edori (an ethnic group that resemble Jewish gypsies.)
Meanwhile - a big issue is going on. When the angels sing the songs that control the weather, often nothing happens. Climate change is leading to disaster.
I didn't like this one quite as much as the first in the series, mainly because I wasn't thrilled by the theme of industrialization going on in Samaria. Also, all the technological/sci-fi elements that were alluded to in the first book are made very clear in this story, and some of the mystery is lost. It won me over, after a while, though.

The Alleluia Files

A few hundred years have passed... The Archangel at this time, Bael, is cruel and harsh. He rules with a strong hand, and is secretly committing genocide against the Jacobites, claiming their heresies threaten the land. But - does he secretly know that their heretical stances regarding the god Jovah are true?
Far more than the other books, this one has a clear villain (Bael). However, the clear hero, the upstanding and just Jared, will make things right, if he can ever stop being too lazy to bother. He'll be helped out by the angel Lucinda, who has grown up on an isolated island, far from the politics of the angel's Aerie, and the strong-willed Tamar, a member of the heretic Jacobites.

Angelica

The Archangel Gaaron has his life mate picked out for him by Jovah. Never before has an Edori woman been picked to be Angelica - but although Susannah has the implant that allows Jovah to track the people of Samaria, unlike the Edori, she has been raised by the Edori and identifies with them. She's also only just broken up with her long term lover. (He was a big jerk though, so the reader is sure she will get over him.) She's not at all sure she wants to be Angelica. (Sound familiar? Yeah.) This one is set far before all the other books. Like in the other books, there's also a social problem to address while the romance is given time to develop: mysterious, disappearing invaders are attacking and burning the caravans of both Edori and Jansai, as well as isolated villages.
The day will be saved, and love will triumph.

Angel-Seeker

After finishing the previous book in the series, I was thinking: "Hey, are we ever going to get to see the point of view of one of the oppressed Jansai women? Pretty much all the other ethnic groups in Samaria have been covered by POV characters." And, ta-da, here we are. Rebekah's character is very well done, actually. She's a rebellious girl in a repressive culture, but even after she falls in love with an angel, her ties to family and tradition hold her in a frighteningly realistic way. She also horribly underestimates her fate, if she's caught...
Meanwhile, the title character, Elizabeth, becomes an angel-seeker - a woman who desires more than anything, to bear an angel child, and will do pretty much anything to further that goal. Again, the motivations here were really well portrayed.
Both women grow as individuals over the course of the book - and, of course, find love.

Anne says

I wish I could read this series again. The library had it in a town I lived in years ago, but I have never found it available since I moved away. I remember enjoying the books greatly but just can't remember whether I loved them or liked them a great deal. I do know that the series by Shinn, Mystic and Rider, captivated me even more than this one, so I will give it a four star. I still hope I have the chance to read it again...

Madbethcash says

8/10

I am just absolutely loving Sharon Shinn lately. Romance, but with plenty of other elements and plot points to keep one interested.

Though all three of these books have had a point where the female protagonist "actually stomped her foot that time" and really... do people stomp their feet in frustration? Ever?

Also in this series could do without all the fair, blond main characters and the vague fetishizing of the Edori race and also the use of the word "gypsy" as a negative term for the nasty Jansai... but the 90s. Since the men are so committed to their partners and often less powerful (love the female angel-mortal male dynamic) there's great bending on stereotypical romance novel gender roles here.

Also hoping one of the next books has a sympathetic character who is Jansai or Manadavvi, for variety. And I'm curious about how the 700 Samarian settlers were divided and ended up split by race as they are. That seems an odd contradiction with what they were hoping to accomplish i.e. a non-warlike world.

Noelle says

3.5ish? The first half 2.5 stars the second half 4.

Tiffany says

[Because I hate cliff-hangers and so much of this book was narratives that shifted right when someone was just about to die, I probably skimmed past a quarter of it. When archangel Bael started calling down lightning to destroy the Jacobites, Tamar and Jared included, and we knew that Mercy and Christian (haha--awesome name-dropping) were on the way to rescue, when the stoopid Edori guy was trying to talk Lucinda into stopping for breakfast that's when I nearly blew a gasket.

Of co
