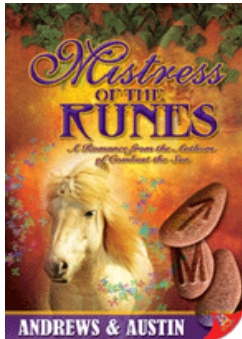


Book Review: October 2007

by R Lynne (reviewer at JAW)



Mistress of the Runes

Andrews & Austin

ISBN: 978-1-933110-89-9

Trade paper, 248, \$15.95

September 2007

Lesbian Romance

Bold Strokes Books, Inc.

www.boldstrokesbooks.com

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Nann Dunne
Editor-in-Chief
& Publisher

Andrews and Austin balance humor and sexual tension throughout this book as their protagonists, Brice Chandler and Liz Chase spar and work together. Brice is a powerful, corporate executive for whom going to work is tantamount to going to battle. The corporate wars in which she fights could be cut from the business page of the *L. A. Times*. As Brice fights these wars, she is haunted by Peggy Lee's song, "Is This All There Is?"

Liz Chase is a TV anchor of the morning news. Liz and Brice meet at a fund-raiser, and each is instantly attracted to the other. Liz is doing a story on Icelandic horses, a topic new to Brice. As they investigate the subject, each woman is taken by these spirited, almost human creatures. For Brice, the horses also bring on past life dreams, and present-day visions.

Andrews and Austin keep up the sexual tension between Liz and Brice while telling the story of these two dynamic, witty women. Their verbal sparring is reminiscent of *The Avengers* in its wit and double entendre. The other characters in the book, including the two Icelandic horses, add to the mystery as the haunting love story unfolds.

Andrews & Austin, partners in life as well as writing, live on a horse ranch in the Central Plains. They previously wrote for the entertainment industry in Los Angeles. They are involved in several large business ventures as well as their ranch and their passion, writing lesbian fiction. *Mistress of the Runes* is their third book published by Bold Strokes Books.

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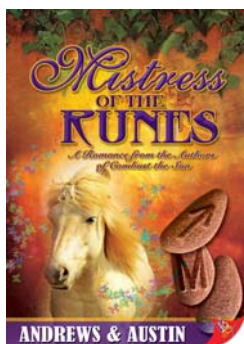
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Book Review: November 2007

by Gwen Whitehead (guest reviewer at [Story Circle Book Reviews](http://www.storycirclebookreviews.org))



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Story Circle Book Reviews

-reviewing books by, for, and
about women

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Andrews and Austin's *Mistress of the Runes* is labeled a romance, but it isn't one at all, at least not in the way I view romance. It is far more than that. It's a story of self-discovery, even though Brice Chandler, the heroine of this novel, has already made it in most people's eyes...True, Brice finds romance and love in this novel, but she also finds herself.

As the novel opens, Brice Chandler's challenging career as an entertainment industry executive but her less-than-satisfactory relationship with her partner, Clare, leaves her in a bit of a funk. Changes at work have created stress, and Brice feels that her relationship with Clare is over. Then she meets Liz Chase, a newswoman...

...In addition to everyday life and the budding romance with Liz, the authors take Brice and their readers on this journey through the use of some fantastical dreams/flashbacks in which Brice sees herself as a medieval warrior, a warrior responsible for saving his men and the queen from invaders. Brice easily connects her twenty-first century corporate warrior self to this man, but she fails to understand why she keeps having visions about him. I found myself in the same situation as Brice as I pondered the significance of the dreams...

...Brice is a complex character, one whom many women will immediately gravitate to and understand. Straight or gay, stay-at-home-mom or corporate warrior, many of us share Brice's characteristics. As I read the book, I found myself shaking my head over the foolishness of some of her actions. In mulling over the novel, though, I recognized my own desire to control my world and my refusal to "follow the dream."

Andrews and Austin have composed a fascinating tale that grips the reader early. Midway through, the book slows... but it is perhaps necessary to the working out of Brice's character. She does nothing fast, instead thinking things out, oftentimes too thoroughly. As she continues to shy away from Liz and Liz's obvious attraction to her, I sometimes wanted to reach into the book and shake Brice.

Andrews and Austin have backgrounds in the entertainment and news industries, and I enjoyed the insight into worlds far removed from my own. Their combined knowledge and talent are demonstrated in the composition of *Mistress of the Runes*. This book does not move quickly or rashly, but with a combination of dry humor, believable dialogue (both internal and spoken), and a touch of the paranormal, Brice Chandler's story will stay with the reader.

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