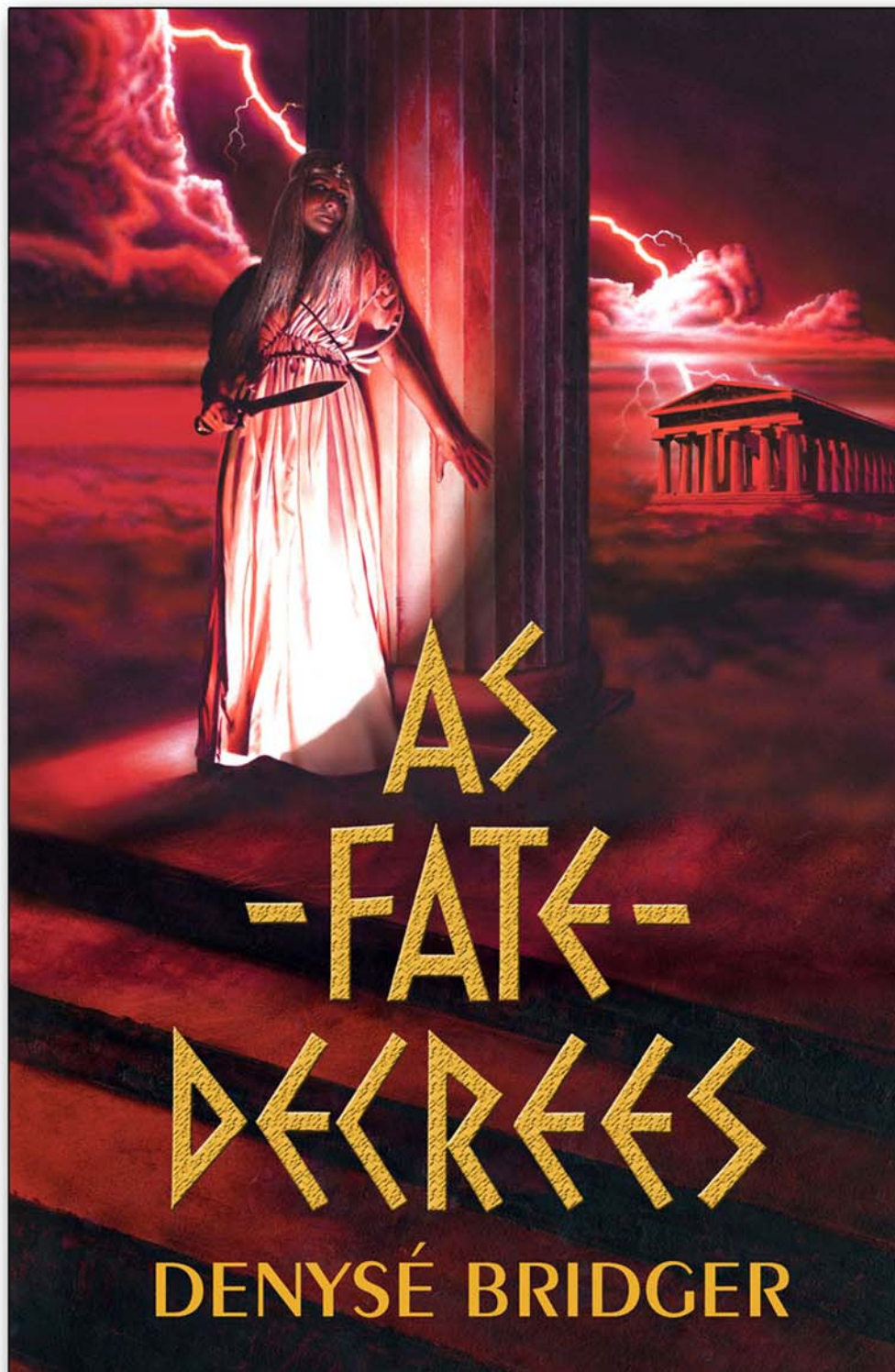


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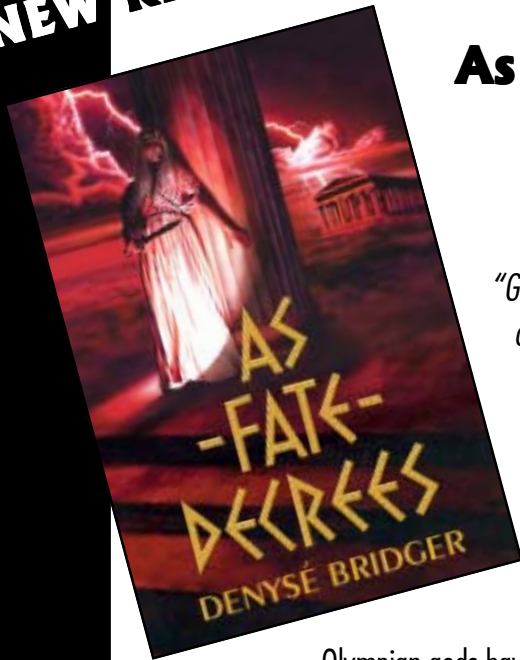


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SCIENCE FICTION

As Fate Decrees  
**ABOUT THE  
BOOK**

**NEW RELEASE**



## **As Fate Decrees by Denysé Bridger**

**The gods of ancient Greece must find  
a mortal champion to defend their fate.**

*"Go and seek the one of whom I have spoken, she is frail and in need of help. Look not of upper blood, for I have seen her down in the dirt. She is held against her will. Find her and you shall find your savior."*

— The Oracle of Delphi

In ancient Greece the young maiden, Amarantha, is captured and sold in the slave market of Athens.

"What fates await?" she wonders. "And what divine design will the Olympian gods have for me?"

As unexpectedly as she had found herself placed in chains, Amarantha finds herself purchased by a mysterious master who refuses to reveal his true identity.

But he is no ordinary man, nor she an ordinary slave.

Under her master's tutelage, Amarantha is trained as a fighter and challenged to prove herself in battle after battle until her skills are perfected and she is granted the right to know his true identity.

He is Ares, god of war and the son of Zeus. And she is to become Champion to the gods of Olympus; bound forever to serve and vanquish all foes until the gods themselves grant her peace.

But even gods are not immune to the fickle twists of fate, and Amarantha is soon ripped from her quiet resting place and cast through time itself to do battle with a modern day reincarnation of an old foe - a madman bent on rewriting history to suit his own twisted desire.

She must act quickly to win this battle, for the fate of all Olympian gods hangs in a delicate balance between immortality and the realization that even the gods themselves may be returned to the dust from which they arose.

**As Fate Decrees**

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**EDGE**

**NEW RELEASE**



**As Fate Decrees  
ABOUT THE  
AUTHOR**

## **Denysé Bridger**

"I began writing as a child, and as a teenager the interest grew. In 1984 I wrote my first complete novel-length story based on my favorite television show at the time. I sent it to the actor I loved, and he called me less than two weeks later to tell me it was better than the script they were working on, and that I should consider a career in writing. The praise drove me and inspired me, and I spent the next ten years writing in a vast number of genres, and stayed active in fan writing, as well. It proved to be an invaluable training resource, and taught me discipline and dedication to detail and content." – Denysé Bridger

Passionately intrigued by the ancient legends of Greece, Denysé turned to historians and Greek literature lovers alike as resources for this adventurous fantasy.

This Newfoundland born author has had a highly prolific career; writing numerous paperback and electronic books. Her work has also been featured in a number of anthologies.

As Fate Decrees is Denysé Bridger's breakout Fantasy novel. Her readers are anticipating this books arrival.

Denysé has published over 400 stories, poems, and novella's world wide and has won an Amber Heat Wave award and has been nominated for an EPPIE Award; a prestigious award given for excellence in electronic publishing.

**Denysé Bridger**

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# BACKGROUND



# Background

As Fate Decrees  
**AUTHOR**  
Background

## Denysé Bridger

Background biography (May 2007)

Denysé is a native of Atlantic Canada, born in the country's Eastern-most province, Newfoundland, and raised in Nova Scotia.

A lifelong dreamer, she began writing at an early age and can't recall a time when she wasn't creating in some artistic form. An active interest in the American West, and to a lesser extent the American Civil War, has been a lifelong obsession. Cowboys have been a love-affair that began at the tender age of three, and eventually expanded to encompass an equally timeless passion for pirates, Greek Gods, and Ancient Egypt. The other side of the Old West intrigue is an affinity for Victorian England, particularly the 1885-1895 part of the century.

Denysé's first major fantasy novel is *AS FATE DECREES*. The novel relies heavily on Greek Mythology, and is set in Ancient Greece and modern Athens. If you enjoy a tale of Gods, Destiny, and the battles of an Eternal Champion, this is the book for you! Not surprisingly, there's a touch of romance throughout, of course! "It's what I do best, after all!" The next fantasy novel, already in the works, is about pirates, parallel worlds, and sorcery.

At this point in her career, Denyse has had published in the vicinity of 400 stories and novels, in almost any genre you can name. "The only thing I haven't tried yet is hard-core science fiction, and horror. Since I don't consider vampires as I write them to be the fodder of horror, I classify those stories as Dark Fantasy." Many of her vampire stories have appeared in Margaret L. Carter's anthology, *The Vampire's Crypt*, and *Night To Dawn*, published and edited by Dawn Callahan for the first two years, and now published by author/editor Barbara A. Custer.

Denysé's poetry has been published internationally, as well. She has also been the recipient of numerous awards, most notably the Fan Quality Award, which is given annually for excellence in fan-written fictions based on film and television. As of May 2004, there are four awards in her collection, and no less than a dozen nominations to her credit.

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Also in 2004, Denysé was chosen as a winner in the Amber Heat Wave, an annual contest held by ePublishing company *Amber Quill Press*. One of the novellas published by AQP, *Mirage*, was included in the anthology collection "Suits, Ties, and the Water Cooler", which was a finalist for the 2006 EPIE Award, a prestigious award given for excellence in electronic publishing.

In 2006, Denysé formed a partnership with actor/producer/singer Branscombe Richmond to create and write a serial that is best described as a modern day western. (Think motorcycles in place of horses!) Installments of the book have begun appearing on the *American Motorcycle Company* website, ([www.amc1902.com](http://www.amc1902.com)) the first episode appeared in April 2006. The serial is available for free, and can found at the company's Home Page. A new project with Mr. Richmond will be officially announced shortly. It is a second serial story, this one a romance novel posted in chapters, will be featured on the website of *Good Morning, Hawaii*. ([www.goodmorninghawaii.com](http://www.goodmorninghawaii.com))

*Simply The Best* was the title of Denysé's first full-length erotic romance novel, and was her debut title with *Liquid Silver Books* ([www.LSBooks.com](http://www.LSBooks.com)). Upcoming projects include a new Historical/Western romance, an adventure/fantasy, and possibly a sequel to *As Fate Decrees* in the near future. In the erotic romance genre there is also lots to explore, including the Victorian mystery series set in and around the infamous Ripper murders; and soon a set of tales

that take place at a Venetian Masquerade Ball; as well as many other stories set in a variety of genres.

Denysé also writes an erotic serial for the FREE eZine, *Wicked Escapes*, published bi-monthly. The series is called *Stranded!*, and is comprised of six stories, with all available installments on the website. ([www.wickedescapesezine.com](http://www.wickedescapesezine.com))

The short Action/Thriller *Silent Death* marks Denysé's debut with *New Concepts Publishing*, ([www.newconceptspublishing.com](http://www.newconceptspublishing.com)) a new contemporary vampire thriller with *Forbidden Publications*, ([www.forbiddenpublications.com](http://www.forbiddenpublications.com)) and new titles in future with *Samhain Publishing* ([www.samhainpublishing.com](http://www.samhainpublishing.com)) are also on the books for the coming months. Also, new publisher *Twilight Fantasies* ([www.twilightfantasies.com](http://www.twilightfantasies.com)) will feature a new contemporary romance in their anthology *Summer Flings*, coming in August of 2007, as well. The collection was an invitation only project and the story is based on the music of Italian superstar Patrizio Buanne. ([www.patriziobuanne.com](http://www.patriziobuanne.com))

To stay current with all these projects, or to just say hello, please feel free to visit Denysé's website: <http://denysebridger.com> Or, sign up for the monthly newsletter *Romance and Fantasy*. If you prefer to chat with Denysé and other readers, the newsgroup is open to everyone. *Denysé Bridger News*. MySpace at: <http://www.myspace.com/denysebridger>

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# chapter one

The sounds reached Amarantha long before she caught sight of the campaign that raged. Screams and curses mingled, distorted in the uneven terrain; yet the horror was easily discerned. Deep within her, a familiar, long-suppressed anger stirred, against every effort she made to quell the rash battle-lust. She'd spent most of the past two years training with a master who demanded absolute control, and she had eventually won his praise. She did not want it undone mere days after leaving him.

She closed her eyes, breathed deeply, sought for the inner core of discipline. It came, slowly. His voice, a gravelly purr of teaching cadence, filled her mind with the calm that he imposed. She shook off the lure of her impetuous nature, and continued her trek through the heavily wooded forest. Unconsciously, she stroked the neck of her beautiful white mare, Furey. She calmed the animal's agitation with soft words as well, spoken in a voice that lulled, a direct foil to her inner turmoil. Furey knew the moods of her mistress as intimately as the master who had given the horse.

Minutes later, still wary and watchful, she was almost run down on the path. Cursing softly, she quieted the rearing mare, steadied her, then dropped lightly to the ground. Swaying when the man clutched desperately at her, she groped for a tree trunk and kept her balance. The stranger crumpled at her feet. He was badly injured and a single glance made it clear that he had little more than moments of life remaining to him.

"Please... You must... deliver... the message."

She stared as he pulled a scroll from his belt, and held it toward her. She took the blood-stained missive and knelt beside the stranger. He was dark, and young, barely more than twenty seasons, she guessed. He had the look of a farmer, but in his eyes was a sadness that spoke of too much knowledge of death and destruction. He was dressed in rough, worn clothes, and carried no visible weapon.

"I am here to see the king," Amarantha repeated to the guard who stood before her at the palace entrance.

"State your reason, woman," he snapped back.

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Amarantha smiled, an expression that was forced. The man was well suited to his job, he was six and a half feet tall, and built like the wall at his back. Dark eyes glittered with annoyance as he scowled at her.

"I have told you already," she replied patiently, and slipped from Furey's back, motion carelessly graceful. She wasn't unaware of the attention she was receiving from others who waited for the outcome of this confrontation. "I have a message that must be delivered to the king. Will you allow me to pass?"

"What message?"

"I carry a scroll from Pheneüs, the original messenger was killed. It was his dying request that I take it in his stead." She watched closely as the man responded to her words, and trepidation settled in the pit of her stomach when his previously belligerent expression altered to reveal a genuine concern for the news she had just imparted.

"Follow me," he directed. "Leave your horse with Dacius, he'll see that she's looked after."

Amarantha handed the reins to the man who stepped forward to accept them. She lifted the scroll from her saddle, and tucked it into her belt as she followed the Captain of the Guard.

The palace of Corinth was a magnificent place, a true palace. The two men who stood on either side of the doors to the castle nodded curtly to their comrade, then held the massive double panels open. She passed into the palace and her breath caught at the grandeur of the large entrance hall. Floors gleamed, marble polished to flawless mirror-like shine; tapestries covered the stone walls, vividly depicting the glories of the Gods and their escapades; and the silence that permeated the huge building was not stifling, but the quiet of peace. As she trailed after the Captain, she found herself wondering if the tranquility would survive whatever message she was bearing.

"Wait here," the Captain directed, then spoke to another nearby guard.

As she watched, he nodded, then disappeared behind another door. He was gone only a few minutes.

"The king has agreed to see you," he announced when he had returned. "He's in the garden, just beyond that door."

"Thank you," she inclined her head and made to leave him. A hand on her arm halted her momentarily, and she looked up into his wary gaze, mildly chilled by the threat in his dark eyes.

"There are men close by," he warned. "If you attempt to harm any of the family, you will die."

Startled, she merely nodded once, then went through the door that was being held for her. As she walked the sunlit path into the heart of the garden, she had a few minutes to ponder the loyalty of the guards. Jason must be a fine ruler to inspire such staunch support, she decided.

The garden was a glory of scents and colors, all vivid and filled with life. She breathed in the aromatic fragrances, occasionally stopping to touch the silken petals of a particularly dazzling bloom. She could happily have lost herself for days in such surroundings.

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As she rounded a bend in the pathway, laughter drifted toward her; laughter, and a small body running at full speed. For the second time that day, Amarantha was almost run down. She grabbed his arms to steady him when he would have fallen backward in reaction to ploughing into her. Her heart stopped beating for an instant as she stared into the deep blue eyes of the boy, and his responding smile was one of pure innocence.

"Who are you?"

"I'm here to see the king," she answered. "Would you like to show me where he is?"

"I'm lolaus," he told her, tiny face suddenly serious as he looked at her.

"The Prince?" she wondered as she scooped him up and went in the direction he indicated.

He nodded and pointed, "They're over there."

The prince was barely two, she estimated, but oddly old for a child. She smiled, and turned the final corner. As she spotted the boy's parents, she froze. The couple were on the lush green grass, the king lying on his back as the queen sat demurely at his side. She smiled, expression loving, and touched his forehead, brushing aside a lock of hair.

The warmth of the afternoon sunshine grew chill, and the brightness dimmed to gray haze. Amarantha swayed, unaware of the sudden loss of strength in her limbs until lolaus' childish squeal of concern reminded her that he was still in her arms.

The couple rose instantly, and the king stared back at her; she saw her own shock mirrored in his handsome face. Against her will, she let herself truly look at him, her gaze caressing the shining dark hair that fell to his shoulders, skimming invisibly the smooth, contoured planes of his face, and stopping briefly over the full curve of his mouth. His dress was casual; earthy brown tones that complemented him to perfection. He was taller than she remembered, and much broader through the shoulders. Everything about him made her feel self-conscious and vulnerable.

At his side stood his Queen, one hand resting lightly on his arm as she watched them. She was lovely, delicate of features, and fair-haired, as her son was; she was a full head shorter than her husband, and dressed in flowing lengths of pale blue. Amarantha thought her to be the most beautiful woman she had seen in many years. As striking as his mother had always been.

lolaus squirmed and shook her a little.

Swallowing convulsively, Amarantha smiled weakly and set the boy down. He ran immediately to his father's side, was once again lifted off his feet, then they came to greet her.

"My lord Iphicles," she whispered and bowed her head in obeisance.

lolaus leaned close to his father and whispered into his ear.

"My son thinks you're very pretty," Iphicles informed her, his eyes drifting over her familiar, well-remembered features.

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Amarantha's eyes blurred with sudden tears and she tried to smile as she pretended indifference to the flicker of concern in King Iphicles' eyes.

"Thank you, little Prince," she murmured, and kissed the small, soft hand that reached to touch her hair.

Prince Iolaus caught a handful of the silky silver tresses and he began to chew happily on his prize while Iphicles and Amarantha stared at each other. The spell broke a moment later when the Queen, Automedusa, joined them and nodded a greeting as Iphicles introduced the women.

"You've been hurt, Am," Iphicles noticed, his tone filled with unmistakable concern.

Amarantha glanced at her arm when he touched her, the angry gasp forgotten in the unexpected shock of seeing him again.

"It's nothing, really," she murmured, and gently eased free of his light grasp. "I encountered a troop of soldiers. They tried to persuade me not to see you," she added with distinct irony.

"We'll have it looked at immediately," Iphicles replied, dark eyes narrowed to a frown. "Tell the physician to join us," he requested of his wife.

Automedusa nodded, her light hazel eyes appraising the visitor for a moment before she smiled again at her husband. She took the toddler from his father's arms, hushed Iolaus when he objected, then left.

"It's been over ten years," Iphicles observed quietly when he'd led her to a stone bench in the garden.

Amarantha nodded, nerves making her restless. She didn't sit, instead she paced, agitation creating greater levels of static within her.

"Why are you here?"

"I was asked to see that this was delivered to the King," she replied softly, pulling the scroll from her belt and handing it over to him. "I had expected to meet Jason. I did not know that you were Corinth's new ruler."

Iphicles looked closely at her.

"Would it have made a difference?"

She considered his words, then shrugged.

"How?"

She wasn't surprised when he understood the precise point of her cryptic query.

"Medea's wedding gifts to his new wife made him unpopular, to say the least."

Amarantha looked closer at him, saw the disquiet in his eyes.

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"Do you fear for your family?"

He looked skyward for a moment, then shook his head.

"I had no desire to be King of two cities," Iphicles murmured.

"You will be a very good king, Iphicles," she replied with a smile. "It was your destiny."

He didn't look convinced, and she dropped the discussion in favor of more immediate concerns. As she watched, he unfurled the scroll and read it, his face bleaching free of color, then slowly growing dark with rage. Amarantha went to his side, and accepted the missive when he passed it to her, his gesture indicating that he wanted her to know its contents.

"What do you intend to do?" she asked once she'd read the message and returned the parchment to him.

"I don't know yet," he answered with his customary, direct honesty. "While I consult with my advisors," he smiled wryly as he spoke, "I'll see that Automedusa attends to your comfort. Once you're settled, the physician can look at that arm." He started to turn away, then halted, his dark eyes locked intently with hers. "I hope you'll stay for awhile, Amarantha," he said quietly. "I've missed you."

She was surprised, and it showed.

Iphicles laughed. "I didn't know it myself until I saw you again."

"I'd like to help you, my lord—" She stopped abruptly when he held up his hand.

"We know each other far too well for that kind of formality, Am," he intoned, his husky voice suddenly revealing a weariness that she had never before heard in him.

"Iphicles?"

He smiled. "We will talk later, I promise." He held out his hand and was silent as they walked into the castle.

###

"You've known my husband a long time?"

Amarantha was startled by the unanticipated presence of the queen. She'd bathed, and was now being attended by the palace physician. The clothes that had been placed on the bed were loose, flowing garments of the palest gray, the material rich, finely woven silk.

"Since childhood, my lady," Amarantha answered. The physician finished the bandage and left them without a word. Amarantha stood and indicated the lovely gown she wore, her fingers a graceful arc that encompassed the clothing with a single, eloquent gesture. "This is beautiful, my lady. I thank you for your generosity."

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The queen smiled, though the expression lacked warmth.

"Iphicles chose it," she observed coolly. "He said you hated dark colors."

Amarantha's eyebrows rose and she felt decidedly awkward.

"He seems to know you very well," Automedusa continued.

"As I said, we have known each other since childhood. Your husband was one of my few friends. As was his brother."

"Heracles, as well," the queen noted with a nod.

There was an undercurrent of knowledge in her eyes that made Amarantha edgy. Her anxiety intensified and she remained silent for several minutes, uncertain of what the other woman wanted from her.

"Iphicles has asked me to show you to the war chamber," Automedusa advised her. "Your weapons have been cleaned and are here," she lifted a length of white linen to reveal the sword and daggers that had been the gifts from Ares. Her staff was standing next to the table that held the other things. "Your armor and leathers will be brought here as soon as they've received the same attention."

"You are very kind, my queen," Amarantha whispered.

"Somehow, Amarantha," Automedusa remarked, "I don't think that I will ever be your queen," she paused, met the pale, silvery eyes of the stranger. "Though I suspect that my husband has always been your king."

"A long time ago," Amarantha stated. "When we were children."

Automedusa nodded, her expression sceptical.

"Perhaps," she murmured, and they left the chamber in apprehensive silence.

When they had reached their destination, the queen indicated the doors, then left Amarantha.

The warrior hesitated, unnerved beyond reason. Irritated with herself, she nodded and the guards held open the heavy doors. Iphicles' head turned instantly, and his smile was welcoming. He came to greet her and drew her into the room, to a place at his side.

"This is Amarantha," he told the assembled men. "It was she who bore the news of Pheneüs."

"What else can you tell us?"

Amarantha glanced at the man who spoke, and her spine tingled in warning.

"I can tell you nothing," she said firmly. "I was asked to deliver a scroll. The man who could have answered your questions died and entrusted me to complete his task."

"Iphicles?"

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"Lyaeus, I didn't ask her to join us so that you might interrogate her," the king reproved.

"Then why is she here?"

"This is my chief advisor, and war strategist, Am," he told her. "Lyaeus, Amarantha is an old friend. She is also more familiar with Pheneüs than anyone in this room; she was born there. Melaneus has grown powerful over the past years, but he is an outsider."

"A stranger, one who clearly knows little of the people of Pheneüs," Amarantha interjected. "They are a loyal and fierce people," she told the gathered men. "If they have chosen to accept Iphicles as their king, they will honor him as deeply as he does them. You will have an army with spirit to lead in this battle with the warlord."

"Can you show us the best route into the city?"

She smiled at Lyaeus' dubious tone.

"I can map you a way into Pheneüs that will enable an army stealth and surprise," she laughed. From the corner of her eye, she caught Iphicles' smile of approval.

"Where are you from?"

"Pheneüs," he gasped softly, wide eyes darting wildly as he tried to see if they were about to be attacked.

"You are safe," she assured him. "Who are you running from, and why?" She was steadfastly ignoring the fear that woke at the mention of Pheneüs.

"Give the scroll to the King," he pleaded.

"The King?"

"Corinth..."

She opened her mouth to question him further; then realized it was futile when his eyes rolled and he drew his final breath.

She tucked the scroll in her belt and glanced around. The forest was no longer a sanctuary, the reverberation from too many soldiers rapidly descending on her location was making itself felt in her bones. The heavy scents of crushed wildflowers and trampled undergrowth created a pleasing perfume in the air, despite the danger its cause presented. Birds flew, and small animals scattered before the intrusion, she could hear their escape and feel their fear seeping into her mood. Sighing heavily, she caught Furey's reins, left the dead messenger from Pheneüs, and quickly slipped away.

She had ridden little more than a few yards when the first wave of soldiers came upon her. She smiled inwardly as she assessed them. They halted, surrounded her, and their thoughts were as easily read as their thirst for blood.

**As Fate Decees** by Denysé Bridger

EDGE Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing / Release: August 15, 2007

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### As Fate Decrees Reviews and Testimonials

Time-spanning fantasy will satisfy romantics

By Elizabeth Patterson

It's outlandish, over the top and beyond imagination, but hey, it's a fantasy novel. Whaddya expect?

As Fate Decrees by Denyse Bridger is a rip-roaring yarn that keeps you reading right to the end.

Ares, the war god, purchases Aramantha, a beautiful slave from Greek times, and trains her to be a great fighter. She becomes Champion to the Gods of Olympus, which means she has to serve and vanquish all enemies until the gods grant her peace.

As you might expect, there's little peace for Aramantha. Violence sickens her but this woman can slice and dice the crap out of entire armies. She is constantly running into people who are just too anxious to fight. To makes things worse, old enemies from the past have a nasty habit of being reincarnated thousands of years later, leading to a situation where even the immortals could die. This is no dull history lesson.

"I've always had an active interest in Greek mythology," says Bridger. "I liked the concept of a single individual who would be sent forth over and over, throughout time, to defend the very face of history and keep the truth of the gods a fact so they wouldn't fade from memory."

I call As Fate Decrees a time-spanning epic, and while that is a simplification, it's fairly accurate as a broad statement. There is a romance backbone to the story, the catalyst that moves it, but it's not the central plot.

The book is divided into two sections, one set in Ancient Greece to tell you who the Champion is and how she's come to be chosen for this destiny. The second

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section, while strongly tied to the past, is set in modern day Athens, at the turn of the millennium.

Although born in Newfoundland, Bridger now lives in Dartmouth. She has published more than 400 stories, poems, novellas and books, both paperback and electronic. Much of her work has been published in anthologies.

She has won an Amber Heat Wave Award and has been nominated for an EPPIE Award, for excellence in electronic publishing. If you haven't heard of her yet, there may be several reasons.

"I think some of the problem with recognizability is that this book, *As Fate Decrees*, is the first one to end up on bookshelves here," she says. "My other books, two trade paperbacks for a smaller publishing house, are only available direct from the publisher, or Amazon.com, and many others are only available as electronic downloads, or e-books as they're called."

There's also the matter of genre fiction not being taken as seriously as other forms, despite widespread public appeal. "I do think, though, in all honesty, that the markets for romance and fantasy/science fiction aren't the general mainstream, so they do tend to be overlooked to a large degree. They're labelled as genre markets, and for some reason, no matter how talented the author is, they do appear to be less respected than mainstream writers.

"That's only an opinion, and in no way a reflection of anyone's thoughts on the matter but my own. Nova Scotia is home to a number of successful romance authors that few people seem to have heard of, people like Ellen Ashe, Julianne MacLean, Deborah Hale, although these ladies are recognizable in the romance fields."

Bridger enjoys writing and communicating with her readers too much to let that get in her way. One of the best things about writing is the reading involved to produce it.

"It enabled me to bring a really rich, detailed vision of the mythology to a new audience as well as an old one. The reading I did for this book was

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fascinating, and a classics professor has stated that the research is accurate and well presented, so that's a very rewarding thing to hear. It's also fabulous to walk into a local book store and see it on the shelf!"

Bridger also likes to write in a variety of genres, from romance to science fiction, with lots of historical detail. While much of this book is set in ancient Greece, she's just as likely to write a Victorian-era romantic mystery. "I don't know if there are many local authors who cross genres quite as often as I do, but I like to explore all the things that interest me, so I experiment with what works, and hopefully, entertain my readers."

And just in case you were wondering if she was planning to take a more conservative approach in the future, her next novel will deal with pirates, parallel universes, sorcery and time loops.

It's just everyday stuff in the world of Denyse Bridger.

Elizabeth Patterson is a freelance writer living in Sydney.

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"If you enjoy the world of classical mythology, you'll love this novel." - Margaret Carter, author

"Ms. Bridger brings new life to the Greek gods and to any human with the mixed luck to cross their paths, including an unusual warrior woman who might be Xena's long-lost sister. Part II in particular is a page-turner, interlocked with what has gone before in a millennia-spanning clash of mortal versus immortal love." - Patricia Hodgell, author

"This tale of an eternal champion torn between her love for a god and a mortal - and her duty to both of them - should satisfy readers with a taste for romantic fantasy." - Nancy Baker, author

"I just finished and I'm in love. I'm getting a copy for everyone I know for Christmas." - Lila Dubois, author

"As Fate Decrees is well-written and has an interesting core concept." - Dru Pagliassotti, reviewer, The Harrow

"The characters Bridger creates are intense and believable..." - Carolyn Cooke, reviewer, Surrey Now

"One of Burnside's best-kept cultural secrets is about to take the international literary stage..." - Stephen Clare, The Burnside News

"Romance, adventure, time travel, magic, and conspiracy theories all get intertwined in this one, which sets its sights reasonably high and reaches most of them." - Don D'Amassa

"Both tales, and how they merge are masterfully done. The mythology is excellent and the story of timeless love, and fealty to the Gods is amazing. Am and Ares are together until the Fates decree she is to go and champion them at another time..." - Ellen, Amazon.com

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"This is an exciting story of a young slave girl, Amaranth, who has no idea that she will fulfill an ancient prophecy and defend history and myth with the highest price of all, her life. This adventure is both exciting and riveting even for those who do not particularly enjoy myths and legends of Greece. It would be a good book to introduce students to that very subject. Often in Greek myths and legends, the abundance of names gets so confusing for the reader. But I think this story is so intriguing that the reader will be too engrossed with the characters and plot to notice. The action and turmoil in the story will appeal to many students. The author's characterization methods are so vivid and real that you feel as if you are there in ancient Greece also. RECOMMENDED. Tricia Grady, Library Media Specialist, Custer Baker Middle School, Franklin, Indiana" — Library Media Connection Magazine, FICTION section on page 75

Am, short for Amarantha, discovers the King of Corinth is her childhood friend Iphicles, mortal twin of the demi-god Heracles. She has secretly loved him all her life, but he is now married with a young son. Treachery abounds, and Am helps the king defend his throne. Honor drives her to leave him and return to her jealous master, Ares, God of War.

Sought by Heracles on behalf of the son of Iphicles, Am deserts Ares and returns to Corinth, but cannot save the father. Mourning Iphicles' death, Am is attacked by an assassin at the tomb. Hampered by her garments, she struggles to overcome the fury of the man. He wounds her, but she slays him and Ares heals her wounds. In the second half of the novel as the legendary Champion of the Gods, Am jumps to Greece in 1999 where a religious zealot seeks to destroy all other religions and replace them with the One True God. Her task is to destroy him and preserve Greek history and culture.

The new religious fanatics will stop at nothing to achieve their goal. They destroy holy places and religious shrines all over the world and use torture and murder to gain information. Capturing Am, they subject her to unspeakable abuse.

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While romance plays a major role in the novel, Bridger focuses mainly on her characters and their reactions to events beyond their control. She has written numerous short stories and a number of erotic novels. Another fantasy novel is in the works. — Mel Jacob, SFRevu.com

The opening scene is a slave market; the setting is Athens in ancient Greece. Amaratha, a beautiful slave, is purchased by a man whose identity is a mystery and who carries her off on a ship to his castle in Thrace. He is eventually revealed to be Ares, the brutal Greek God of War, and he is training her as a fighter to be his Champion. Her destiny, according to Ares, is to serve the gods and vanquish all their foes until the gods grant her peace.

Amarantha's first mission takes her to Corinth, with a message for the king there. The king, Iphicles, turns out to be an old love from her earlier life, adding complications. The story involves gory duels, battles, and treachery as Amarantha attempts to do what she feels is her duty. Her master, Ares, keeps her in the dark, only feeding her hints when it suits him. The other gods do not always agree with Ares.

Eventually the story moves to modern day Greece, and Amarantha is reincarnated in the body of Alexandra, a student of Greek history. Alexandra has been trying to stop a madman bent on world-wide destruction of ancient buildings etc., and now Amarantha must take her place. Adding to her complications is Alexandra's live-in boyfriend, Nic.

The softcover book is 272 pages and includes a page of Author's Notes, five pages of material from the publisher listing other books, and three pages about the author. The story is broken down into sections: Prologue, Part One consisting of seven chapters that tell the ancient tale, Part Two with the modern part of the story told in another eight chapters, and an Epilogue. There is one black and white picture inside, a representation of the God, Ares.

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This historical fantasy should appeal to readers who enjoy the Greek setting, complete with sword-play, warrior women, romance, aloof impetuous gods and modern-day terrorists.

Recommended.

Ronald Hore, CM Magazine

You shouldn't miss this one! Denyse Bridger's writing is fluid, melodic and totally spellbinding. Once you pick this book up, you will not be able to put it down until you have devoured it whole! The characters are endearing and mysterious, the plot is full of action and suspense - with a twist and a subplot that will leave you astounded! An amazing read - I can't wait for her next book!! — Jennifer Webb, Chapters.ca

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