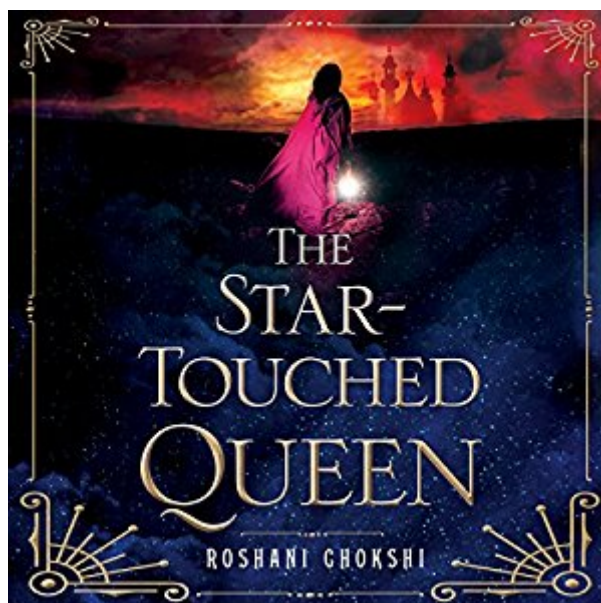


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The Star-Touched Queen



Synopsis

Fate and fortune. Power and passion. What does it take to be the queen of a kingdom when you're only 17? Maya is cursed. With a horoscope that promises a marriage of Death and Destruction, she has earned only the scorn and fear of her father's kingdom. Though she's content to follow more scholarly pursuits, her whole world is torn apart when her father, the Raja, arranges a wedding of political convenience to quell outside rebellions. Soon Maya becomes the queen of Akaran and wife of Amar. Neither role is what she expected: As Akaran's queen, she finds her voice and power. As Amar's wife, she finds something else entirely: compassion. Protection. Desire.... But Akaran has its own secrets - thousands of locked doors, gardens of glass, and a tree that bears memories instead of fruit. Soon Maya suspects her life is in danger. Yet who, besides her husband, can she trust? With the fate of the human and Otherworldly realms hanging in the balance, Maya must unravel an ancient mystery that spans reincarnated lives to save those she loves the most...including herself. A lush and vivid story that is steeped in Indian folklore and mythology, *The Star-Touched Queen* is a novel that no listener will soon forget.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Roshani Chokshi's debut novel, *The Star-Touched Queen*, is full of gorgeous and breath-taking imagery, but fell short when it came to having a clear, structured plot. Maya has always been an outcast, defined by a doomed horoscope since birth. Most regard her with superstition and distrust, viewing her as a walking omen. For Maya, this works in her favor, beside

her younger half-sister, Gauri, there is no one in the whole of Bharata that she'd like to spend time with. But inside Maya wants more. Tired of being defined by so-called fate, she plunges head first into the strange world of Akaran, where she is promised the power to define her own future. But her own ambition and need to prove herself threaten to become her downfall. While I really liked Maya's character arc, it became a guessing game for a large portion of the novel, as I tried to figure out what its main conflict was. Bharata was on the brink of war when Maya left for Akaran and her disappearance becomes a catalyst, but as time plays tricks in this mysterious kingdom, we as readers are left in the dark, waiting for something significant to happen with the overall plot of the story. It isn't until we are nearing the end of the novel that we learn of Bharata's fate. While not a long novel, it did feel like I had to wait an awfully long time for the story to actually take off. I also had a hard time feeling invested in Amar's character. Though Maya is spellbound by him and their relationship is meant to feel like destiny, there are certain elements at play that kept me from truly understanding his character and looking back, I still don't feel like I got to know him as much as I did Maya. If more time had been devoted to his own character development, I think I would have liked reading about the evolution of their relationship more. The kingdom of Akaran itself is a rich and enchanting setting. There are mysteries behind every door, entities lurking about that aren't quite what they seem, and magic that is at once awe-inspiring as well as frightening. The Star-Touched Queen plays with the idea of fate versus free-will: are our choices ours or have they already been determined? Chokshi's writing is otherworldly and at times I had to pause just so I could admire the way she uses language to paint such a lovely and vivid picture of this world. There's such potential in her writing, I'm fairly confident the next book will be an improvement upon this one. There's a specific minor character in this novel that I felt more drawn to than the protagonist. Her story seemed really interesting and compelling, despite knowing very little of her journey. If you've read the synopsis to the follow-up novel, A Crown of Wishes, you'll know who I'm referring to. I wasn't sure about this novel getting a sequel, but knowing who it will be focused on makes me pretty excited about it.

10 Things I Loved About This Book: Maya is a strong main character. She's flawed, but very likeable. The Raja, Maya's father, was a...complicated man, but he had his redeeming qualities. The characterization of the Harem women was so on point! I literally hated Mother Dhina; well, up until the end, which is when I began to love her! Guari! She just seemed so adorable and I loved that she grew up to be so strong. This book is extremely unique in its world-building. There's succulent fruit

that looks like jewels and a variety of other things. Kamala was the BEST flesh eating demon horse ever! I loved her, she was soooo freaking likeable! The idea of threads in a carpet representing individual people was new to me & a very cool idea. The memory tree was a very cool idea! Not to mention the cover, it's gorgeous! Diverse characters rule in this book!

10 Things I Didn't Like About This Book: Amar seemed paper thin to me. He's supposed to be the love of Maya's life, but he seems to lack passion. The world-building, while interesting, was extremely confusing at times. I literally stopped reading this book at page 80, and then restarted just so I could get a better grasp of what I was reading. I'm still not sure how three stars, real stars (you know, burning gas) can be used as a hair pin. 0_0 The romance between Amar & Maya seemed forced. There wasn't a gradual increase in their closeness; Amar just trusted her implicitly & she's like...okay, cool. Gupta was paper thin, as well. It seemed he was only in the story to make it seem like it wasn't all about Maya and Amar (which it is). This book reminded me of *Cruel Beauty*. I cannot stand *Cruel Beauty*. The first half of this book is a hot mess when it comes to plot and writing. I literally found myself saying "huh?!" every few minutes. The metaphors are just...so bad. The second half of this book is so different from the first that it was like reading a completely different book. I don't like when that happens. Nritti was a bunk villain. I honestly didn't even know what the hell was going on when she first appeared in the story. Something about smoke and a voice like something...lol. The tutor. I don't know what the hell the scene with the tutor was supposed to do, but all it did was confuse me. Is it a Series or Stand-Alone? Series, a duology! The next book, *A Crown of Wishes*, releases 3/28/2017. If it's a Series, Am I Reading the Next Book? The next book is about Guari, so I may buy it, but I don't think I'll rush to read it.

Books It Reminds Me Of: The writing kind of reminds me of two books: *Cruel Beauty* by Rosamund Hodge and *The Program* by Suzanne Young. Much like *Cruel Beauty*, the *Star-Touched Queen* is largely focused in a magical castle/palace/home with areas off-limits to the main character; this book also has a rambling plot of Maya wandering around the palace like *Cruel Beauty*. Much like the *Program*, Maya experiences traumatizing things, but then suddenly forgets them. For instance, she forgets what the false tutor told her before she vanquished him. This is so annoying.

My Recommendation: Buy the *Wrath & the Dawn* instead.

I absolutely ADORED Chokshi's writing. It is gorgeous, flowy, and just all around lovely to read. However, there were a few instances which left me confused and looking up words, wondering if I am the only one on the planet to think it means something else. Maya's character intrigued me and I was able to relate to her through her loving protection of Gauri, her half-sister and her incredibly witty friendship with Kamala. However, she still lacked some quirks (this has become a real pet

peeve of mine). She was incredibly plot driven, but I don't know her favorite color, or those little details that happen when you really know someone. I disliked Amar, all Amar and Amar love. Amar doesn't really have a personality, except he is powerful and loves Maya. Additionally, they don't talk about anything. Maybe he knows everything, but they do not have any conversations of shared interests, or even real communication. There are no conversations where they unravel each other's histories or even look at their flaws. With the wonderful writing and characters that I actually did enjoy, there were always moments where it snagged. HOWEVER, I am still left with an overall enjoyable experience and look forward to the sequel A LOT. Especially since I know who is the MC.

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