



The Keeping Place

Isobelle Carmody

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'Look out,' I screamed. The flying creature lashed out and I stared in horror at Rushton's bloodied arm. Maruman leapt between us in his tyger form. 'Let me go to him!' I screamed.

'He is in a dream but the beast is not. It comes! Wake!'

After a kidnapping, Elspeth Gordie and the Misfits are forced to join the rebellion against the oppressive Council, using their extraordinary mind powers. But Elspeth must also seek out clues left by the long-dead seer, Kasanda, vital to her quest to destroy the Beforetime weaponmachines. One clue is lost in the past, forcing Elspeth to travel the Dreamtrails, stalked by a terrifying winged beast, with the cat, Maruman, as her guide and guardian. Only there can she learn more of the Beforetimer Misfits and their enemy, Govamen.

Gradually Elspeth realises her quest is intimately linked to the Misfits' refuge, Obernewtyn - its past and its future...

The Keeping Place Details

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Author : Isobelle Carmody

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From Reader Review The Keeping Place for online ebook

Noodle TheNaughtyNightOwl says

Finished reading The Keeping Place by Isobelle Carmody, Book 4 in the Obernewtyn Chronicles.

Oh, what a disappointment!

I had noted that the first 3 books were a bit of a hard slog, but they were beguiling & had moments of excellence. This one was a waste of time & 700 odd pages of drivelling twaddle. I began skipping whole chapters in the end just to finish it.

So, what does it get?

?3/10: "Finished the book but left a lot to be desired" on the NBR.

Now, do I read the fifth in the series? Or do I cut my losses now? Mmmm.

Johanna says

I am really enjoying reading the Obernewtyn Chronicles, especially after finishing the fourth installment in this series - "The Keeping Place". This young adult fantasy series is incredibly progressive in terms of its humanitarian views towards animals and humans. It is a sad warning that our prejudices are not wiped out, even when most of the world is destroyed and tainted by our ambition. At the beginning of each installment the reader is reminded that the earth has undergone a terrible holocaust caused by man-made machines. It is the ultimate warning of 'pride cometh before the fall'.

As the books become thicker, the rich tapestry that Elspeth is a part of widens. "The Keeping Place" provides more detail into the prophecy that Elspeth is central to – her role is to ensure that the world is forever rid of the dormant death machines. As Elspeth waits for the call to follow her destined path she and her fellow Misfits are drawn into the rebel uprising. The ensuing chaos is fraught with danger, treachery, and intrigue as Elspeth and the Misfits try to find their place in a hostile, post-holocaust land.

I did not anticipate how quickly I would be drawn into this series. What started out as a light holiday read is becoming a desperate attempt to finish the remainder of the series before I return to work in 2018. I would recommend this series to young and old readers alike.

Beth says

My first thought when I picked this one up was that I would just give up on this series rather than start reading this insanely long, enormous, monster of a book. But my curiosity got the better of me and I had to give it a shot because I really do like this series and do want to know what is going to happen. There were times when I considered giving up on it but then something really interesting would happen and honestly

there is some really fascinating information coming to light in this one. It is just too, too long. Overall the series is getting just a bit too drawn out and detailed. Too many characters are being introduced and I can barely keep them all straight. Lots and lots of things going on but it is just interesting enough to keep me wanting more.

Liz says

I want to give this four stars NOW, but I can't. The first two parts of the story could easily have been just one part - this book fell into the trap that a lot of fantasy books fall into. TOO MUCH DETAIL. The first part of the book just followed Elspeth around in her daily nothings with a few dreams related to the plot thrown in. The build up to their moon fair went on and on and on! It really tried my patience.

But part three - it was great! The rebellion had a lot happening at a decent pace (it probably could have been stretched out a bit more even). I don't want to say too much more about that though as any discussion would probably contain spoilers.

A major problem I had with the book though: Rushton. He was barely in it at all - so much so that when (view spoiler). I had grown to like him in the other books (though we didn't see much of him there either) but I just sort of forgot about him here, he just wasn't around enough.

I give it three and a half.

Kerry says

REREAD #1: 20 November 2015 - 23 November 2015 (9/10)

There's so much in this book. The rebellion takes place, we learn more about Elspeth's quest and the Beforetime - and how those two are linked together.

There's been a fundamental shift by the end of it, but there's still so much more to go. On my first read of the series, this was where I stopped. I was too worried about what was going to happen next and I knew the next book was the last one written at the time. This time around, I'm eager to keep going (and I've already read the first few chapters of Wavesong, which is the first half of The Stone Key, that was split in half for its original US publication). Knowing I can keep going right to the end has reduced most of my previous anxiety and turned it into anticipation. I shall carry on reading and I'm looking forward to finding out what happens next.

Ariel, and the idea of meeting up with him again and the Herders along with him, does still creep me out though. As corrupt and nasty as the Council was, I think the Herders are going to prove to be worse. Fanatics usually are.

ORIGINAL READ: Finished 3 July 2009 (9/10)

Josh says

Re-read in preparation for release of *The Red Queen*.

Shannon (Giraffe Days) says

This review contains spoilers.

Spring is arriving to the highlands, where Obernewtyn - the big sprawling mansion and farm that is home to a large group of Talented and unTalented Misfits and animals - lies protected by the mountains and a snowed-in pass, but the events of the previous year are still fresh in everyone's minds. Much has changed: understanding their pacifist nature, they have turned to devising ways of using their skills and Talents (Farseeking, Coercing, Beastspeaking, Healing, Futuretelling, Empathy and the Teknoguild) to bringing a more subtle kind of change to the Land. If they can't change people's prejudices towards Misfits, then they'll be no better off when the Rebels strike and the Council falls.

Rushton has left for a sudden and unexpected meeting with the Rebels in Sutrium, the capital, leaving Elspeth, Guildmistress of the Farseekers, in charge of Obernewtyn. She pushes aside her niggling worry that borders on premonition, by focusing on the many demands on her attention. Dragon, the wild girl Elspeth rescued from some Beforetime ruins in *The Farseekers*, still lies in her coma, locked in her recurring dream of the past that she had sealed off in her mind - only Elspeth now realises that Dragon's powerful empathy-coercer talent is letting her dreams affect everyone at Obernewtyn, and no one is sleeping well. They dream of Matthew, the Farseeker who was taken by slavers, toiling in a far-off, hot red land, and their details match. And they dream of a dragon, though no one has been attacked by it except for Elspeth. Maruman, the mad old cat who guards Elspeth's dreams, protects her as best he can.

In the half-submerged city built by the Beforetimers under the mountain Tor, the Teknoguild have worked obsessively to uncover the secrets of the past, secrets that connect Obernewtyn to the mission Elspeth is secretly on: to find and destroy the weaponmachines that brought the Great White and nearly destroyed the world, before the Destroyer finds them and activates them, ending life for good. Elspeth has come to realise that her mission and the destiny of Obernewtyn are entwined, and the puzzle of the past becomes an important part of understanding how to find the clues she needs as the Seeker. Her dreams aid her as she witnesses the past, though they are also dangerous, not just from the manifestation of Dragon's insanity, but from the Destroyer himself, who turns out to be Ariel, the beautiful but cruel Misfit who fled Obernewtyn all those years ago and now works his twisted magic on both the Council and the Herder Faction.

Rushton, on leaving Sutrium, is kidnapped, and the Misfits of Obernewtyn have been ordered to join the rebellion or he will be killed. Elspeth has no choice but to set them on the path they had collectively decided not to take. But there are traitors within the Rebel ranks, and many Rebel leaders despise the Misfits, so that they are betrayed more than once. And who kidnapped Rushton, if not the Rebels? And why - who else would want them to join forces? The answer surprises, and puzzles, them all.

Well! I can't believe I couldn't remember a single thing that happened in this massive, eventful volume, from the last - first? - time I read it when it came out in 1999. Unlike the previous three books, I think I must have read this one only once, though that seems unlikely. Maybe twice. How could I have so completely forgotten it all? Incredible. But good, because re-reading it now it was almost like reading it for the first time (I say

"almost" because, as things happened, I remembered them - but I still couldn't recall what would happen *next*, so it was full of surprises for me!).

Elspeth is about nineteen or twenty years old at this point - I'm still keeping track, because if you remember, the only time her age is mentioned is at the very beginning of *Obernewtyn*, when she's fourteen. Almost the entire first half of *The Keeping Place* is focused on Elspeth running Obernewtyn, and the dreamtrails. It's busy and richly detailed, fleshing out how the Misfits live at Obernewtyn and giving us some much-needed time with Elspeth away from dire predicaments. She's always been a wonderful and fascinating character to me, and it's very interesting to see how far she's come and how her time as an orphan - isolated, too fearful of being denounced to make any friends, and secretive - has shaped her (as well as helping her face the solitude of her task, one which she doesn't expect to survive). She now makes an effort to empathise and give comfort, though she feels awkward doing it. She's still aloof, and when they get the news that Rushton has been taken, she makes a big effort not to fall apart for the sake of Rushton and Obernewtyn, even while she knows that everyone will think her cold and unfeeling (except the Empaths, I'm sure).

I was always disappointed that this volume didn't have more Rushton in it - like, they finally get together at the end of *Ashling*, only to be separated again for almost the entire book, here. I always felt so cheated! There's a different vibe to this one, perhaps because of Rushton's kidnapping, but also because after much talk, there is action. There's a subtle kind of tension, a gnawing anxiety that something's not right - Elspeth feels it but doesn't really heed it, though for all her suspicions about the Herders, it's hard to believe that she still can't see them for the dangerous enemy that readers can clearly see. I was also surprised, and disappointed, that she couldn't see that Malik, one of the Rebel leaders, was up to something. I couldn't remember what, until it happened, but I had that sick feeling of dread that he was going to do something really bad to the Misfits, first chance he got. Elspeth had a gut feeling there too, but there wasn't much she could have done about it. Oh except realise that the trap the Misfits were going to lead the soldierguards into was also going to be a trap for them! Remember the lesson from *Ashling*, that they are nice and compassionate and humane people - bordering on naive at times, because their imaginations fail to encompass the malicious hatred of someone like Malik.

The second half is planning and action for the rebellion, and things move swiftly. I loved that the rebellion wasn't The End that solved everyone's problems: the people are so downtrodden and afraid that, as the Sutrium Rebel leader explains, you have to bring change gradually, and let the people be in charge of it as much as possible, or they won't see the difference between the Rebels and the Council that ruled before. They are putting a democratic system into place - not only does the Obernewtyn Chronicles tackle the rights of animals, or modern warfare, or human greed, or the environment - it also takes on politics, and the motivations behind power machinations. All highly relevant to our time and what our countries get up to. I love fantasy like this, the kind that subtly connects dots and, even, not so subtly waves little red flags over certain issues. I rather think that that's what fantasy is for, in a way - you've heard me go on about that before on other reviews.

This is a complex world, one that is intricately fleshed-out, and not at all predictable. The best thing is, I have reached the end of the books that I had previously read. Next up, in October, I am reading *The Stone Key*, and in November *The Sending* (the final book in the series, *The Red Queen*, isn't due out until late 2013). I have no idea what happens next but I can't wait to find out! It's so exciting!

Mel says

****All the emotions****

Oh god. Okay, I remembered this book much more than I thought I did- which I don't necessarily consider a good thing! Oh my poor heart.

I said in my review of Ashling that it's the book that seems to set everything into place. Well, this book throws a whole bunch of information at you while you scramble to try piece everything together, while at the same time try to follow along with all your favourite characters. The end of this book has a tinge of desperation to it, which -for me, anyway- leaves me aching to read the next one.

I've often struggled trying to describe these books to people. There's SO MUCH going on, and while you can break it down to just Elspeth's 'main quest' as such, in doing so you miss the opportunity to express just how *wonderful* these characters are, and just how beautiful, and sorrowful, and compassionate this story really is.

I love this series. So much.

(I've received notification that the last book will be in my hands in 8-18 days. Two pretty huge books to go. I can do this... Right? Eeeep)

Gwendolyn says

This is one of the best books I have read in a long time. As a fan of the series thus far (while only lately introduced) I had rather high expectations upon commencing, and I must say I was by no means disappointed. While arguably a little slow, and perhaps burdened with unnecessary detail at the novel's beginning, such ultimately enables the crux of the plot to take on such a superior impact that they are beyond justifiable. Isabelle Carmody not only transports readers entirely into the realms which she portrays but also enables them to share the deep emotions of the characters whom she portrays, which is one of the central reasons I have fallen for the Obernewtyn Chronicals.

The only negative (though I cannot bring myself to fully justify the use of such a strong term) element associated with this book is the extensive interlaced web of characters to whom readers have been previously introduced and are called upon to recall. While such an issue may not restrict the reading pleasure of those who are previously acquainted with the series, it may do so to those who are previously unfamiliar with the the extended Obernewtyn family.

Despite this "short-coming", ultimately *The Keeping Place* is a heart-wrenching novel and, in my opinion at least, the best of the series so far.

Melliott says

Okay, maybe Goodreads should alter its methods and give credit for every 300 pages read or something? because that was a loooooong book to get credit for just one! (754 pages) Good, though. And moving on to the sequel, equally hefty.

Lara says

I *devoured* the third book in this series--it had me absolutely captivated. This one? Not so much. It felt like there was too much and not enough going on at the same time. I was drowning in mundane details and names and dreams and running around to various places... I will admit that I skimmed. Quite a bit, actually. There just wasn't really anything that interested me, except for Dameon's all too brief appearances and the tiny bit with the diving. Wait, no, that's not entirely true; I was also interested in the direction Carmody went with Rushton for a short while, but then... Poof! Oh, never mind that, problem solved (for the most part)! This book was so long, and yet, I get the feeling that once I've finished the entire series, this one won't have really played a huge part in the grand scheme of things at all. The few important points could be summed up in a paragraph or so; didn't Carmody have an editor for this thing (I'm guessing not a good one at any rate--also there are many weird typos and grammar errors)?

I already bought the fifth and sixth books, so hopefully those are an improvement. But I'm feeling rather bitter about this one and it certainly doesn't make me anxious to start the next right away.

Rachel says

This fantasy sci-fi series about a group of psychic, mind reading, beast speaking teens in a post apocalyptic world gets better with every book. The whole plot line is complicated and involves over zealous religious groups, big brother government, rebel groups, and gypsies. All this tied into the sub plot of the main character trying to solve the mystery of how she is supposed to save the earth from another great disaster. Confused yet? Well, somehow this all comes together in a really fun, exciting, story. Trust me.

Dr.q says

i didn't feel as strongly as others that this book was a boring departure from the first three, but i did feel that it dragged on and on a bit.

I think that Carmody could have sped everything up a little bit without losing any of the tension. The bits about the diving were really cool and i'm excited to learn more about the red queen. But it was super obvious that Dragon was the Red Queen (or at least her daughter). I wanted to slap Elspeth on the head by the end of the novel.

and if i don't get a satisfactory love scene, or scene of affection with both Rushton and Elspeth i'm going to give up on these novels. Telling me they are in love isn't the same as showing a loving interaction between them. I was so excited at the end of the third novel and then POOF he's gone, never to really be heard from in this book until the EPILOGUE! *frustrating

But i'm sticking to it. i won't be discouraged because i want to see this through to the end.

Elise says

3.5 stars. The story took a weird turn, so it's not my favorite. I also grew tired of Elspeth's obsession with Rushton, and saving him, even if I do like the idea of them being together.

Grace says

This is definitely the weak link in the series. Literally nothing happened for the first 4/5ths of the book and all the places and people seem to have caught up with Carmody to create an impenetrable maze of names. Seriously, no wonder she felt she had to include a three-place (tiny font) dictionary at the front of the novel, but surely the fact she felt she needed one should've been a warning light? Once the book does get moving it's interesting, but I don't know weather it's because I've been reading a lot of crime novels lately but I saw all of the swists and turns coming from several miles away. Indeed, one of the 'big reveal' moments was guessed by me 2 books ago! Still, I hold out hope for the series, and I will keep on reading...I suppose even authors are allowed to have a down year.

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