

Title: *Ashlords*
Author: Scott Reintgen
Genre: Fiction

Reviewer Name and Grade: Shan L., 8th Grade

Date Reviewed: March 25, 2021

Ashlords is a book about three different people from three different cultures. Imelda Beru is a Dividian girl nicknamed the Alchemist. She is known for her videos on experiments of different rebirths of phoenix horses. Phoenix horses are horses born from sunlight and their strengths and weaknesses lie on what materials you use in a rebirth. The Dividians are a culture that tried to defeat the Ashlords, but they failed. The Ashlords claim that their victory is because of their gods and the fact that they gave the Ashlords the power to rule. Adrian Ford is the son of the leader of the rebellion. He is a Longhand, one of the people who live in the north. They think that the Ashlords should not have power, and they plan a rebellion. Pippa is an Ashlord, the daughter of two former champions of the Races. Pippa is a celebrity, and favored to win the Races. The Races are where eleven candidates each race their phoenixes using the different rebirths they know. Each candidate gets five ingredients for their rebirths. Since the horses usually only travel during the day, the fighting mostly happens during the night. I can't tell if this book happened before the present or after the present, because there are elements of each in the book. The race means something different for each of the three main characters. For Imelda, it is about Dividians doing their own thing without Ashlords controlling their every move. For Adrian, it is about leading a revolution against the Ashlords. For Pippa, it is about making her family proud and marrying the one she loves. Each person has their strengths and weaknesses. Imelda has the natural ability of rebirths and she can ride well. Adrian has one of the best fighting skills in the area, and he is more intelligent than he appears. Pippa has the strengths of both her parents, and a spirit to guide her during the race. They all care about winning, but for different reasons.

Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?

At the beginning of the book, the plot was a bit boring, but when the races started everything was set into motion. There was a lot more action and the story was much more interesting.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

The pace at the beginning was slow, and things didn't move as fast as I wanted them to. As the Races started, the plot got faster, and it started to become the speed that I like.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

I would say this book is appropriate for 6th graders and up because there was violence in the book that might be too harsh for people under the age of 11 to handle.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this book to people who like the rags to riches type of story. I also would recommend this book to people who like a lot of action in books, because the Races are action packed, with betrayal, fights, and tight-necked races.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

I think some other information that would be helpful is that even though IT may seem like the upper class has no problems to the lower class, they have problems and fears too. The upper class thinks that the lower class is weak, but the lower class has their strengths too.

Rating:

I would give this book *3 out of 5 stars* because I didn't really like how the perspectives changed every chapter. It made the book confusing to follow, and IT made me want to skip one person's view to continue another person's. The book also lagged at the beginning, and it was mostly social events and other things I think are boring. But when the Races started, the action almost made up for the slow part at the beginning.

Reviewer Name and Grade: Ethan D., 8th Grade

Date Reviewed: April 4, 2021

The Races, an annual event that pits various cultures within the empire against each other in an effort to replace warfare, tracks three teenagers as they prepare to ride in The Races. Entrants compete in a multi-day event on Phoenix horses, which burn each night and then rise from the ashes the next morning, as the name implies. The book's three riders come from very different backgrounds and have very different ambitions for running in The Races. Pippa is most famous. Her family has a track record of winning The Races, and her parents expect her to follow in their footsteps. Adrian is the prize of his people and the son of a Revolutionary. He's strong, well-trained, and self-assured, the ideal combination to beat the odds and win the race. Imelda, who joined The Races on a scholarship, has a slim chance of winning. She's a good rider, but she's not skilled in war, which could come in handy if she comes across a fellow competitor while riding. As these athletes from various parts of the empire come together to prepare and train for The Race, Ashlords have a Hunger Games feel to it. In the end, they battle against one another in a televised showdown. Of course, there can only be one winner, and that person is proclaimed Champion, with all the praise and glory that comes with it. The Races differs significantly from the Hunger Games in that murder is not permitted. Racers can plan and fight, but anyone who kills another racer would be disqualified. While Reintgen spent an extraordinary amount of time building up to The Race, I enjoyed getting to know the characters and their motivations before the competition began. Of course, the most thrilling part of the book was when the case started and the real action began. There were betrayals and unexpected alliances established. The story's alliances were my favorite aspect. I couldn't help but wonder if Pippa, Adrian, and Imelda could put their faith in the new friends they'd made during The Race.

Did the (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?

I think the plot in this book is very interesting. It is interesting because the plot had a Hunger Games feel to it.

What is the pace of the book, too fast, too slow, or just right?

I think the pace of the book is just right.

What grade level(s) is the book appropriate for?

I think that the book is appropriate for people in 5th grade and up.

What type of reader do you recommend this book to?

I think the book is best for people who like fantasy books. I recommend this to people who like fantasy books because the genre is fantasy fiction.

I rate this book 5 stars

I rate this book 5 stars because the pace of the book is really good and the whole plot is very interesting. My favorite element of the book is the competition. The Races have been kept in the Empire for over a century. By releasing a large herd of Phoenix horses, one of the deities assisted the Ashlord nation in their battle against the Dividian. Since then, the Races have been the only thing that draws attention to these majestic animals, with candidates having to learn three main skills in order to win. The Ashlords are the traditional Race winners, but nothing could add more flavor to the game than a sprinkling of Dividian and Longhand members. Pippa, the prodigy daughter of two former Race champions, the Alchemist, the Dividian girl famous for her Alchemy abilities, and Adrian, the boy from the Reach, will stop at nothing to bring victory to the Longhand people and start the war for their liberation.

Reviewer's Name and Grade: Benjamin W., 10th Grade

Date Reviewed: August 23, 2021

Centuries ago, a group of people sailed to the land of the Ashlords with the intent to conquer. Through gifts from their gods, one of which was the phoenix horse, the Ashlords defeated these people and forced them into subjects. They became known as Dividians, who have no power or wealth. Not long after that, another group came, looking for freedom rather than land. These people did not get their freedom, which angered them and led them to plan rebellions ever since. They became known as Longhands, who have vast wealth but no power. Now, in the annual Races, where contestants race phoenix horses for prize money and more, both groups

can get what they want. The only thing in their way are the Ashlord riders. In an environment where teaming is allowed and sabotage and injuring other riders are encouraged, the Dividians and Longhands, who both can only send one rider, will have to fight through obstacle after obstacle to accomplish their dreams.

Imelda is representing the Dividians. She is a great rider and an even better alchemist. However, she is at an instant disadvantage. While all other contestants have their own horses and have formed long-term relationships with them, Imelda is too poor to afford one and must use a provided horse. From the very beginning, she knows she has no chance. This is why she comes up with a plan to escape the Races with all the equipment she is given. With the money she could make from selling the equipment, her family and friends would have enough money to live the lives they always hoped for. Adrian is representing the Longhands. He is a great rider and an even better fighter. However, he is also at an instant disadvantage. Because he is a Longhand, the Ashlords will team up against him and work to eliminate him from the race. Once the Races begin, he knows nothing will stop the Ashlord riders from permanently injuring him. However, he also knows that nothing will stop him from winning and starting the rebellion his people have always wanted. Pippa is the main representative out of nine for the Ashlords. She is the daughter of two former champions and has been raised for the Races. She is the easy favorite to win but that is not her plan. She plans to let her boyfriend, Bravos, win and live a happy life with him after with the prize money they would get from placing first and second. All three of these riders have their goals, but will they be able to succeed or will the treacherous Races bring them down.

Now, I will answer some questions about the book:

Did the plot keep you interested? - This plot definitely kept me interested. There was a lot of action and suspense throughout the book. There were also a couple of plot twists that kept me from guessing the plot.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right? - I think the pace of this book was just right. The book started slow but sped up as the Races progressed, eventually delivering a very exciting ending.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for? - I think this book is appropriate for kids in grades 7-12. This book isn't suited for younger kids because the plot is kind of confusing and it can get hard to keep track of all the characters.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to? - I would recommend this book to readers who like the Hunger Games trilogy. Imelda is a lot like Katniss and the plots are similar. Both characters are poor and find a way to break the game they're thrown into, starting a revolution in the process.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book - Each chapter alternates to a different character's point of view.

I would rate this book *5 stars*. The plot was really good and exciting. The author did a great job of leaving many chapters with a cliffhanger, so you would be forced to read through the other two character's point of view before finding out what happens next. The only thing I would have liked is a clearer explanation about what alchemy and phoenix horses are at the beginning.