



Knight of Shadows

Roger Zelazny

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Melvin Corey must choose between an alliance with the Pattern of Amber or the Logrus of Chaos, in a tale of a sometimes murderous family of wizards and their alternate worlds.

Knight of Shadows Details

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Author : Roger Zelazny

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From Reader Review Knight of Shadows for online ebook

Cathy says

Ended better than it started. Didn't enjoy the quest any more than Merle did. Got better once the normal pace resumed.

Assi Kovacheva says

So far, the best book! I loved it!

Bryan says

I had a hard time with this one.

It's not like I think the Merlin sequence of the Chronicles Of Amber is bad(although it's certainly not as good as the Corwin books), it's just that this book in particular struggled. It seemed like the Order vs. Chaos quest was rather forced, and because it occurred in this mysterious "land between Shadows" Zelazny felt it was acceptable to resort to deus ex machina at every turn to get Merlin out of the binds he was flung into. Frakir was made sentient(mostly to serve as a means of railroading Merlin)...and then reverted to being mindless again, once railroading no longer served the plot. The Logrus-ghost-Jurt sacrifices his life to save Merlin...for some reason(I thought he hated Merlin). There was a cool fencing scene in there, but ultimately this book falls way short of every previous book in the series.

I hope the last book is more like the majority of the series, and less like this one.

Fred D says

Some say the second Amer Series focusing on Merlin was not as good as the original. I tend to disagree. I liked the second series for different reasons than the first. Corwin was more of a fighter, Merlin a magic-user. I enjoyed Zelazny's detailed descriptions of how Merlin cast spells. I enjoyed the humor in the second series more than in the first. Following the convoluted plot and intrigues and mystery was also very entertaining.

William Gerke says

Penultimate of the Merlin books and one of the weaker entries. Large portions of it are taken up by an admittedly allegorical contest that, while sparking some interesting imagery, largely consists of Merlin running on a set of rails. The one really bright spark is a confrontation in the halls of Amber that does some serious damage to the local architecture. Adequate for what it is, but not Zelazny's best effort.

Fantasy Literature says

<http://www.fantasyliterature.com/revi...>

Ariel Hudnall says

n6980Knight of Shadows by Roger Zelazny

My rating: 4 of 5 stars

The identity of Mask has been discovered, Merlin's brother is in league with entities desperate to kill him, and Coral, a dignitary's stepdaughter (and illegitimate child of Oberon) is lost after instructing the Pattern to conduct her to where she "should" go.

Oh, right. The Pattern is sentient.

And practically every other magic tool in Merlin's employ.

Knight of Shadow has a bit of a misleading title, calling to mind images of a gallant Merlin, fighting the forces of the Pattern and the Logrus (or Avalon and Chaos) as he attempts to find his father and Coral, and deal with Luke and Jurt.

While I can say with confidence that there was a lot to enjoy in this book, there were also many things that frustrated me. On the one hand, Zelazny shows his master weaving of conflict and plots that intersect in wild and unexpected ways; on the other, Merlin spends the majority of the book doing a whole lot of nothing (critical elements of the plot instead given to the characters in his periphery), and not many of the runnings story lines resolved by the end. With only one more book to go, and that book being only 130 pages, I am worried that the resolution of all of these conflicts will not be dealt with in a way that will satisfy.

However, I won't judge the book on future concerns. Rather, I'll focus on what I did like, and what I didn't, in Book Nine of the Book of Amber. Spoilers to follow.

I think Mandor is starting to grow on me as a character. He has sort of a Vincent Price feel to him in my head, if Vincent Price was less into horror and more into fancy magic and playing Mandrake from King Comics. The scenes he was in were interesting, and I'm curious to see how his budding relationship with Jasra will play out in the final book, given that she pretty much duped everyone, despite their best efforts to see through he scheming.

There are a LOT of characters. Like, a lot, a lot. And this book has a problem with names that sound way too similar (Mandor/Merlin) (Jasra/Jurt) (Dalt/Dara). In addition to the problem of trying to keep track of so many characters, it's also important to keep track of how many people are related (a fair amount of accidental and consensual incest happens in these books). I found a nifty chart to help me keep track of them all in the future (though apparently Oberon had upwards of 47 illegitimate children while he was alive.)

<http://alex-hurst.com/2014/09/21/sign...>

During a very lengthy play-by-play analysis of the book, Rajan Khanna, of Tor.com, noted that one of the creepiest scenes in the entire series takes place in Knight of Shadows. Coral, Merlin's aunt, is under an enchantment that doesn't allow her to wake, and Merlin, in an attempt to rescue her, negotiates the Pattern to reach her. However, the Pattern demands Merlin have sex with Coral before leaving, a demand which is briefly (and correctly) refused, before Merlin gives in. Merlin KNOWS Coral is related to him, but that isn't even a thought that crosses his mind. He knows she is under an enchantment, and practically asleep, but after telling Coral of their predicament, receives a "I thought you'd never ask. (actual dialogue)" before stripping Coral of her clothes and having at it. This scene, coupled with the very last, which calls to mind the schemes of Morgana in the King Arthur mythology, cast doubt on Coral and her motives, at which point I have to wonder no woman other than Vialle can resist the temptation to walk the darker path.

As well, though the plots were intriguing and extremely complex, the effect was sort of ruined, because the motives that the big baddies have for doing the things they do to Merlin are quite watery. Julia, our prime villain at the moment, is, when we get down to it, trying to murder Merlin and all the others involved with him simply because "he didn't trust her enough". That's it. The scheme seems to demand more than such a weak motivation, and so that sort of killed the effect for me.

Some highlights in the book included a talking Frakir, which, after reading Steven Brust's Jhereg, and knowing from N J's vast knowledge that Brust was inspired by Zelazny, I could see an almost literal copy + paste from their witty exchanges in Chapter 5. Frakir is very much a Loiosh in my mind, though I realize Frakir came first.

I also really enjoyed the interactions between Merlin and Benedict (though he was a Pattern-Ghost), and the development Luke and Nayda/ty'iga received in this installment. The supper between Merlin, Mandor, and Jarsa was also really fun to read. In fact, now that I think about it, though Merlin's lengthy walk in the place between shadows did not add much directly to the story at large, his interactions with the Pattern-Ghosts (including a not-so-evil Jurt and an indignant Oberon!) were very interesting.

All in all, I feel this edition of the book is much stronger than some of the others, even with the incest and rat's nest of plot lines, precisely because it plays to the characters, which I think are Zelazny's strong suit in this series.

Hien says

Even though books 6-10 are lumped in as part of the Chronicles of Amber, I feel that it's really a second series. It's about Merlin (Corwin's son). Merlin is from Chaos due to his mother being from there. One of the things I didn't like about the second series is that lots of people can shadow walk. It used to be only the princes and princesses of Amber can do it. Now it seems like everybody can. It's not so special after all.

Michael R. says

I didn't care for this 9th book in the Amber series.

Which is surprising because I really like books with a lot of action, and lots of short dialog. But this book was so much nonstop chaos (not unlike the realm of Chaos), it was too much to enjoy. And it seemed amateurish. First is the aftermath of the fight for the Keep with Mandor and Jarsa vs. Julia and Jurt. Next an explanation from Jarsa that she trained Julia, who Merlin thought had perished previously, to kill Merlin. Already the

storyline is getting pretty convoluted.

Instead of a brief respite at Amber, Merlin decides with the help of Mandor and Jarsa to be sent via trump card to the lost Coral. Instead Merlin is transported to some weird place between shadows between Amber and Chaos. Between the Pattern and the Logrus. The gist was that someone or something wanted Merlin to pick between the two. Eventually finding Coral in a broken pattern needing repair. Wandering through this land lasted six chapters.

Then the emergency is that the recently found Jewel of Judgement will kill Merlin if he removes it. As soon as that is resolved, the ty'iga steals it. This leads to an explosion in the castle. After which Merlin decides to dress and go to the coronation of his friend Luke as ruler in the world of Kashfa.

So many story threads. So much unresolved. I had the feeling Zelazny was just typing away like mad to hit a deadline to get this penultimate novel out and done with. Really pasted together effort.

Hopefully the final novel in the Amber series Prince of Chaos will make it all worth while! (?)

Dan Schwent says

Merlin continues to search for his father, Corwin, and Mask, the mysterious usurper of the Keep of Four Worlds who is someone from Merlin's past, and Coral, Oberon's illegitimate child who disappeared after walking the Pattern in the previous book. Along the way, he learns of the way of the Broken Pattern, nabs the Jewel of Judgement, and encounters Pattern Ghosts. Just what do mysterious forces have in store for Merlin?

As I said in my review of the previous volume, the second Chronicles of Amber suffer from sequel-itis more than anything else. While Merlin's quest is interesting, I'd like it a lot more if I didn't have Corwin's tale to compare it to. All of the Broken Patterns and Pattern Ghosts are over-explaining the Pattern and destroying some of its mystery. And when is Merlin going to walk the Pattern Corwin wove at the end of the last Amber saga?

So many questions and I have a feeling not all of them will be answered in book ten. Oh well, time to boat this bass. On to the thrilling conclusion!

Ana Tijani? says

Po mom mišljenju, najslabija knjiga Hronika Ambera. Baš sam je sa naporom ?itala, posebno središnji deo. Nadam se da me poslednja knjiga ne?e razo?arati.

Gia Jgarkava says

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Wise_owl says

One of the problems with reading a series of books in rapid succession is that you run out of things to say if your planing on reviewing it.

Like other in the series this book picks up pretty much where the last one left off, and often makes the series appear less as a sequence of seperate books, but one book that was chopped up into books for publishing reasons. Things are finally coming to a head for Merlin, and the various plots he's involved in are all spiralling around him, truths finally being revealed, betrayels, attacks from expected and unexpected quarters, all the good stuff we've come to expect.

I would say this book is, if not my least enjoyed of the series, one that I gave 4 stars to with trepidation; It certain does a few things with plot elements and world-building elements that were done in earlier books, and takes those off in odd new directions, some of which I really didn't enjoy. Like many series that are written over a span of time you look back at the earlier works with knowledge gained in the new works and someimes it can make you question whether accepting this new information invalidates your enjoyment of the old stuff. That's of course a person thing, and in my opinion this isn't a 'midichlorian' level rewrite, but there are a few things that made me sort of shrug and ho-hum.

Joel says

Summary review: Not my favorite of the series for sure, and not even my favorite of the Merlin cycle - seemed oddly rushed, which was something Zelazny had avoided previously, despite the shorter format of the books. I enjoyed it, as I have with all books in the series, but I sure didn't love it.

Kevin says

Magical AI has more to do in this volume and for me that's always a good thing. Onward to the the exciting conclusion.
