



The Oracle's Queen

Lynn Flewelling

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Under the rule of a usurper king, the realm of Skala has suffered famine, plague, and invasion. But now the time for the rightful heir has come, a return to the tradition of warrior queens. And the Lightbearer's prophecy is to be upheld at last: so long as a daughter of the royal line defends and rules, Skala will never be subjugated.

Now a mystical fire has burned away the male body known as Prince Tobin, revealing Princess Tamir, a girl on the verge of womanhood-and a queen ready to claim her birthright after a life in disguise under the protection of wizards and witches. But will her people, her army-and the friends she was forced to deceive-accept her? Worse, will the crown's rival heir, friend to Tobin, turn foe to Tamir, igniting civil war in a fierce battle for Skala?

The Oracle's Queen Details

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From Reader Review The Oracle's Queen for online ebook

Kat Hooper says

Originally posted at FanLit:
<http://www.fantasyliterature.com/revi...>

The Oracle's Queen is the final novel in Lynn Flewelling's TAMIR TRIAD, an epic story about a queen who has been prophesied to rule the land of Skala. To prevent the emergence of this queen, the king, who usurped the throne by killing his own female family members, has killed all the noble women and girls who could possibly challenge him. He doesn't know that his own sister's daughter has been hidden by dark magic and a heinous murder.

In the first novel, The Bone Doll's Twin, we watch this little girl grow up as a boy named Tobin. Tobin struggles with gender identity, the madness of his mother, the ghost of his murdered twin brother, the confusion and guilt of his father, and the need to deal with his uncle the king. It's pretty compelling. In Hidden Warrior, the second novel, Tobin has learned that he's really a girl. While this explains a lot about the weirdness of his life, the knowledge causes him all sorts of other issues — the gender identify issue is most prominent. Can someone who's been thinking of himself as a boy all his life switch to being a girl? Fortunately, Tobin has time to adjust because he still must act like a boy until it's time to reveal himself as the rightful queen.

The Oracle's Queen begins where Hidden Warrior ended — with Tobin being transformed into a girl in public and claiming to be the prophesied queen. Now the nobles are forced to choose sides — will they be loyal to the king and the son he pronounced as his heir, or will they realize that Tamir must be crowned so that the land can be healed? Tamir's friends — Prince Korin's Companions — must also choose sides between Prince Korin and Princess Tamir. For me, this was probably the most gripping part of the story in this last book of the trilogy. These boys (and, covertly, a few girls) have been training for years to fight for their prince and this is not how they expected it to happen.

Most of the plot of The Oracle's Queen involves the war that ensues after Tamir is revealed and, at this point, the story isn't remarkably different from so many other epic fantasies. There's a long slow build-up involving lots of strategizing, war preparations, troop movements, etc. There's an oracle, visions, a race of helpful fae, and an evil wizard to defeat. Frankly, I thought much of this was dull, simply because it moved slowly and was reminiscent of so many other fantasy epics. I was further disappointed that, to try to secure her throne, Tamir resorted to some of the same ruthless tactics as her uncle had.

The other part of the story involves Tamir's personal life. She is still trying to satisfy the ghost of her murdered twin (who we keep thinking is gone and at peace until he shows up again). She is also trying to learn to be a woman. Some of this is the little stuff, like learning to walk in a dress or how to style her hair, but other aspects of this new life are monumentally important for Tamir, especially her relationship with her best friend and squire Ki. She's known for quite a while that she's in love with Ki but his world is turned upside down when he finds out that she's a girl. He feels like he's lost his best friend and he has trouble thinking of her romantically. The angst this causes both of them goes on a bit too long and makes up a significant part of the plot.

If you've read and enjoyed the previous books in THE TAMIR TRIAD, you'll definitely want to read The Oracle's Queen since it successfully brings Tamir's story to a close. While I did enjoy the story as a whole, I couldn't help but think it would have been better if condensed into only two volumes. Again, I recommend Audible Frontiers' version which is read by Victor Bevine.

Katy says

I think this was actually the weakest of the trilogy, but still enjoyable. I will be reading more by this author.

Travis Foster says

4.5 really. This series is so wonderful.

Felicia says

I forgot I read this series a few years back and LOVED it. Definitely one of my faves.

Ais says

Okay, fair warning that 1) this review is actually for the whole series because I read it all at once, and 2) this is a review I rediscovered that I wrote in 2010 right after finishing the series. As a result, I honestly don't remember enough specifics about the series to say whether I would feel exactly the same way about the series today or whether my opinion might change. Please keep those both in mind when reading this review.

Also note I tried to avoid spoilers but even at the time of writing the review I couldn't remember what happened when so there may be spoilers for the series or even the end. Proceed with caution.

Last fair warning: as usual, I wrote a lot so you may find this to be tl;dr.

Overview of what the series is about:

(view spoiler)

This is what I thought about the series after finishing it:

(view spoiler)

In thinking back, between my memory of how I felt finishing the series and the bits that came to my mind when rereading my review, I'm not sure if I would rate this series 4 stars or even a bit higher at 4.5.

Jenifer Thomas says

Overall a pretty great series, however, the final book is the weakest out of the three. The characters, as usual, were written very well, but this occasionally caused the attention to stray away from the main characters and onto the supporting cast. Tamir's angst and forceful feelings towards Ki is probably what made a majority of scenes in the novel painful to read and a relief when a chapter switched to a different character's perspective. Moreover, using Ariani's ghost as a force to push their relationship to the next level, in my eyes, was cheaply done. I liked their relationship a great deal better when Ki was a loyal squire and his love for Tamir was only that of friendship. Their rapid development into lovers was more than odd. Additionally, Tamir also undergoes a startling development from Prince to Queen. Though Tamir emerges as a steadfast leader, and still harbors Tobin's moral compass, her pride seems to have dissolved some, leaving her weeping throughout the book more than I would like.

Also, two themes seemed to fly out the window in this one -- female empowerment and sacrifice (i.e. you can't have it all). Tamir appeared to be the only strong female character in the final installment, as the roles of other strong female characters severely diminished (like Una, Lytia, and even Iya for example). Granted, Nalia summoned enough courage to push Niryn out of the window, but she still was a submissive, fearing woman until the end. And as extremely satisfying as it was reading about the surprising twist where the bastard flying out of the window, I would like to point out it did not compensate for the predictability for the remainder of the book. After inevitably winning the war, Korin dies and his remaining force surrender. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of nameless nobles and soldiers die, whereas Ki and a majority of the 'good' important characters, remarkably live. With the exception of Ki, most of them seem to have got away minor or no injury.

Bottom line, I would recommend the first two books, then tell you to read the third only for closure.

Jiny S says

[
I cannot sympathize with the protagonist. Sure she had a tough childhood but she is so protected and loved by everyone and nothing bad ever happens to her there isn't really a struggle of any kind. Everything is on her side: her people support and love

Erin says

While I did *like* both of the previous books in the series... there were some things in there that really bothered me, even at the time. Among them were the treatment of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and rape as being traumatizing and horrible whenever *men* are the perpetrators, but easily shrugged off and even leading to sexyfuntimes when it's female-on-male—which is sadly not even the first time that this particular author has had this particular problem. (Tanil is suffering from severe PTSD and is left a complete wreck after being raped by Plenimaran soldiers, but Arkoniel's response to being assaulted by Lhel is to eagerly keep running back for more?) Then, in this book, there's Tamir's transition—regardless of what the author might have

intended, it's impossible not to read her as a transgender character, and let's just say that some of the ways in which her transition is treated can get more than a little reeeeeaaaaally uncomfortable.

The single biggest problem (and, not incidentally, the reason I've been so iffy on which pronouns to use) is that, out of all the significant milestones on Tamír's journey from boy to woman, not a single one of them was undertaken on her own initiative. She was assigned male at birth, by people who were fully aware of her true sex—albeit with the caveat that this was done to protect her, but then again it never was adequately explained *why* they couldn't just hide her away in the mountains or take her to Aurënen or *something* until she was of an age to take her rightful place, and let her twin brother live under the pretense that he was the only child who'd been born that night, beyond a vague mumbled "It's the will of the gods".

(The excuse that they *had* to disguise her as a boy to keep Erius from finding her, Because Reasons, falls flat on its face when it's revealed that *another* wizard had saved *another* girl of the blood and successfully kept her hidden in a remote area long enough for her to reach adulthood without once having to resort to forcible misgendering or to murdering a baby—and this is from one of the *villains* of the story. And sure, Niryn had more resources and the king's favor at his disposal, but *Arkoniel* sure didn't have much of a problem keeping himself hidden despite not having access to any of those things; nor did Lhel, right under the heroes' noses—between them and Iya, they *surely* could have managed to hide one little girl as well. *The literal villain is doing a better job of this than the literal heroes.*)

Tamír never *realized* that she was a girl, she was *told*, and by the same people who'd wrongfully assigned her to begin with. Her coming out was again handled by other people, not because *she* was ready but because the gods were. (We never do learn a whole lot about Sakor, Dalna, or Astellus, but I've seen enough at this point to be convinced that Illior at least is a bloodthirsty *monster*.) The same thing happened with her transition, which she undertook only because other people had *told* her to, after these same people had kept the means from her to prevent her from taking this step without their say-so. Even her new *name* is imposed on her from the outside, bestowed on her by the ghost of a dead queen.

This continues in the way that she presents even after transitioning. In the first and second books, she showed interest in dolls, fancy dresses, and boys 100% on her own initiative, and I actually *believed* that she *genuinely was interested*. In this one, though, Tamír is all but forced into a dress she explicitly does not want to wear when she's already extremely uncomfortable and still adjusting to her changed body solely because Iya tells her that she *has* to—because she's a girl now, and girls wear dresses whether they like it or not, because that's the only way other people will know that they're girls, see, and believe me there's no quicker way to saddle a girl with a lifetime of internalized sexism and a deep misogynistic resentment of all things feminine. This continues in a myriad of other different ways: she's deeply uncomfortable with her new body, resents that she now has to squat to pee, feels sick at the sight of her altered genitals, is terrified by the thought of pregnancy (once again knowing that she *has* to secure the succession eventually without any regard to what *she* wants), and even outright states at one point that she doesn't feel like a girl, but like a boy in a dress.

I can't speak for trans people, but... just going from my gut, this whole thing strikes me as being really uncomfortable, and the exact opposite of empowering. It seems that far from showing a legitimate representation of an empowered transgendered character, or even simply of an empowered *character*, the book instead forces Tamír into exactly the sort of oppression faced by transgendered people in real life, where gender assignment is something that's imposed on them from the *outside* and their own voices in who they are and what they want don't matter.

Even looking at Tamír not as a trans girl, but simply a girl... a lot of those same problems are still there, where she's being forced into clothes she doesn't want to wear and being pushed into motherhood without regard to whether or not she wants it or to her deep visceral fear of what it will entail. And, for the record: *yes*, we need more stories that acknowledge that femininity and competence are not mutually exclusive, and

that it's possible to be a mother *and* a warrior or a leader. *But*, I am getting thoroughly sick of narratives that push girls into feminine pursuits that they have no interest in, or aren't ready for, or explicitly *don't want*, make them learn to like it after realizing they have no say in their own bodily autonomy, and then call it "empowering".

Start forcing your *boys* into dresses Because Tradition, *then* I'll start believing how ~important~ it is.

As if that wasn't enough, the resolution of Brother's arc was an exercise in extreme frustration. Again and again Tamír complains that Brother and the Oracle do nothing but drop oblique hints and won't ever give her a straight answer concerning what happened to him—yet they *both* told her *exactly* what she needed to do in order to *get* a straight answer: *ask Arkoniel*. And yeah, I get that she's putting it off because there's still a part of her that doesn't *want* to know—but not wanting to know wasn't what she was complaining about, and she's rescinded all right to complain that no one is giving her any *answers* if she won't *seek* them.

Iya also had some nerve equating Tamír's upset over having her body altered without her consent—*twice!*—coming to terms with the fact that she's going to have to kill her beloved cousin and fight against old friends in order to take the throne, and learning that her longtime mentors and protectors were responsible for the murder of her infant brother, to a spoiled child's ungrateful whining, and not "accepting one's destiny" (in other words, blindly following the bloodthirsty gods' nonsensical mandates) to spineless cowardice! Iya supposedly "gave Tamír her life"—*what*, exactly, did she give up? While Arkoniel and Lhel were putting in the actual time and effort to teach her and keep her safe, Lhel cutting herself off from her own people to do so, Iya was off gallivanting around Skala and spreading rumors of something that most of the other wizards had already seen through visions *anyway*. At least when Lhel did that she had actual *grounds* to claim that the gods aren't fair to anyone and that she made great sacrifices too!

Tamír is, what, fifteen?, recently had a huge responsibility dumped on her shoulders with very little preparation and has been constantly breaking her back in order to *fulfill* that duty, has just had her entire identity rewritten on others' say-so, and has never, at any point since the day of her birth, had even the slightest bit of autonomy over her own life. If anyone has the right to complain right now, it's her. So yeah, a scene that was probably intended as Iya pushing Tamír to take the reins of responsibility instead came off as yet *another* instance of women and girls being accused of being "selfish" for daring to spare even the tiniest amount of thought for their own wellbeing out of the neverending self-sacrifice for others that's seen as nothing short of a divinely mandated duty. I'd always seen Iya as somewhat hardened, but still a good person who was willing to do bad things for the long view, but this was the point where I lost all sympathy for her.

Still, even so, there was a part of me that was inclined to show this book sympathy, because Lynne Flewelling *can* still write epic battles, and she can write the really emotionally charged conflicts, and she did at least make sure to tie up all of the loose ends (I have read *Stalking Darkness*, so I do know how the bowl thing eventually goes). *Then*, though, I got to the part where Tamír finally agreed to let Mahti heal her from the last vestiges of the transformation, and it basically amounted to... "Let's make her accept her birth sex as her true gender once and for all! Oh yes, and how about we prepare her for having babies while we're at it!"

Just... why? It would be entirely different if the author had *ever* managed to convey that this was something that Tamír actually *wanted*. Instead, it's just another thing that she ends up being pushed into. Like she's been pushed into first one gender identity that doesn't match how she feels, and then *another* gender identity that doesn't match how she feels. Like she's been pushed into clothes she doesn't want to wear, a role that's in direct opposition to all of her previous loyalties, and a marriage that she's not ready for. I think that Lynne Flewelling probably *intended* to write an empowered female character. Instead, she ends up just as trapped and subject to others' dictates as poor Nalia.

Linda ~ chock full of hoot, just a little bit of nanny ~ says

TW: Transphobia, transmisogyny, misogyny, war/detailed descriptions of battles and aftermath of torture.

This is a satisfying conclusion to the Tamir Triad, though it does suffer from You Know How It Ends. As well written as the battle sequences are and the final showdown between Tami and Corrin, it didn't have as much tension as it might have if it really was a toss up instead of a predestined certainty. What tension there is comes from not knowing who (other than Tamir and Corrin, and possibly Iya and Arconiel) survives the battle or not. Let me tell you, I was worried about Ki! (view spoiler)

I'm still not entirely sure what to make of the transgender issues brought up through Tobin/Tamir. Granted, this is a land where transgender people simply don't exist, so it's reassuring on one hand to see how easily Tamir's people accept the change. And I totally understand why it would take Ki longer to accept the change and see Tamir as Tamir and not Tobin anymore. I can even understand Tamir's frustration with the limitations and restrictions that come from being a woman, because don't those suck, and that it took her so long to feel comfortable in her new body. The only people who slander Tamir are Corrin and his people, and that's because it threatens Corrin's claim to the throne since Skala is only supposed to be ruled by queens.

On the other hand, Tamir was born as Tamir and was always supposed to be Tamir. Tobin was the "false" persona, the "wrong" gender, even though she was raised believing she was a boy for the first twelve or so years of her life. So was it Tobin who was the transgendered person, who then got replaced with the "real" gender when Tamir's body was "corrected"? It can get pretty dicey when you start thinking about it. I leave it up to trans* readers to decide if that was ultimately handled well or not.

It was pretty great seeing Tamir come into her own, both as a young woman and as a queen. It wasn't an easy transition, and as always I appreciated Ms. Flewelling's attention to detail. A queendom under threat by enemies far and near, after years of droughts and plague was not an easy thing to take over, but Tamir proves herself up to the task, even as she wonders herself if she can do it. And getting to see the beginnings of the Third Oreska and where Reminee will eventually be built was exciting.

As for the narration, this is another great performance by the narrator, and this recording didn't have the sound issues I experienced with *The Hidden Warrior*. There was some slight confusion on POV during the final battle sequences though. He didn't take as long to pause between POV switches as he did during the rest of the book, I think to keep the tension and the momentum up, but that resulted is sometimes not knowing who's POV I was hearing until a few lines into it.

Chris says

I must point out that overall I would give the whole series 4-5 stars. I just find this book to be weak.

Let me start with what I didn't like. I found it strange that a book that is, in part, about a woman's strength, only has one young woman. While the two older woman, who had larger parts in the first two books, are well portrayed, Tamir is surrounded by men and boys in this last book. This makes sense because she used to "be" a boy. Flewelling, however, brings back Una, but gives her such a small part and so little development that it is pointless to have her there. Una is the second least developed companion; the first would be Una's squire, who gets mentioned by name only twice. There is one female character of Tamir's age who gets some

development and that is Tamir's opposing female blood claim rival. This girl is simply the girl in the tower. It's an interesting contrast, but it falls flat because the only girl who we see doing anything is Tamir, so it makes all the other girls look weak and idiotic. (It is also a little uncertain why Tamir will make a better ruler outside of the fact that she is a girl and a better general).

What I also had problems with was the simple good/evil sectioning of the sides in the Civil War. While Tamir's confusion is wonderfully portrayed, if I were a lord, I don't know if I would believe the whole "now he's a she" story. In many ways, this idea of doubt was brushed aside so quickly that it left me slightly uncomfortable. (Though, if you see this series as YA, then it can be forgiven this flaw). Additionally, there is one plot point that does not get the full development it needs (and no, I'm not talking about the bowl), and magic plays too much of a solving role.

Despite these flaws, Flewelling does a masterful job with her two central characters of Tamir and Ki. Their confusion about what has happened is believable and well done. One gets the sense that Flewelling found their relationship more interesting than the battle for the kingdom. The relationship between the two makes up for the flaws in the novel and drives the novel onward.

Valerie says

There are so many ways in which trilogies can go wrong - either they start off great and slowly decline, or become ruined because of a third book that makes *no sense whatsoever*.

Happily, The Oracle's Queen does neither of those. In fact, this is a trilogy that got *better* as it went along (after a very solid first book!) Flewelling does an excellent job of detailing character growth, from Korin's downward spiral to Ki slowly learning to accept Tamir as she is. Some of the problems were resolved *exactly* the way I wanted them to be -- (view spoiler) -- and I was really happy with the outcome.

I also want to make note that one thing that makes this work is how *likable* Tamir is. Oftentimes, a series that revolves around the presence of a protagonist can fall apart if s/he's an asshole. Tamir isn't. She parleys, she's merciful - but if she's pushed, she won't hesitate to Screw You Up. This is one of the few times when, while reading, I actually thought, "I'd definitely support you, man."

A very satisfying conclusion - possibly one of the best I've read.

Mello ♥ Illium ★Harry★ ?Myrnin? Torin Ichimaru says

Synopsis:

Under the rule of a usurper king, the realm of Skala has suffered famine, plague, and invasion. But now the time for the rightful heir has come, a return to the tradition of warrior queens. And the Lightbearer's prophecy is to be upheld at last: so long as a daughter of the royal line defends and rules, Skala will never be subjugated.

Now a mystical fire has burned away the male body known as Prince Tobin, revealing Princess Tamir, a girl on the verge of womanhood—and a queen ready to claim her birthright after a life in disguise under the protection of wizards and witches. But will her people, her army—and the friends she was forced to deceive—accept her? Worse, will the crown's rival heir, friend to Tobin, turn foe to Tamir, igniting civil war

in a fierce
battle for Skala?

My Thoughts:

This was a good end to the triad. I liked Tamir a lot despite how stubborn she could be at times. The romance aspect was a lot more prevalent in this book compared to the first two (book 1 has none at all and in book 2, her feelings for Ki start to develop). At least the romance issues seemed to come up at appropriate times. It hurt to see how sad she was at first because Ki couldn't return her feelings at first. In the end, they ended up happy, though. I was glad of that.

The book pretty much picks up where book 2 ended. Nalia is married to Korin and sees Niryn for who he truly is, finally. We learn more about what he's put her through since then. I couldn't help but feel sorry for her. She was nothing but a pawn and Korin obviously didn't love her. He had flashes of kindness toward her throughout the book, but it seemed most of that was due to Niryn's influence. Not to mention his nightly "duty." I felt sorry for that girl, but she was strong. In the end, (view spoiler)

It seems that despite the revelation of Tobin as Tamir, the binding between her and Brother wasn't completely severed. He was still around haunting her, calling for her to avenge his death, but Tamir had no idea why. As far as she knew, he'd been born stillborn, so what was there to avenge. She eventually learns the truth after going to Afra to see the Oracle and man did she get pissed. Brother gets pissed, too since she doesn't avenge him the way that he wants and continues to torment her. Instead, she sends Iya away. Iya does make her keep Arkoniel at her side, though. That turns out to be a good thing, at least. I was disappointed that (view spoiler) We did finally get a resolution to the whole Brother issue as well as the issue with Ariani's ghost thanks to a male witch that was guided to Tamir and Arkoniel by Lhel and the Mother. That guy came in handy. Thanks to him, Tamir and the others were reunited with some of their Companions from Ero. Some of those reunions were joyous, but others were bittersweet. At least the ones that I wanted to stay alive did. Except for one. I hate that he got away, but it seems he must not have made any trouble, though he didn't get the opportunity.

Honestly, quite a bit happens in this last book. It's not my favorite in the series, but it was a good ending, I think. I'm glad the battle was saved until the end, though I would have liked to see Tamir and Ki get married and have their first time together. The epilogue made up for it a bit, at least. The journal page of Arkoniel's that Nysander found was sweet and gave a nice summary of how things ended up. It seems Skala has had years of happiness and Tamir's line continues to rule. Tamir got a happy ending, so that was what matters most to me.

Nafiza says

Oh my goodness, this had to be one of the most satisfying conclusions to a trilogy that I have ever read. It involved me fist pumping, beaming, reading breathlessly, awwing and you know, the whole spectrum of emotions. It was so so good to see Tamir come into her own as a woman, as a soldier and as a queen. It was very easy for me to forget that she was a mere fifteen at the time because the way she was written, seemed to be at least in her twenties. But experiences age a person far more and the incongruousness between Tamir's voice and her age didn't upset me at all. I had been afraid that Tamir's character may develop Mary Sue-ish qualities in the last novel but I was wrong and she continues to display the same enchanting mixture of vulnerability and world-weariness that suits her position. She doesn't stop growing in this last installment and her inability to move in the predicted lines of past rulers keeps the narrative fresh and intriguing.

I also really really appreciated how Flewelling dealt with Niryn. At first I thought it was somewhat anticlimactic and then I realized that Niryn was an instrument of the conflict but not the conflict itself. And the irony of Niryn's fate was not lost on me. It is the subtlety that plays in the narrative, enjoining one event to another, one coincidence to another fact that makes the overall story so very readable. All the characters retain their greyness and I liked how Tamir manages to stay good and not become sanctimonious. The novel has a huge cast of characters – even more than the usual novel since it is the third installment in a trilogy but Flewelling manages to keep them all real in that they could really exist. Her characterizations are wonderful.

One of my favourite parts of the novel was how the romance between Ki and Tamir is approached. I loved how it wasn't an instant attraction and culmination of that attraction. Flewelling spends time in developing and portraying the necessary confusion that arises when your best friend becomes a girl and you find yourself seeing him in ways that you don't necessarily want to.

I would recommend this trilogy to anyone who likes high fantasy. I think you could easily term this one of the better young adult high fantasy trilogies (though it is not exactly marketed in that way, it can be seen as part of the YA genre since its protagonists are young adults, I think). The trilogy is more complex and more mature than what is normal to the genre but I think this is a good thing rather than bad. Read this especially if you like strong heroines with a dash of vulnerability and wonderful world building. Strongly recommended.

Sandi says

I thought *The Tamir Triad* was excellent. I must forewarn that the books should be read together because they really do form one story, not three stories that tie together.

I really liked the pacing of the story. With the exception of a rather lengthy discussion of the main villain's youth in the third book, it never lets up. Every action leads to the next in a realistic way.

I especially like how Flewelling dealt with the concept of gender identity, sexuality and growing up. Her protagonist is understandably mixed up and Flewelling handles it in a way that is quite believable. How much would it screw with a kid to grow up thinking he's a boy when she's really a girl? *The Tamir Triad* gives new meaning to "a boy trapped in a girl's body". I thought the issues surrounding Tobin/Tamir's puberty and adolescence were handled particularly well. It rang true and wasn't shocking in the least. The series had some great messages in it about friendship, love, compassion and understanding.

Although this is a series about a child/teen, it is absolutely an adult series, in my opinion. I recommend it for high school and older.

Sherwood Smith says

This book is the last in a trilogy. The reader is highly encouraged to get the first two books.

Mahti, a hill mage, comes down from the mountains in search of the girl who was once a boy. His form of magic is neither predictable nor easy; we don't know whether or not to trust his vision or his motivations when we remember that in the first book in this series, it was this kind of magic that bound a pair of newborn twins--so that the girl could grow up in his body, the boy was sacrificed. This was a necessity the mages were driven to due to the Herodic excess of the king Erius, who was slaughtering his female relatives. He was determined to contravene the prophecy declaring that the kingdom of Skala could only thrive with a

queen on the throne.

And Skala has gone steadily downhill under kings. Due to mage interference Erius's son, Korin, has only succeeded in fathering monstrously deformed children--until his beloved princess dies. The kingdom is invaded by warlike people; Erius is finally killed in battle; and Korin reveals that despite his looks, strength, first-rate training, and supporting friends and companions, he is no leader.

The battle is saved by Tamír--who has recently discovered that she is in fact a girl--and it's not saved through her wishing hard, or through convenient magic goodies, but because she has gone through the same hard training as Korin, while she wore her boy's body, only she has learned, step by step, the difficulties of command. And the costs.

And that's where the third book opens. Tamír is now a girl, and a queen--but she's not left to sit idly on a throne and charm all who see her. Instead, she has to get used to being a girl while coping with the detritus of battle, and of a war-torn kingdom. Under threat from beyond its borders.

She also has to deal with Korin, who was once her friend. He cannot believe in her transformation--a decision fostered by the mage Niryn, who has his own motivations for doing what he does. Korin is forced into marriage with Nalia, and if he can just get her pregnant, Niryn convinces him everything will be resolved. When you are not a leader, it's with relief you listen to single-cause 'solutions' to complicated problems, and thus the hapless Korin is as used as he is a user.

Meanwhile, drifting as an angry ghost through all three novels, is Brother--the twin who never got to taste life. He has his own motivations and desires, and Tamír has to come to terms with them. He is, after all, her brother.

This novel delves deeply into the psychological effects of razzle-dazzle magic, thrones, swords, and the rest. Tamír isn't gorgeous--she's ordinary--and she has to come to terms with the physical aspects of being a girl. So do her friends. And the mages. And the people of high and low degree.

Everyone in this book has believable motivations--including the evil Niryn, whose road to evil is explained early on. And keep your eye on the supposedly helpless Nalia, princess in the tower. Meanwhile, Tamír has to face the Oracle, bringing her full circle with the magic that put her in her current place.

She has to deal with events that are inexorable forcing her toward battle with Korin--and that includes facing with steel many former friends. And, she has to deal with the emotional fallout of turning into a girl just about the time she and her best friend, Ki, have hit their mid teens, and their feelings were already in turmoil.

Magic, mystery, politics, emotions, and rare golden threads of the numinous all make this book a rich tapestry of a read right through the climax that Tamír so wanted to avoid, but must win. There is never an easy answer in this book: the trilogy is a must for those who love fantasy with all the Good Stuff stitched together by intelligent world-building and a wise eye for the frailties, and the greatnesses, of the human spirit.

Kaila says

[being pushed out of a window. (hide spoile

Peggy says

The perfect ending to a great trilogy. In some ways it felt stretched, but it was all worth it in the end for Tamir (formerly Tobin) and Korin's final battle. Also, the author did not shy away from showing how strange it must be to have your best friend suddenly change gender in front of you. Ki and Tamir's relationship is wonderfully complicated and angst-filled.

Tamar says

3.5*

It was a good book but it could be great!

It feels to me that the author decided to write ya book to complete this trilogy.

Still, I really enjoyed this trilogy.

Algernon says

[7/10]

The conclusion to the Tamir Triad is a satisfying one, solving the war of succession for the throne of the Skalan Empire in a spectacular battle that shows how Lynn Flewelling is capable not only of creating interesting magic systems and of raising gender issues in a fantasy setting, but also of managing a furious and extended action sequence.

The road to this battle was sometimes slow though and took a lot of detours into romance and moral dilemmas instead of nation re-building. I liked the young Queen Tamir a lot and sympathised over her struggle to become a woman after a childhood spent convinced she was a boy. Her companions and allies were also engaging and well drawn, but I was honestly expecting events to move at a faster pace than in the first two books. My expectations were also confounded by insistent hinting at a larger conflict with the Plenimarans, the neighboring nation of necromancers, a bigger war that was ultimately left pending for a later series.

The things that I liked in the first two books of the series are still here: carefully developed young characters that struggle with gender identity as they are undeniably attracted to one another (Tamir and Kyrothius); blood and ghost magic that is integral to the plot; some flashes of humour to relieve the dark theme; good writing that even if doesn't excell in metaphors or clever turns of phrase is nevertheless clear and evocative of the passions and dreams of the heroes of the story.

The things that bothered me before are also present : the continuing use of prophecy and predestination trumping free will; the generic villains; the predictability of the plot for all its original setting (view spoiler)

I have been having trouble giving high ratings to final books in epic fantasy series before, so often that it made me think it is a personal issue of being more interested in the exploration of new worlds and new magics than in end-of-the-world-as-we-know-it wars or happy ever after conclusions. Flewelling managed to steer clear of both extremes, the grimdark and the Disneyland, and so she probably deserves more than the three stars here and a more detailed exploration of the gender issues central to this epic. The overall score for the Tamir Triad is actually an easy four star and I have no hesitation recommending it to fans of fantasy adventures looking for some originality and a bit of romance. I may be even interested to start on her second series, **The Nightrunner**, which I understand is set on the same world but on a different timeline. The only thing stopping me is that I'm not sure when this second series will be concluded.

Tracey says

The story begins (two books earlier) with a kingdom where the god has decreed that rule must be held by a queen of the blood. He meant it; the few times a man has usurped the throne there have been plagues, famines, and other signs of deific displeasure. However, the last queen was completely mad, and her son wound up with the crown as his sister was too young to rule... and then it turned out the sister had inherited a bit of the mother's mad streak... The king was a good ruler, and beloved despite the plague and invasion and bad harvests (he was better than his mother had been), and, well, female offshoots of the blood just sort of started disappearing. It was a definite pattern of elimination, though no one dared voice the observation (there was a wizard at work there), and finally the god gave a vision to a wizard of more loyalty to the land: the king's sister was pregnant, and would have twins, a girl and a boy. The only way to restore the throne to a queen would be to make it appear that nature did the king's work: that the girl was stillborn. In reality the task that was set before them was terrible: the boy, perfectly healthy, must die, and the girl must take on his appearance until the time she might take the crown.

Naturally, nothing goes smoothly - there is an interruption just as the boy is born, and the witch midwife does not smother him quickly enough - he has time to draw a first breath, which in this world is all that is needed to create a demon/ghost. And boy does it...

The trilogy follows the life of the "boy", who is until puberty totally ignorant of his true birth, as is everyone else in the world but the parents, two wizards, the midwife, and the wetnurse. The revelation, the transformation, the battle for the kingdom - that's the trilogy, and I loved every word. With some books I skim because I'm bored; with these there were places I galumphed through the pages and missed chunks just because I wanted to know what happened next. These books were nearly perfect.
