



## Storm Breaking

*Mercedes Lackey*

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## **Storm Breaking** Mercedes Lackey

As Storm Breaking opens, the western allies, led by Karal, Karsite Sunpriest and delegate to the Valdemaran Court, and the Adepts Firesong and An'desha, have traveled deep into the Dorisha Plains to locate the ancient ruins of the Tower of Urtho, Mage of Silence, creator of the gryphons. Legend has it that below the Tower, deeply buried beneath the plains, is Urtho's Vault, hidden stronghold of some of the most powerful magical weapons ever devised - weapons that Urtho himself felt were too dangerous to use. With the help of the Shin'a'in plainsmen, they have successfully excavated this ancient arsenal, and risked their lives triggering one of these antique but potent tools of death to unleash a monstrous burst of mage-energy. With this explosion of magical power, Karal, Firesong, and their companions have temporarily counteracted the ever-increasing waves of the mage storms. But they know that this desperate action will not save them - they have bought themselves precious time, but are still far from a permanent solution. They know now that the mage storms are an "echo" through time of the prehistoric Cataclysm which destroyed Urtho's Tower, created the vast and barren Dorisha Plains, and permanently warped their world more than two thousand years ago. And they also know that if they don't find a way to banish these magical vibrations they will culminate in another Cataclysm - this time destroying their world for good. But the Vault is not the only thing buried for centuries below the Dorisha Plains, and camped in the ruins of what once was the workplace of the most ingenious mage their world has ever known, the desperate allies soon come to realize that their solution may lie beneath the dust at their feet. The saving of their world just might be accomplished by the work of a man who has been dead for millennia!

## **Storm Breaking Details**

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Author : Mercedes Lackey

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## From Reader Review Storm Breaking for online ebook

### James says

Full review here:

<http://jamesgenrebooks.blogspot.com/2...>

Out of all of her Valdemar series, this is likely the best of the "Modern" setting she wrote. Not that the rest are inferior products, but more that she had a better grasp on the world she created and how to narrate it by this point.

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### Carolina Edwards says

The ending was heart rending. Not for who died but for those who survived. But, this book spent way too much time with people and in places that have no impact on the story as a whole. Too much wasted time for a five star rating.

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### Sandra Walker says

#### Cataclysm's

Storms worldwide affected everything in its path. Survivors from all lands managed to their homes. Lost a few good friends and family for good reasons.

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### Dawn Livingston says

It's strange, I think the trilogy with Elspeth is better overall (the Mage Winds trilogy), perhaps more even, but there is so much to like about this book, this trilogy. I think there are elements in this trilogy that are great (I'll get to that later).

Parts of it were slow and tedious in my opinion, there were things that weren't explained well, didn't make sense, were inconsistent (or at least appeared that way). I got tired of it being stated that Karal felt useless. I got tired of the Shin'a'in proverb about being careful what you ask for. They might have mentioned it at least four times in the book.

On page 46 when An'desha is speaking to Firesong, about Karal he says light-heartedly that Karal is "occasionally bigoted." That really comes out of the blue and sounds harsh and unnecessary. Maybe in answer to some criticisms that Karal seems too perfect? That one really rubbed me the wrong way, it was so jarring.

Elspeth... in this book she just pi\$\$e\$ me off. She's so arrogant, and b\*tchy. Arrogant in particular on page 56, and b\*tchy regarding Tremane maybe starting in the middle of the book.

Religion. While it was kind of cool to see the variety of religion in the books, I really got tired of it, it was or

became heavy-handed. And there was too much divine intervention. It make things too easy in a way.

Florian and Karal. I don't know if this is good or bad. Karal was Florian's Chosen for all intents and purposes. Karal should have been chosen. But he wasn't. Even though the Companions are mystical, there doesn't seem to be any particular god involved just individuals that are able to be reincarnated if they choose and retain their memories, and control things from behind the scenes to some degree. But I think he couldn't technically be chosen because he already belonged to Vykandes, so he was unofficially chosen.

The best things about the book:

- Tremane. I love this character. Yeah, I know some things that were going to happen were too perfect in a sense, but I really love how Tremane winds up in Hardorn and what happens to him there.

- The Empire, etc. I really loved how this series showed how other countries acted, worked, thought in comparison to the Valdemar we know. The Empire was especially well done, well fleshed out but then it needed to be.

- The scale of what is happening to whom, and why. The variety of peoples working together and how they came to be working together. I loved the scale of the story.

- Solaris. She's not a favorite character, but I really came to like her at the end.

As I was reading the last pages finding out what happens to who, the aftermath of what's done or not, and then was done and put the book down, I really felt a sense of loss. I liked those characters, I liked them working together from disparate backgrounds and to find out what happens to them, where they go and what they do after what's done is done... I was thinking, "No...!" I guess I just don't like goodbyes.

So, bits of really great stuff, but certainly at times slow, uneven, confusing. Certainly worth reading.

I'll liking be reading the Arrows series with Talia (that came before this trilogy or the Mage Wars trilogy). I remember loving that one. I suspect when I'm done I won't be able to pick a favorite trilogy among the three. Then I'll be off to read the Gryphon trilogy or revisit the Vanyel trilogy to see if I still like it as much as I recall.

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## **Bibliotropic says**

The *Mage Storms* trilogy wraps up in an exciting way that was much more tense and action-oriented than the previous novel in the series, which I'm glad to see. The reader gets to see the world as it's known change drastically. Iftel opens its borders, Hardorn gets a new King, the Empire suffers yet more turmoil (and not just from the increasing mage-storms) and most importantly, the structure of magic itself is shattered and must slowly reform. It's all a very fitting finish for this chapter of Velgarth's history, one that does justice to both the large and the small issues of all the major players in the tale.

(Poor Valdemarans, just rediscovering magic and then having to witness it getting scrambled up before they can really get a handle on it.)

But like all things, it has a drawback. In this case, the drawback is the fact that this book -- or rather, this book and the book before it -- were clearly not meant to be read independently of the *Gryphon* series, which was published round the same time. While the *Storms* trilogy deals with the echo of the Cataclysm, the

*Gryphon* books deal with Cataclysm itself, and the events that followed. Publishing these series at the same time formed a nice symmetry, but things are mentioned in the *Storms* books that get no explanation, and the only way to really find out about them is to read the *Gryphon* novels. The *makaar* are a prime example of this. Normally Lackey is all over repeat descriptions in her novels, but in this case it's almost like she decided to forgo that tactic in favour of getting people to buy both series for a full explanation. Only having read and remembered the *Gryphon* trilogy kept me from being confused a couple of times.

At the end of this trilogy, though, I have to say that if you're interested in the Valdemar books, this is a trilogy you can't miss. Not without leaving a serious gap in your understanding of the world and how it works. Though the second book may have been slower than the first, the third comes roaring back with more fascinating things, world-changing events, and the return of a few beloved characters that no doubt made more than a couple of people grin with glee. There are a few books in the Valdemar series that can be skipped without much problem, but this certainly isn't one of them. A must-have for Valdemar fans!

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## Elaine says

This is another disappointing, unmemorable series I am unable to rank one by one. Mage Storms manages to be even worse than Winds because there is so little that happens over the course of the three books. I decided to write my review of the whole trilogy in the space for the third book, since it contains spoilers for the entire series.

I am convinced this trilogy could be condensed down to one book or even a novella. I'm not even sure that book would be better, since I still find nearly everything about this plot uninteresting, but at least it would make for a shorter, tighter read. These two trilogies are most of the reason why I'm hesitant to pick up the rest of Lackey's Valdemar books.

The plot of this trilogy is that some ancient cataclysm is reverberating through the ages and causing mage storms that affect weather patterns, transport bits of land elsewhere, and even mess with human and animal biology. The people of Valdemar and surrounding lands must figure out to protect themselves against the storms.

While that is going on, Valdermar and Karse are trying to cement the temporary truce the two countries reached while fighting against a common enemy. The Son of the Sun sends a sun priest and his acolyte to Valdemar to discuss the peace treaty. Karal, the acolyte, is the main character of the trilogy.

Karal is a terrible protagonist. He would make a great friend, but is neither extraordinary nor interesting enough to carry a series on his own. I was excited to get a perspective on Valdemar from a resident of its habitual enemy, but Karal did not offer many new insights. I learned more about the Karsites from Alberich.

I had a similar problem with the mage storms as I did with the Dragonriders of Pern's Thread. It's hard to really get worked up over a "villain" that is not human or even alive. If you think about it, Pern and Valdemar (in this trilogy) are being threatened by weather. Sounds pretty boring, right? I understand that the mage storms cause a lot of problems, but when there isn't anything conscious behind the attacks, it's hard to care about it at all.

At the end of each of the three books, the characters try to protect themselves from the storms and/or stop them entirely. Between the problem above and the repetitive nature of the climaxes, the endings failed to inspire much emotion.

The Eastern Empire was an empty threat. The emperor just sat on his throne and murmured evil things without taking any action. Some might find the politics and jockeying to replace the emperor intriguing, but I thought it was a waste of time. Since Lackey has yet to write any more about them, it's doubly pointless to read about them here.

I did like the character of Tremaine. His transformation from sort-of enemy to ally was believable. It was nice to see the ravaged country the Eastern Empire invaded being placed in the hands of someone who will care for it and its people.

The country of Iftel, which was such a mystery for so long (I think it's in the map at the beginning of the Arrows trilogy), ended up being kind of a disappointment. I thought we would get some answers, but instead Lackey just teased us with some information and then went nowhere with it again.

I was surprised that for a trilogy that took place largely in Valdemar's capital, there weren't many Heralds in large roles. Karal spends most of his time with the other foreign dignitaries and the unaffiliated students, artificers and engineers mostly. While I suppose it was nice to get to know these groups better, I don't care about them as much as I do the Heralds.

I liked the fire cat, as well as the Companion that befriends Karal and provides him with information about Valdemar. I wouldn't have minded reading their conversations instead of just getting references to it, even if we know most of it already, since I was more interested in that than the peace talks or Karal helping An'desha. I did think it was a bit odd that the Companion was so forthright with a stranger – and a former enemy, no less – when most Companions are secretive when it comes to their true nature.

Shockingly, there are no sex or torture scenes whatsoever in this trilogy. While I appreciate the lack of sexual violence, I do think a little romance would have livened up the plot. If memory serves, Karal and his underdeveloped love interest never even kiss. I guess Lackey operates at two extremes – either there is no romance whatsoever or she goes really explicit and often perverted. Lovely.

I did like that most of the characters involved in the final pushback against the storms in the third book face consequences. A couple of them “die,” including the Companion and the sword Need; the various spirits leave the mortal world never to return; the vain Hawkbrother mage's face is scarred terribly; and Karal himself is blinded. I like it when characters have to sacrifice something to attain their goals.

I also confess I'm somewhat curious how magic will be affected and changed after the storms. It seems to become weaker and more difficult to control. However, unless Lackey really steps it up, I won't read any future book she publishes about that particular transformation.

Overall, a disappointing trilogy that was way too long and contained way too little plot. The grand saga Lackey began all the way back in the Arrows trilogy ended with barely a whimper here. It's a shame, because I think some of her characters deserved better. I doubt I will ever try to reread the Mage Storms. If I need to recall the plot, I'll skim or read a summary of each book.

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## **Renee says**

This is the wrap up to end all wrap ups!

The band of heroes (okay, at this point it's more an ARMY of heroes - all countries/tribes working together) finds themselves on the Dorisha Plains, when Urtho (THE Urtho from The Black Gryphon) lived in his

tower. He was one-half of the war which caused the great Cataclysm aeons ago - echoes of which are causing all the ruckus now. They're hoping some magic gizmo in the tower might help explain/fix this whole mess.

The mages are still looking for a magical solution. The artifactors (engineers) still grump that magic CAUSED the whole mess, therefore MORE magic will just make it worse. They're looking for a NON-magical solution. Karal's tearing his hair out trying to make everyone just STOP and LISTEN to each other for a MINUTE.

Really surprised Karal's not bald by now...

WARNING: I'm a sucker for noble sacrifice, and I don't mind shedding a few tears. If you're NOT, do not start this trilogy. At least grab tissues.

No great victory comes without great price - Mercedes Lackey would be a hollow writer indeed if she didn't follow the laws of Fate. This book - this series - ROCKS because it's true and honest and unflinching. It doesn't pretty it up for aesthetics or convenience. And is mightier for it!

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### **Meira (readingbooksinrael) says**

These books have so many bad things. But they also have some good things

2.5 stars, anyways

I wouldn't recommend them but I enjoy reading them

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### **Speedtribes says**

It seems that the best character in this trilogy, Duke Tremane, has been reduced to a sad and pitifully stupid character, fallen from the great heights of an excellent military leader-- an excellent military leader that made the fatal mistake of attempting to deal in politics against the Valdemarians.

I *wanted* him to be Chosen. I *wanted* the Heralds to ask the difficult questions of the meaning of their morality now that there is this bad, bad man in their ranks. I wanted the problems to be solved *politically*, not religiously. With the creation of Tremane, this series had a very good chance at complexity-- only Lackey lazily dropped him and all the possibilities he represented for formulaic certainties. He vanishes from the story almost as if she forgot that he even existed. I was so upset by this lost opportunity that even the gentle loveliness of Karal and his friends weren't enough to counter balance the obnoxiousness of everyone else in the book. As can be seen in my review of volume 2, I can't see Tremane as a bad or unworthy man. Flawed. Yes. Capable of misjudgment and mistakes-- but he owns up to his mistakes and works around them.

Lackey has her Companions smugly assuring Elspeth that, no, rest assured they're in no danger of him *ever* being chosen-- they are free of the possible taint of him ever entering the Heraldic ranks. I find this condescendingly insulting, unbearably smug, and completely unfair. I don't care that he came from the supposed bad guys (who have made so little appearance except for a few "Mwuahahaha I'mma keel j00!" style three second cameos in past books that I have very little sense of whether they even are good or bad or neutral.) -- half the people from Karse came from the bad guys who's badness we've been showed repeatedly

and in detail. I don't care that he's imperialistic, and is obviously political minded.

It didn't matter that Tremane spent two volumes being as good of a person and leader as he could under terrible and confusing circumstances. It didn't matter that he even acknowledges other religions and tries to work with the peoples' wishes as much as possible within the sets of rules and laws he understands and believes to be best. It didn't matter that we are not given any real backstory to decide whether or not Tremane was either a good or bad man. The fact that he had a man killed with the intent of protecting his own people-- even going so much as admitting that he had misread the situation and was willing to make reparations-- he was too *tainted* to be a good man. As I read scene after smugly moral scene, I had no choice to interpret it as thus: The god chosen are more special to the gods than the mere mortal man -- even if one is trying his best to be morally upright and good -- because trying is useless. The taint of survival and expediency is unforgivable and in this world, there is no forgiveness unless you're a Herald. Or possibly blessed by Heraldic intercession. Fine, if that's what Lackey intended-- but she won't be able to sell me the idea that this is a particularly *good* world to live in.

As for the rest of this book-- this book was formulaic, the characters spent too much time repetitively affirming each others' moral decisions and condemnation. It had too many characters and, in the end, with the ridiculous addition of some old 'surprise' cameo appearances that didn't seem all that surprising in retrospect, it became plain anti-climatic.

Book 2 left me with an impending sense of doom. This last volume simply left a bad taste in my mouth.

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## **Rosu Aquabutts says**

"I liked it."

This probably deserves closer to two stars, but I have a hard time rating it just on its own merits. This book is the true final book of the core Valdemar series, and so I can't help but give it an extra star out of affection and respect for all that came before it.

Every last bit of plot that had been laid down since *Arrows of the Queen* comes to a head in *Storm Breaking*, the final book of the "main canon" of the Valdemar novels. The answers to all the mysteries of the *Cataclysm*, the *Mag*e of Silence, *Lake Evendim* and the *Dorisha Plains*, the history of the *Shin'a'in* and the *Taleydras*, the barrier of *Iftel*, the *Eastern Empire*, the fate of *Hardorn*, the ultimate purpose of *Need*, and every single character who ever really mattered to the series is present in one way or another in this book. It's the end to so many things and ...

... sadly, it doesn't conclude them all as well as it should.

I really admire the fact that Misty is clearly trying to go outside of her comfort zone, but she might have been better off staying inside at this one. She's at her best writing about a core group of characters, and while the final sendoff to this world and this cast of hundreds **DESERVES** a big, grand ensemble cast, Lackey fumbles a bit while trying to maintain tension and pacing throughout many different concurrent plots and characters. This book, like the previous two novels in this trilogy, could have stood to have been twice as long. It's as long as most of her other books, but four times as much happens in this. *Storm Breaking* has even less focus than the previous too as it shifts away from primarily being about *Karal*, *An'desha*, *Firesong*, and *Tremane*, and greatly expands the pool of characters to include returning favourites from every series before it. And as much as I loved *Need*, *Vanyel*, *Stefan*, *Yfandes*, the *Avatars*, *Tarma*, *Kerowyn*, *Elsbeth*, *Gwena*, *Darkwind*,

and Vree all getting their moments in the sun, there just weren't enough words and pages to fit them all with satisfaction. In addition, the Empire plot in its entirety could have just as well not existed. Melles and Charliss took up a lot of the book while not really having any payoff, or even a long history in the series that needed concluding. They just sort of took up space that could have been better used to fix the pacing in the other plots.

But despite the odd pacing and the sudden ending, Mercedes Lackey manages to tie up every single loose end in this MASSIVE world without anything actually feeling out of place. Some of the revelations, particularly about how the Star-Eyed and the Sun Lord relate, and the true history of Iftel, are fist-pumping moments for people who have been following the series from the start, and it's immensely satisfying to see every separate meandering thread from over the years weave back into this final tapestry.

And you can't talk about the Storms books without talking about Valdemar, who is possibly Lackey's best realized character in the entire series. His long, long arc finally reaches a satisfying conclusion, and tracing him back to the hotshot who first showed his face at k'Sheyne vale in Winds of Change is a great feeling. I have always loved the ending he's been given and how he learns to accept love where he can find it and respect himself for more than his looks. This trilogy is more about Firesong than it is about Karal or An'desha, and Firesong gets a hell of a satisfying ending.

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### **Kristy Halseth says**

While I reread these every few years, I think my rating went down this time. There was too much happening in too many places and it felt like most were handled too briefly. The ending was far too abrupt. The best parts of this book were with the Empire and Hardorn. Tremaine was interesting but, as usual, I find Elspeth very annoying. The book was much less satisfying than most of the books are. Although, getting rid of some of the characters that were too powerful and could likely solve everyone's problems too easily was probably a good idea. There were so many mages by the end of this set of books that you suddenly understood Vanyel's actions in making people forget about mage-gift.

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### **Daniel Millard says**

Storm Breaking picks up very tidily after the minor cliffhanger ending of Storm Rising, and proves to be just as enjoyable. While I still admit some confusion concerning all of the mage storms that are the books' inspiration, and while I actually find the "main focus" of this book (Karal, An'desha, Firesong, and company in Urtho's tower) to be the most boring/routine component of the story, it's an overwhelmingly good climax for the story arc.

More time is spent back in the empire, and I love the political intrigue that both Emperor Charliss and Melles are engaged in. My greatest regret of this whole trilogy is that the tension here is largely unresolved and left a complete mystery, though it is implied that the empire will not be in any condition to assail the western nations for quite some time.

Grand Duke (now King of Hardorn - spoilers) Tremaine's storyline continues to be an excellent subplot, and it blossoms full in Storm Breaking to reveal (at last!) the nature of Iftel, the heretofore silent and mysterious neighbor to Valdemar's north. News of Iftel is something I've been itching for for ages, and Lackey delivered in royal fashion. Definitely one of the high points. Actually, after all of the subterfuge in the empire and the Hardorn/Iftel/Karse/Valdemar interactions, the climax of the book is almost underwhelming - which Lackey

may have well realized, considering how brief it turned out to be.

Disappointing on a few counts, but quite satisfying on others, Storm Breaking feels like it has its priorities a little out of order, but as it is one of the author's earlier books, I think it is quite enjoyable. Worthy of a re-read, and thus far, this has my strongest recommendation for best Valdemar trilogy.

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### **Susan Pola Staples says**

review later. this was a reread

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### **Ward Bond says**

As Storm Breaking opens, the western allies, led by Karal, Karsite Sunpriest and delegate to the Valdemaran Court, and the Adepts Firesong and An'desha, have traveled deep into the Dorisha Plains to locate the ancient ruins of the Tower of Urtho, Mage of Silence, creator of the gryphons. Legend has it that below the Tower, deeply buried beneath the plains, is Urtho's Vault, hidden stronghold of some of the most powerful magical weapons ever devised -- weapons that Urtho himself felt were too dangerous to use. With the help of the Shin'a'in plainsmen, they have successfully excavated this ancient arsenal, and risked their lives triggering one of these antique but potent tools of death to unleash a monstrous burst of mage-energy. With this explosion of magical power, Karal, Firesong, and their companions have temporarily counteracted the ever-increasing waves of the mage storms. But they know that this desperate action will not save them -- they have bought themselves precious time, but are still far from a permanent solution. They know now that the mage storms are an "echo" through time of the prehistoric Cataclysm which destroyed Urtho's Tower, created the vast and barren Dorisha Plains, and permanently warped their world more than two thousand years ago. And they also know that if they don't find a way to banish these magical vibrations they will culminate in another Cataclysm -- this time destroying their world for good. But the Vault is not the only thing buried for centuries below the Dorisha Plains, and camped in the ruins of what once was the workplace of the most ingenious mage their world has ever known, the desperate allies soon come to realize that their solution may lie beneath the dust at their feet. The saving of their world just might be accomplished by the work of a man who has been dead for millenia!

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### **Megan Cutler says**

This book is weak as the ending of a trilogy, but as the wrap up to a long running series it's downright inadequate. This book is full of dense info dumps describing what's going on in the world. These updates consume so much page time, that there's little room for character development or interaction. So much of this book is internal monologue that it's a relief to see anyone interacting even if those interactions are ultimately useless.

It really feels like the author didn't have enough material left for a third book, but had to make it stretch to finish out the trilogy. The characters spend most of the book having no idea how to solve their problem, and reiterating all the reasons why that is. About halfway through the book they start considering divine intervention and its pitfalls, which feels like a cop out even for a fantasy world that has established divine

intervention as plausible. The novel's actual plot is crammed into the last 150 pages or so and is woefully underwhelming.

In the end, the story doesn't even check back with the two places which would have been most affected by the book's events. Perhaps my expectations were a bit high, but then one expects a lot after 20 some books in a series.

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### **Victoria says**

Mercedes Lackey's Valdemar series provides one of the cornerstones of my reading history. After discovering her when quite young, I still follow new additions to the series - nearly twenty years later! I read and re-read these books over and over again throughout my youth, but I haven't re-read this series in its entirety in a long time - and never as an adult. There are some new books added to the series since the last time I read them, so this re-reading project is pretty exciting for me since it will include these new volumes, and will be in a new order. These books really just remind me of being young, reading them in the back seat of the car on family road trips... I think I was in 4th or 5th grade when I first started reading them, and they've always been a pleasure to re-read - and I am sure this will continue to be the case! The Valdemar series is broken up into (for the most part) separate trilogies. In my re-reading project, I am going to try to read them chronologically - not by publication date, but by their timeline within the series.

This final book of the Mage Storm trilogy is truly a bittersweet conclusion. It is a (mostly) happy ending for all and a lot of fun to read, but it's hard to believe that it is truly over... I read this in more or less one sitting - bathroom breaks for the puppy were about my only distraction. And though I knew how all the sadness was going to settle around the characters, I continue to hold onto the hope that some day Lackey will pick up her pen and address those left in the immediate aftermath of this book... Unfortunately, the remaining books in the series do not follow this trilogy as closely as the other few trilogies flow together. I do seem to recall that Firesong makes a cameo appearance in the "Owl" trilogy that follows this, but from what I otherwise remember about that trilogy, is little beyond my intense disappointment. But, I suppose that re-reading them could change my initial opinion - especially since I do not think I have ever re-read them! And at least, after finishing those, I have the brand new Collegium mini-series to look forward to! But someday, I would love to read a real continuation from this book!!

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### **Kirsti says**

Ah, a very satisfying ending to what was overall a great series. All the characters had their part to play and some of the questions I had from other series are answered in this one. I read parts of this series out of order when I was younger, and am only just catching up now (Still reading them out of order though, haha!) Now I understand more, I'm going to enjoy my favorite book (Owlflight) even more the next time I read it!

Now all I need to do is choose what to read next! Five stars for this one, a great conclusion.

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### **Ruthie says**

I've been working my way through Mercedes Lackey's books one by one since one of my best friends told me how much she loves them. I quickly fell in love with Valdemar, the Heralds and their Companions, and

the magic of these books! I do have admit, however, that this wasn't one of my favorites of her books.

I just don't think I ever really got into The Mage Storms Trilogy as much as I did The Heralds of Valdemar Trilogy or The Last Herald-Mage. I think part of it is just that there is a lot of time spent on the Empire, which makes sense because of the story, but I don't enjoy the parts about the Empire, and the mindsets there, as much as I do the parts about out other nations.

Having said that, I did enjoy how this book delves more into how magic works in Valdemar and the surrounding lands, and it was good to watch them find the solution to the Mage Storms that had been ravaging the lands. I particularly liked that one of the characters (Karal) was willing to pursue love, albeit tentatively, even though they had no idea if any of them were going to survive the last storm. I love the value that puts on love, for no matter how long it lasts.

I'm giving this book 3 stars, it is good writing and expands the world and our understanding of it more, but it just wasn't one of my favorites of her books.

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## **Dwayne Tranbarger says**

### **Storm Breaking**

The sacrifice of a few saved them all from the storms from the past. The Empire is corrupt and will need to be watched. Iftel will be a valued ally May there days be filled with joy

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## **WillowBe says**

I really would like to give it 4 and a half. By the end, I found it quite affecting, esp Karal's encounters with the Sun/Son. The magical animals, I'm not so in love with, but by the end, I was OK with the more intellectual ones. I ain't never gonna love no gryphons though. And Larry Dixon's artwork- they deserve to half half a star left off just for having to look at those terrible drawings which simultaneously removed some of the wonder, yet did help you get an idea of what these creatures looked like. But if you go on and on and on about how handsome guys are, they need to be drawn as good-looking!! I was also a bit disappointed more wasn't made of Vanyel, but it's not his book and it does give closure to his story. He and Yfandes and Stefen deserved to rest.

Reading this book really helped me understand the Valdemar series. I could now start again and read it all from start to finish. I doubt I will given that very nasty things happen to characters in her earlier books. I have been reading books piecemeal and not really understanding who the Hawkbrothers or the Taleydras or the Shinian were. I understand their place in the pantheon now.

I am encountering a problem that I think many people who read fantasy heavily must- I am getting very confused with all the different worlds I must remember even among authors. The Bardic voices series, which I didn't really like has confused me somewhat. And all the Valdmar stories written by other authors- I've read all those books which amounts to about a hundred extra Valdemar stories which aren't woven into the main narrative but can confuse you as you recall echoes of - but didn't "X" happen to him/her? So tackling the whole oeuvre from start to finish, when I am really bored with absolutely nothing in my life going on could be an option.

