



Wings of Wrath

C.S. Friedman

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The dark and mesmerizing *Magister* saga continues...

Wings of Wrath is the second novel in C. S. Friedman's *Magister* trilogy—a true high fantasy replete with vampire-style magic, erotic action, war, treachery, sorcerous danger, and one of the most terrifying dragon-like creatures in fantasy. Against a backdrop of knife-edged politics and fearsome prophecies, those who are sworn to protect the human lands must discover the truth that lies at the heart of ancient legends, and find a way to defeat an enemy that once brought mankind to the very brink of destruction.

Wings of Wrath Details

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From Reader Review Wings of Wrath for online ebook

Horus says

I have enjoyed Friedman's work since I first read The Madness Season (which admittedly, I picked up because of the cover art). Her plots and characters are layered and usually complex and she has explored the theme of magic use with a price before. This book is the second of the Magister Trilogy that brings back to this particular world, beasts out of legend and a prophecy that may or may not make a difference even if it is fulfilled. I find all her writing compelling and this series is no different.

Blodeuedd Finland says

Exciting stuff. I love fantasy! I was not a fan of Kamala in book 1, but here I liked her better. I think much of my dislike had to do with poor Andovai, whom I really liked and then he died cos of her sucking the soulfire out of him. Seems Friedman sure like killing people.

Right, great world. Magisters who use magic by taking other people's lives. Witches who die by using too much magic. And a world where winged beasts from legend are coming back to suck the souls out of everyone. What is there not to like?

Kamala is right at the front lines here. Queen Gwynofar is trying to find her heritage. Her son Salvator is taking the throne (oh I hate pompous religious a'holes who think their way and God is the only way!) and then there are many more. Like the witch queen Sidarea..bitch. I am also intrigued by Magister Colivar, I was already in book 1 and here the end, oh how Friedman taunts me with riddles! I need to know what he is!

A good sequel to this saga and the epic battle will continue and surely Friedman will kill more. Because this is a dark world. Magic kills.

I read it fast. Maybe not as good as book 1, because there I was enthralled by the darkness, but still awesome enough that I need book 3. And why did I now tell the library to get it before?

Anna says

The Coldfire Trilogy counts amongst my favourite books, but even it did not get 5 stars from me, because while I love the main character, some of the concepts represented in the books seemed simplified, wooden. Well, in Wings of Wrath, these issues are more pronounced, and at the same time, I cannot relate to the main character.

Celia Friedman's world seems empty. We know nothing about the countries, the cultures, apart from those few details that are essential to drive the very simple main plot. On top, in the second volume of the Magister Trilogy, the same information is repeated again and again in the thoughts of the different characters through whose eyes the author lets us see. Furthermore, repetition of certain phrases (questions tend not to be phrased as questions but as statements with the appendix ', yes?') annoyed me increasingly.

In the world of the Magister Trilogy

- all men are sexist swine (with one or two handpicked exclusions)
- all religious people are fanatics
- everyone is distrustful and self-serving (unless they are religious fanatics)
- the main character hates all men, but is surprisingly quick to spread her legs for them
- people's actions don't always seem to originate in personal motivation but rather serve the plot by bringing them to the right place at the right time.

All in all, while some ideas (such as the soulfire fuelled Magisters) have potential, I found this book a disappointment.

Krista says

This book picks up where *Feast of Souls* left off, continuing the mystery and threat of the Souleaters. Hoping she can use knowledge of these foul beasts as a form of currency to save her immortal skin, Kamala follows Rhys, the only Guardian in modern history to slay one of the winged serpentine beasts, into the far northern territories where the Spears of the Gods stand sentinel.

Meanwhile, Salvator's recent ascent to the throne of the High Kingdom is challenged by a bloody invasion that kills most of the residents in one of his major port cities. When evidence suggests his own family has moved against him, the new High King sends his mother, Queen Gwynofar, to her homeland to ascertain the truth. Her truth-seeking mission becomes something more, though, when Rhys and Kamala return to the Lord Protector with their news of rogue Guardians and a broken Spear. Faced with such a monumental threat, the royal families call on their Royal Magisters.

Colivar, perhaps the oldest and most knowledgeable of the Magisters, is given the opportunity to observe and interact with Kamala for an extended period. While he baits her with carefully crafted phrases, he does not reveal her secrets to the other Magisters. This creates a sense of vulnerability in Kamala and makes her even more determined to gather information on the Souleaters that she can use to unwittingly enlist the other Magisters as a line of defense for the day when her true nature is revealed and her crimes are brought to bear against her.

A great deal more happens but it would spoil the books for others, so I'm going to stop there.

The one thing I have to say about this trilogy that I adore so far is the fact that there are so many powerful women in this story that are critical to the main plot points. Kamala is the first female Magister in history. She defies all gender expectations, proving that a woman can make the same kind of soul-shearing sacrifice that supposedly only men can make. She's smart, crafty, and world-wise in a heartbreaking kind of way. There is a coldness in her, a ruthlessness, that can paint her in a very unflattering light. She's perhaps the first female anti-hero that I've run across, and I love it.

Gwynofar, the physical embodiment of femininity, is often underestimated. A glance at her slender figure, delicate features, and gentle mannerisms leaves one assuming she is not a threat. Yet, she is smart, determined, willful, and brave. Her faith is strong and often guides her through her fear or uncertainty. She is the woman who can gently guide others, who can soothe the rougher edges of the most barbaric men or women.

Then there's Sideria, the Witch Queen. She is the seductress, using her feminine wiles to create alliances and garner favors with royals and Magisters alike. The most valuable and coveted favor, of course, has been the Magisters' ability to remove all traces of aging from her physical form. Discovering the physical repairs cannot replenish her waning life force, she is enraged and filled with resentment, emotions that soon become a deep-seeded hatred of the Magisters she had once courted. She craves immortality but, unlike Kamala, has not discovered its secrets on her own. This makes her prey to those who intend to use her for their own dark desires. Only this Witch Queen is still a force to contend with, as those who wish to control her soon find themselves the ones being controlled.

Although I'm sure that Colivar and the other Magisters, as well as King Salvator and the Lord Protectors, will all have a significant role to play in the concluding book, I expect that these three women will be at the center of everything. In many ways, this is a story of feminine power.

Matt Sampson says

Pretty disappointed in this installment after such a strong start with Feast of Souls.

From the middle to the end it felt very unfocused and seemed as if the POV style of the book went back and forth from 3rd person to omniscient and back. Several times I was confused by being directly in someone's head only to have them leave the scene and the chapter keep going.

Errors abound in the hardcover version too. More than I wanted to keep counting. It honestly felt as if a ghost writer helped finish this and both authors failed to connect on a mutual direction.

Really is a shame as Friedman's Coldfyre trilogy is one of my all time favorite fantasy series. Unfortunately book 3 has been moved far down the TBR list.

kari says

Move aside, "Game of Thrones". Friedman's Magisters Trilogy does all that GoT promises to do, and does it better. Political intrigue? Checked. Characters that are utter scoundrels, but you can't help liking them? Checked. Powerful magical creatures? By all means. And more importantly: while the setting is full of misogyny, it's not the usual blanket sexism overabundant in SF/F. Friedman gets to the core of the phenomenon, dissects it, and warps it in her plot. And even if she doesn't escape all tropes already worn thin, she manages a powerful narrative: dark, sexy, and leaving the reader a very real sense of danger.

Trish says

I liked this one better than the first, however, it seems that once the reader finds out all the mysteries, there is no longer anything left to write about. I mean, how many times can it be written that magisters don't like each other, hide their emotions, or act like really bad bene gesserit witches (Dune reference, yo!).

Time to say something good...

I like the way the writer slips into different points of view depending on which character is in action. Stink becomes perfume, ugly becomes beauty, evil becomes good. Where a person stands really does depend on where they sit... even if where they were sitting was completely the opposite of where they were before.

At the end, there is just enough of a hook (why can't magisters ally with other magisters?) to make me think about reading the third and last book, but I'll probably forget to read it by the time it comes out.

Maybe I'm not doing this series justice because I'm so ready to move on in other areas of my life and books tend to imprison me. I let them because I'm stubborn about finishing one once I start. Anyway, off to do something more worthwhile with my time.

Patrick Burgess says

Good But No Banana...

I heard that phrase earlier this week and I've been dying to use it for some oddball reason. What does it even mean? Why would I want a banana anyway, do I look overtly simian? *shrugs*

So... it was okay. A fair read, kinda dragged for me 'cause it kinda lost it's sparkle from the very beginning. Book 1 was the better one... Of course! Gee, it's the attack of the sophomore slump again *hiss*. I thought the main issue was going to be that a woman had finally become a Magister, but all the focus shifted to an "ancient, forgotten evil returning to enslave all of mankind... again." Why does that sound so familiar...? Maybe 'cause it is? No, it's not the Earth-Masters from Patricia McKillip's Riddle-Master of Hed. No, it isn't the Stone-Burners from Melanie Rawn's Sunrunner series. And NO it's not Threshold or Kanubai from Sara Douglass' Darkglass Mountain series. Actually, I love this premise, it's just that the approach to it in the series isn't as exciting as Kamala's story-line (which is a side plot-thread, but one that interested me FAR more than the main one). *sigh*

I hope Book 3 is better. I might read it if the blurb hooks me. Peace out...

Eve says

I enjoyed this book, but as always with series where the newest book follows at some distance from the previous, I had only a hazy recollection of what had happened in the first book. Much came back to me as I read, however. The magisters are an interesting premise and Friedman, as always, does the somewhat dark fantasy well. Don't think that this is up there with "the coldfire trilogy" or "In Conquest Born," but did enjoy this book. I'm sure I'll have totally forgotten it by the time the 3rd volume comes around!

Felicia says

Second book of this series, I was drooling for it because I LOVE CS Friedman! This is a bit of a "middle child" book, but I enjoy the world a lot. I wish I had read the first one nearer to this one to remember the world more better. I felt like I wanted to identify with some of the characters a bit more deeply than I did, but I still enjoyed it. Some really chilling scenes.

Anna Wiggins says

Not as polished as the first book, but still an enjoyable read. And what it lacks in tightly packed cohesion, it makes up for in depth of characterization: characters are driven logically by their motivations here, and are capable of changing their minds about things. They feel realistically like *people* in a way many authors neglect. (and, to be fair, this isn't the only 'good' way to write characters, but it is a compelling one)

The thematic change from survival to sacrifice was a surprise, and the coherence of those themes in each book makes me curious to see what comes next.

Kelly says

I almost gave up the series while listening to the 1st book . I am giving up on the series after finishing this book.

Blind_guardian says

An excellent continuation of book 1, and things get even more grimdark.

Izlinda says

I'm writing this review a few weeks after I read it, and I don't have it with me right now. I may misremember names. (I'm awful at them.)

I found this book an excellent continuation to the first one. I can't say if this book follows the usual pattern of the middle book being the weakest, but it definitely allows for more character development. The moral ambiguity is also interesting to ponder. I also liked that there are repercussions for some of the good guys, too, and they don't come through the battle all squeaky clean. The Magisters search for Kamala is secondary or even...well, it's not much of a plot point. I do hope to have more from them this book, especially since they were erroneous in believing her dead.

Livi says

Wings of Wrath was ultimately good, but could have been better.

The same meandering at the beginning as in Feast of Souls and the not-quite well thought out world detract from the enjoyment of the book.

Too many POV's for a book that just does not have the content and world building to support them.

The writing style is excellent as usual from Ms. Friedman, but there is a missing ingredient - probably the shallow world-building, the lack of true complexity -

Still better than most fantasy out there and I am looking forward to the last book in the series.

Viridian5 says

I quickly devoured C.S. Friedman's *Wings of Wrath* because I needed to know where it was going next. While *Feast of Souls* was Kamala's story, *Wings of Wrath* gives the rest of the cast a lot more to do and care about, and the book benefits from it. In my opinion it benefits from spending less time on the petty politics and actions of the Magisters, with the stakes *much* higher. I felt even more sympathy for Siderea this time, and I'm very happy with Gwynofar getting out of the castle and more into her own agency.

The fate of all of humanity is actually at stake, not that everyone realizes it yet. While the Guardians are still training for the prophesized return of the Souleaters, even they don't know the true origins and reasons for what they do, and this time the Souleaters are invading in a different, smarter, subtler way than anyone expected.

Wings of Wrath's mood really reminds me of 70's-early 80's fantasy-sci/fi: the darkness, the awe and beauty combined with repugnance, the involved sexuality. (It's also nice that while the book uses euphemistic terms for sexual actions you can actually understand what's going on. In some books it gets so euphemistic that it's impossible to tell.)

I'll definitely pick up the next book, *Legacy of Kings*.

Xara Niouraki says

See my review of the first book.

Martha says

good plot but, oh, my God! The editing really needed work - numerous errors, places where words were either left out entirely or both choices were included. Extremely irritating when a writer is normally as good as Friedman to find this sort of sloppiness. Why don't editors *edit* anymore?

Disastra says

If you enjoy intricate absorbing fantasy this book is not for you. Further, if you are, as am I, annoyed by a complete lack of proof reading peppering the book with instances of missing words and occasional half sentences, double typed words and two words with the same meaning used in a sentence where the author forgot to go back and delete the one she didn't need, then this book will irritate you enormously. Further adding to this irritation are the many instances of the exact same descriptive word used several times within a

paragraph, laziness unbounded.

Set in a thinly imagined world where the enemy is a very obvious copy of the mythical Dragon with the one substitution of soul eating instead of fire breathing, the story has little richness or depth. Attempts at political intrigue and machination fall far short of involving as do the sketchily written passages that deal with battle strategies.

Some plotlines peter out entirely to nothingness after much developmental backstory leaving the reader frustrated as to their purpose and consequences, whilst trivialities are expounded in lengthy detail.

This book left me cold throughout and utterly failed to inspire any investment in either characters or story.

Daniel says

I love C.S. Friedman! Wings of Wrath is the second book of the Magister trilogy, and as such pretty much sets up the finale. However the depth of Friedman's worlds is as usual excellent, and there is enough plot movement to make everyone happy. I can't recommend this book any more highly.
