ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

FANTASY

Echoes of Emilee: The First Echo
Karin-Rochelle
CreateSpace
978-1-4565-0410-6
Four Stars (out of Five)

Echoes of Emilee is not merely another vampire novel. Witches, gods, and goddesses join the vampires in this unique and enjoyable tale of love and destiny. The story explores a number of paranormal possibilities, traveling back and forth between distant past and present, weaving an intriguing and entertaining adventure along the way.

Cursed in the thirteenth century to spend his immortal life within a glass box, vampire Carrick McKinley is haunted by the memory of the horrific events that led to his captivity. Emilee, the young woman he loved, met a brutal death before his eyes, and his inability to save her torments him and inspires thoughts of revenge against the descendants of the witch responsible for it all.

Nine centuries later, Carrick's grieving and planning have led him to Ally Butler, an artist in present-day Ireland and a direct descendent of Mageara, the witch who cursed him. Ally has her own extraordinary mystical powers and the two develop a telepathic rapport that gradually deepens their relationship and causes Carrick to question his plan for vengeance. The reason for their unexpected attraction is an interesting twist, as is the manner in which Mageara returns. The cast of characters expands and before long, past events and future destinies become clearer, even as an encroaching danger looms over them all.

The plot develops clearly, with each story thread branching out to create a new one, introducing characters and situations that both explain and intrigue. In spite of the large number of characters and events depicted, Rochelle keeps the narrative flowing and transitions from one scene to the next are executed well. Connections between the characters prove deeper than first suspected, and multilayered personalities unfold and enrich the storylines. The inclusion of a pair of cats, whose roles turn out to be unique and amusing, is particularly clever and effective.

Echoes of Emilee, the first installment in what appears to be a planned series, is not without errors. Most noticeably, issues with verb agreement and occasional anachronistic dialogue create stumbling blocks in an otherwise absorbing novel. Modern phrases such as "I

know where you are coming from," simply don't ring true when spoken by a man born in the thirteenth century. Certain aspects of characters would benefit from more description as well. For example, Carrick's vampire nature isn't explored much beyond the obligatory need for blood and inability to withstand natural light. Even so, it is likely readers will be so enchanted by the assortment of characters that they will read on, eager to see which direction the tale will take next.

The ending is satisfying and leaves enough threads dangling to inspire readers to pick up the next installment. While the novel would benefit from more meticulous attention to grammar and time-appropriate dialogue, *Echoes of Emilee* remains a richly layered, inventive, and absorbing story. Rochelle may well be a writer to watch in the paranormal/fantasy genre.

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