



## The Dragon of Despair

*Jane Lindskold*

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## **The Dragon of Despair** Jane Lindskold

Raised by smart, language-using wolves, far from humans, then brought back to the court of Hawk Haven, young Firekeeper had to learn to cope with human society. Fortunately, for one raised amidst intelligent pack animals, the intrigues of humans are neither complex nor wholly unfamiliar.

Now Melina Shield, the beautiful, unscrupulous, and thoroughly discredited sorceress whose power-hungry intrigues have already made so much trouble for Firekeeper, has once more used her power to cloud men's minds, and has induced the ruler of New Kelvin to marry her. This is bad news on a lot of fronts.

It's particularly bad news for Firekeeper. Melina hasn't abandoned her schemes to gain power through the use of forbidden ancient sorcery. And the leaders of the royal beasts who watch over this world have given Firekeeper--and her intelligent wolf companion Blind Seer--the responsibility for stopping her.

## **The Dragon of Despair Details**

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Author : Jane Lindskold

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## From Reader Review The Dragon of Despair for online ebook

### **Siobhan says**

A continuation of the series, but somewhat disappointing. Only minor characters are furthered and the main ones are holding relatively fast. Firekeeper is fearing a war between Men and Beasts, but diplomacy averts it in this book. Worth it if you enjoy spending time in the world, but seems to be in a holding pattern for the overall story arc.

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### **Jagrid says**

I love this series, but DoD is far too similar to the previous book. When you read it right after Wolf's Head, Wolf's heart a lot of the situations are just far too similar. Though it's not a bad book, I'd suggest waiting a month or so before reading it if you've just read the previous book.

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### **June says**

Melina has used her power to marry the ruler of New Kelvin and is planning further treachery. Firekeeper is sent with her friends to stop Melina, and reunite her with her youngest daughter in hopes of helping Citrine recover after her ordeal with the pirates. Wisdom of animals (Firekeeper's wolf lore) and humans (I really enjoy Grateful Peace's character) rise to the top.

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### **Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says**

At this point, I am somewhat regretting having picked up free copies of the first five books in this series. Having done so, I feel compelled to read them all. Unfortunately, I am not any more enthused by this series than I was at the beginning, perhaps less so. For whatever reason, the characters and plots have never particularly interested me.

My complaints here are similar to my complaints for the two previous books in the series. First of all, for an epic fantasy series, there is remarkably little action. Second of all, in addition to there being a dearth of action, romance lacks almost entirely as well. Without either of these, getting any real excitement going is tough. Not that there cannot be good books without these things, however, I do not think the writing and plotting are good enough to carry the reader without them in this case.

Speaking of romance, I am now three books into a six book series and there has been absolutely no romance, except for one mutual affection (upon which no action has been taken beyond talk), one unrequited crush, and some action for Melina, the bad guy. What the heck? This pretty much disproves one stereotype, the one that women are always more interested in romance than men. The Wheel of Time series has tons of romance in it, whereas, this one, penned by a woman, focuses instead on politics.

Two (maybe three, since, at that point, I might as well complete the series, books to go. I sure hope they get

more interesting soon!

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### **Lynda says**

I continue to be pleased with the growth of the characters in this series. If you like fantasy wolves and the idea of someone who can communicate with them, give this series a try.

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### **Amy Ariel says**

It's been too long since I read a fantasy book. I thoroughly enjoyed this one, although I admit I read it as a stand-alone. I loved the political intrigues, the cultures, the characters. I loved the strength in the women, and I loved the wolf. The ending was satisfying.

Is there anyone who would ultimately choose humans over Beasts?

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### **Megalion says**

Things get dicey at home for Firekeeper. Home being her wolf pack as it will always be despite her continuing assimilation into the human world.

Also, our band of adventurers must return to New Kelvin. As mentioned in my review of the previous book, I really enjoy the culture of New Kelvin.

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### **Lindsey Duncan says**

The fact that this was a very long read has nothing to do with the quality of the book, because as with the first two volumes, this is a solid, engaging fantasy. Linskold's world is not an unusual one, although New Kelvinese society becomes more intriguing on further inspection and the Royal Beasts continue to provide interesting wrinkles and an evolving multi-book conflict. Rather, the pleasure is in the characters and their adventures.

The book begins with one plot and continues with another (which isn't as disjointed as it sounds, but the first plot is obviously intended to set up for book four). Firekeeper, raised by Royal Beasts but now a member of Hawk Haven noble society - almost - must deal with the conflict between the animal kin who raised her and Hawk Haven settlers moving onto their turf. The ambivalence that Firekeeper feels throughout these interactions is compelling, and as ever, Linskold's animal societies are well-rounded. I particularly appreciate the fact that she pays attention to the social aspects of wolves, often drawing parallels between their maneuverings and those of human society. This kind of subtlety I find is lacking sometimes even in werewolf stories, where the participants are in theory even more human.

The second plot picks up with the mental illness of young Citrine, abandoned by her sorcerous mother Melina but still in her thrall. A handpicked group heads into New Kelvin to bring about a confrontation

between the two and hopefully free Citrine from her mother's domination. Again, Citrine's evolution is compelling here. It's dysfunction well portrayed. Linskold gets deep inside her devotion, and it's a mildly creepy place to be.

Unfortunately, I think the weight of the previous two volumes got in the way of this one: the book is slow off the mark, taking a long time to get past some minor info-dumping (not too bad, but certainly not as well done as in previous volumes) and a lot of characters meeting other characters and talking to each other. It's good dialogue, but there's a lot of it. The middle sections of the story progress steadily, laying groundwork for the future without feeling unfinished.

Then, later on, it gets uneven again. Now, in fairness, I was having some issues making myself read (not a reflection on the book, just an expression of my headspace) at the time, so perhaps how I was reading the book exacerbated it, but it seemed like large chunks of in-story time passed with nothing happening, which - while it was quick to read; Linskold doesn't waste time in filler - felt disjointed and strange. It was hard to credit the characters would just sit there. I really wanted to know a bit more about what was going on that got glossed. That is a tribute to how fun they are to follow, though!

As we approach the end, some plot points aren't properly foreshadowed. This isn't a huge deal - it's not *deus ex machina*, just details - but it's one of my pet peeves.

On the other hand (paw!), Firekeeper's dreams build nicely throughout, culminating in an explanation of their true nature that is very satisfying. Early in the book, I had issues with the fact that Firekeeper's evolution as a human - deftly handled in the first two books, neither slow nor fast - seemed to have stagnated. This isn't unrealistic, of course - people hit plateaus - but it was frustrating not to see her progress further in her understanding of the human world around her. However, by the end of the book, I would have to say that I feel this objection was met. Firekeeper may not have come out and realized the moral of the story, but I as a reader felt its impact.

This one gets four stars as a continuation, but I might only give it 3.5 stars as a standalone book. It's still very readable that way (which is quite a feat, given how much happened in those books!), but the flaws become more objectionable. If you've not read them, pick up *Through Wolf's Eyes* and *Wolf's Head, Wolf's Heart* first.

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### **Elise says**

I do love how this book ended. It left off with Firekeeper and Blind Seer leaving to return to the pack, which leads me to believe that we won't be seeing too much of the Hawk Haven characters. In that case, I appreciate the tying up of loose ends here even more. And with the plan Sir Jared has that he told Elise about, it seems their romance may work out after all. Maybe. Hopefully. I do hope it does. I find myself cheering for those two a lot.

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### **Taylor Alcantar says**

I really like this book series and plan on finishing it but this book was a test to my patience. Everything happened at a snails pace and left with, of course, so many cliffhangers.

Firekeeper returns to her wolf family who are angered by a new group of humans encroaching on their territory. Firekeeper goes to the king who offers a trade, he will have the humans removed if she goes back to New Kelvin to help Citrine confront her mother, the only way they believe she will be able to move on from the ordeals her mother put her through. Maybe the reason why I didn't like this book as much as the others is because that just seems nonsensical, lets send this traumatized girl back to the women who caused all her problems?

Anyway it was still solid and I liked the evolution of Edlin's character who I think is very interesting. There was plenty of good writing and dialogue it was just hard to get to it with 750+ pages!

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### **Christy says**

Jane, you must have had a very hard childhood. The picture of a child under the thrall of her mother and how she escaped and then was enthralled again, is spell binding. You have given me an insight into the children I work with who've been hurt by their parents emotionally. What a terrible, beautiful book.

Thank you.

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### **Carol says**

This book is the third in a series of fantasy novels. The books are connected, but the plots are self-contained (i.e., this is not one continuous story spread out over several books). Firekeeper, one of the two principal protagonists, is a feral child raised by wolves and recently reintroduced into human society. The other main character, Derian Carter, is Firekeeper's first and best friends in the human world. The plot is, at its root, fairly routine fantasy: a group of adventurous types must go on a mission into not-completely-friendly territory to prevent a terrible magical thing from happening. But I'm not going to describe the plot any farther than that here, because that's not what's interesting about these books and why I read past the first one.

The interesting thing about this book (and the previous two) is the mix of adventure and political intrigue. In a lot of ways, this book is kind of like a "beginner's" (referring to the reader) political intrigue novel.

Because of Firekeeper's background, she sort of acts as an interpreter for the reader. Since she was raised by pack animals, she actually has a surprisingly good grasp of social and political hierarchies and people's places within them. However, since she was not raised among humans, she also has an outsider's viewpoint and doesn't always understand the particulars of how human society and hierarchies work at first. This is in fact, the most clever aspect of the book.

Otherwise, The Dragon of Despair and its two predecessors (Through Wolf's Eyes and Wolf's Head, Wolf's Heart) are reasonably good, but not great. The plots and characters, while not completely hackneyed, are also not wildly original. If you've read a decent amount of fantasy, this will all be familiar ground. The writing itself is also good not great - it does its job well, but that's it. These books are reasonably good, diverting reads - nothing more, nothing less.

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### **Lori says**

A great addition to a new series with an fantasy world where some animals are more than they seem. Some of the animals, in particular a pack of wolves, saved a baby from a burning village and with help from an

unidentified source, inducted her into their pack. Now humans have come in search of the village and its inhabitants, which leads the protagonist to leave behind her forest home to learn the strange language and customs of these two-leggers.

Driven by politics almost exclusively, this dryness is easily offset by the protagonist's trials and travels while learning to speak/read/dress and otherwise act human while making new friends and enemies in the process.

Sadly, the series seems to peter out toward the middle of book 3, which I barely finished.

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### **Cayleigh says**

the 3rd book in a series about a young girl who was raised by Royal (intelligent) Wolves. This book takes place mostly in the country of New Kelvin (a neighboring country to the one the main characters are from and the setting of the first two books). Going to a new country refreshed the books for me since I enjoyed their previous adventure in New Kelvin. These aren't your typical "girl raised by wolves" books. A nice and complex story that would be good read in the series or even as a standalone novel. At 500+ pages, not a book for everyone.

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### **lostinabookbrb says**

This series is going strong with The Dragon of Despair. It continues the adventures of Firekeeper and the gang returning to Dragon's Breath. While the first two novels could be read as stand alones, this novel is (in my mind) best read when you know the background information. I continue to enjoy the character development especially that of Citrine. Also the continuation of the series plot versus the singular book plot is well done.

The single star off is that I kinda wish more time was spent fleshing Melina out a little more. However, this is a rather packed book so I could understand if less time was spent on Melina's perspective of things for that reason.

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### **Jennifer says**

Another interesting plot and better character development. Sadly, I haven't seen much development in Lindskol's writing, but that's not entirely surprising. You follow lots of different characters, and it just might be too many; the timeline starts to get overlapped, especially during the climax and so many different things are happening at once. It starts to get a bit confusing. But that's a minor detail. Overall, though, I enjoyed it.

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### **Melanie says**

The trilogy was long and the books were large. Not large nor long enough in my opinion. We need more Firekeeper. Beautifully written with a justified, vengeful ending to their stories, I was not disappointed with any part of this sequel and really really wish Mrs. Lindskold would give us more.

Edit: I just realized the series is indeed not over. Here I go to buy books.

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### **Jennifer says**

I think it was good, in a way. I enjoyed the story, but it just... drags. She spends a little too much time on building up to the issue, when it really just gets hard to read/boring because there is too much unneeded segues.

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### **Eleanor says**

At first I thought to myself, there is really no way this series can keep up with itself. The first and second books were just fabulous. But, I was happily surprised that "The Dragon of Despair" kept up with the expectations I have come to have for this series. I swear I thought by now this series would have been ruined by some goo goo eyes sword romance as many fantasies tend to. But the intrigue the plots and the easy way the characters interact with each other remained. So really if you enjoyed the first two Books "Through Wolf's Eyes", and "Wolf's Head Wolf's Heart", you will really like this third installment.

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### **Jenna says**

Um, I actually have no idea how this book was, because it was impossible for me to get past the first 50 pages. I'm a fast reader and usually don't like stopping in the middle, but it was boring and yet confusing at the same time. It probably didn't help that I didn't read the previous books in the series, but seriously. It should have a more interesting start.

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