

The Skewed Throne



By Joshua Palmatier

Reviewed by D. Andrew McChesney

In the decaying slums of Amenkor, young Varis steals what she needs, killing if necessary, to survive. Her existence changes when she meets Erick, one of the Mistress's elite Seekers. First employed to hunt down "marks" designated for death by the Mistress, she is compelled to flee to the inner city. She becomes a body guard for a wealthy merchant, which leads to her involvement with the highest levels of society and government. Throughout, Varis is aided and guided by her ability to literally to see the hostility of others.

Amenkor is in turmoil, largely due to a "white fire" that over time twice swept across the city, plunging many of its inhabitants into madness or bolstering their magical abilities.

This was the author's first published book and is extremely well written. Told in first person, as if Varis was relating the tale directly to us, one comes to accept the layer of magic that is the basis for the entire tale and to believe the world in which she lives is as plausible as our own. (In fact, this world serves as a setting for two more Throne of Amenkor tales, as well as for two other trilogies from this gifted author.)

This review is written as the result of a second reading of the story. It was first read several years ago, and again a few months ago. The time between readings allowed many of the details to all but disappear from memory. However, enough lingered to make the story even easier to follow and comprehend. It also allowed this reader to pick up on details that were missed the first time around. A second reading helped emphasize the skill that went into its creation. *The Skewed Throne* is a must read for those who enjoy epic fantasy.