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Chris Wooding

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The Weavers' grip on Saramyr's rulers has grown ever more powerful, and all the while, the blight they have brought grows harsher. The land is slipping into civil war. In the mounting chaos, Kaiku and the orphaned heir-Empress must fight for their destiny and their survival, as Saramyr succumbs to the twisting of the Weave and the unknowable ambitions of the secretive Weavers.

The Skein of Lament Details

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From Reader Review The Skein of Lament for online ebook

Jeffery Chatham says

If you're looking for great writing and an excellent mix of high and low fantasy then this is for you. I loved it throughout. This book, as well as the other two, never really dragged. They kept me turning pages for days and days.

Jen says

I quite enjoyed The Skein of Lament. It is clear from the beginning that this is not to be the last novel in the series; a joy to learn. However, this suffers from the traditional second-novel curse: the major plot line is a minor occurrence, and nothing is tied up properly such that we end on a cliff hanger.

In this book, we get a few new characters and an old character with a few new faces. The lesbian sex scene of the previous novel makes sense, now. It appears that it was not just a random one-off. Does that make it better? I'm not entirely convinced. However, the author treats all sex with the same gratuitousness, so I'm no longer as upset about his desire to write girl-on-girl action.

One of the new faces is a gentleman from a separate continent and/or culture where altruism is the overriding ideal. This sets up a very interesting dynamic when thrown in with the Saramyr characters who all are jockeying, selfishly, for power.

Also, this book reveals who the true nemesis is. The reasoning behind the Weaver's evil and the source of the hive-think is revealed. So now the evil can be named, but it doesn't change its nature.

And the ending cliff hanger ... well ... let's just say that no one is working for altruism except Tsata.

So, why the four stars? The characters feel flat. This book is set five years after the previous novel and I sense no growth in the characters. Well, except that the heir-empress is older. But otherwise, they are flat and merely pawns to advance the plot.

Shawna says

So far this book has been so entertaining with lots of energy in equal parts!! A luxurious blend of oriental and occidental adventure with a double dose of twists and intrigue.

I just came to a huge shocker in this book I didn't even see it coming and that is very rare for me to come across. All I can say is this book is going to be one of my fav's

Pauline Ross says

This is the second part of 'The Braided Path' trilogy. Despite having read the first part relatively recently, I

had forgotten quite a lot of it, and although Wooding reminds the reader of most of the salient points, there were still a few places where I was confused.

The author's world-building is awesome. This is not a word I use lightly, but nothing else quite covers it. Everything about Saramyr and its neighbouring territories - history, mythology, races, cultures, natural history, geography - is defined in infinitely layered and nuanced detail. Sometimes an almost throwaway line gives me a frisson of total pleasure - the flight of a bird, the noise of an insect, a rock formation, a character's tattoos, the way food is eaten. It's all there, all thought about and carefully dropped here and there for best effect, creating a world which truly feels 'other', almost alien.

I particularly liked the three moons, all different, which occasionally come into conjunction causing sudden moonstorms, followed by drifts of tiny ice crystals. I have no idea whether that is feasible in real-world physics, but it's extraordinarily evocative. And the moons are relevant to the plot, even. I love a fully worked out secondary world, and so many fantasy writers make do with some cobbled together mishmash of recognisable environments - medieval Europe, or Roman Empire, or whatever. That's OK, just a little disappointing (and lazy, maybe). Authors, this is how it should be done. My only criticism - could have done with a better map, showing all the places mentioned, and in hi-res.

The characters, on the other hand, don't work quite so well. It's not that they're uninteresting, for some of them - Saran, Tsata, Lucia, for instance - are intriguing enough, and Asara is downright creepy. Nor are they fantasy cliches. But somehow, it's as if Wooding has drawn up a laundrylist of defining characteristics (Mishani: small, delicate, ankle-length hair, reserved, diplomat) and they never acquire much depth beyond that. Apart from Kaiku learning to control her powers, there's not much growth in evidence, although Kaiku's relationship with Tsata is nicely developed. This makes them, on the whole, unengaging and hard to care much about. And maybe it's just me, but the male characters seem to have marginally more depth than the female ones.

Plotwise, there's no slow build-up or scene setting - it's straight into the action, which never lets up. Almost, there is too much action, really, and it seems as if Our Heroes can barely put their noses outside the door without finding themselves in yet another life-threatening encounter. So perhaps a little contrived in places. There are numerous different points of view, and the story hops from one to the other like a demented frog, including to minor characters, but at least this avoids tortuous tricks to reveal incidents we couldn't otherwise have seen. Along the way, there are several totally breath-taking shocks and twists - one in particular which completely blew my mind. And yet (like all the best such moments) it was completely predictable, if only I'd been paying proper attention. Clever author.

The climax brilliantly pulls all the different plot-threads together in a very satisfying way. All the various characters were needed to achieve the resolution, and it was done without any sleight of hand. Very neat. There were a number of blood-and-guts encounters, rather too many for my taste - I'm not over-fond of all that hewing, hacking, gutting, bone-crunching and disembowelling. Oh, and let's not forget the skinning. Nice people, the Weavers. But in between the episodes of slaughter were the really interesting (to me) parts - the time spent 'in the weave', the other-dimensional place where the Weavers and certain others can do - well, whatever it is they do. Is it magic? Or just something unexplained? Who knows, but it's a terrific concept, and definitely the best part of the story. And now everything is set up for the ultimate confrontation on a grand scale. A good four stars.

Lee says

Now have that book three commitment dilemma. Book one held my attention enough to launch into book two. But *The Skein of Lament* barely kept my attention. In fact the middle half of the book I struggled to keep going. I forced myself to read at least a chapter a day, even as I write this, it is becoming obvious that I didn't enjoy this anywhere near as I was expecting to.

The story does finish with a big ending and the last 20% was actually a good solid read, that really had me looking forward to turning the page. But I shouldn't have had to slog through the first 80% to get the pay off. If I wanted that kind of read, I'd go back to *Wheel of Time*. Ouch! Ka-ching!

The main story, well the only story really, carries on with the same characters from book one, but 5 years older. There was some character growth to keep me interested in what they got up too and the addition of a couple of new characters were reasonably interesting. I'll say one thing about Wooding, is that he is a good character writer. The world building continued to develop and you really understood and felt the environment he was delivering. But the story really didn't have the legs for a complete book, there was much filling where events happened that really didn't add to the story, but were added to make the story and events seem relevant and that is when and where I started to get bored.

The story ended with plenty of opportunity to continue to grow, I am interested in the development of the heir apparent who seems to have finally woken up in the last 5 pages and now should become a major force? Player? In book three.

I'll probably read book three, out of interest, but I imagine I'll be reading something else or two in between.

Sorcha says

The Weavers' grip on Saramyr's rulers has grown ever more powerful, and all the while, the blight they have brought grows harsher. The land is slipping into civil war. In the mounting chaos, Kaiku and the orphaned heir-Empress must fight for their destiny and their survival, as Saramyr succumbs to the twisting of the Weave and the unknowable ambitions of the secretive Weavers.

Second book in the trilogy. I read the first book about 5 years ago and enjoyed it enough to keep an eye out for the other two books in the series (I generally avoid multi-book stories).

This is **almost** standalone, in that it's enjoyable to read having forgotten much of what happened in the previous book. It is however, not completely standalone, with relationships and groups established in the first book, that don't get explained again in this second book.

e.g. Who are The Red Order again and why are they trying to keep so hidden? That's not necessarily a fault of the book, more of the reader and the gap between books.

Meanwhile, different groups of rebels are split across the country (sorry, but a map is no good, when half the places mentioned in the story are not on it), making new friends and gathering intelligence against the Weavers. People driven to madness, Weavers are already mad and shown to be more than perverse, people are attracted to the Weave and try not to succumb. Overall an enjoyable book, and I must not wait so long to read the final book

Sofia says

The second book of the trilogy is quite the masterpiece. I loved it to bits.

Suddenly you realise that all the bits of information about the world of Saramyr and their neighbours that you were given in the first book were a mere appetizer for the amazing worldbuilding you witness in this one, and you see all the effort and hard work that went into creating the world.

Nations have backstories with each other, the particular flora and fauna is further developed, you notice that all the deities aren't just random names thrown around, there is a well defined pantheon with its own myths, there is architecture, fashion and cultures specific to each region with logical reasons to be so, the world even has its own climate and astronomy. It is all meticulously thought through and you feel rewarded that the author went to such crazy lengths to make the world feel real and new. It blew my mind.

There is a revelation about the villain's plan that completely shifts your perception of the plot. The big picture gets even bigger and all actions and paths make sense within it.

Five years have passed since the first book, and the characters still grow. They are a little different since you last saw them, and they will be different by the time the book ends - which makes them three dimensional and endearingly real. New characters are introduced, beloved characters will die - and again, never meaninglessly. Everyone plays a small part in the braided path, and by that I don't mean that they are one-trick stock characters. It's just that their little actions, or decisions, or even their mere existence or death have an impact on either the furthering of the plot or in the development of another character.

Just like the first book, the chapters are organised more or less by geographical location of the characters, which while it might have been a bit annoying in the first book, in this one is a necessity, since you are following the events of a war and it helps keeping things clear. It also helps make the book so damn unputdownable.

Nathan says

I usually don't comment on "middle books" of series because really, what is the point? But I had to give this book some respect for avoiding the usually middle book pitfalls.

First of all, we once again have a nicely contained story. Sure there is a big giant cliffhanger, but most of the personal plot lines were wrapped up. We also get a lot of well paced action. Many middle books lag as they try to set up their epic finally, not so with this one.

Lastly, the characters are once again great. Asari is still one of a kind, and while we only get a couple of new faces, they are welcome additions, not just tack-ons to expand the story.

I loved the first two books of the series, and can not wait to read the third.

Eti says

If you like fantasy, read everything by Chris Wooding - he will blow your mind! Every world and character he creates is fully-formed and believable and he gets to the heart of things about our world by creating fantastic worlds.

William says

The second novel in the Braided Path trilogy picks up the story a few years after the end of the Weavers of Saramyr. The initial action takes place on the distant continent of Okhamba as a group of explorers are pursued from the depths of the rainforest having discovered some crucial information about the background of the Weavers who dominate Saramyr society. The initial part of the story features some action scenes more memorable than anything in the first novel and overall the storytelling does feel more assured in the second book, the climactic battle also being more compelling than any of the conflict in the first book.

There is some decent character development here, and one of the new characters, Tsata, is one of the more likeable and interesting characters in the series. Although Tsata does provide an interesting outside perspective on Saramyr society through his conversations with Kaiku, he does feel a bit clichéd at times as well since his role seems to be the supposedly uncivilised forest dweller who could teach the more refined people of Saramyr a thing or two about how to live their lives using the ancient wisdom of his people. The Weavers continue to simultaneously be effective villains and unsubtle caricatures. More interesting is the Red Order which opposes them, their leader Cailin is a more complex and more interesting character than the Weavers, being nowhere near as unpleasant but still potentially as dangerous and ruthless as her opponents.

Whereas the first novel was often a bit predictable there are a couple of surprising plot developments here and the ending of the book did set things up for an intriguing finale in the last book of the trilogy.

The Skein of Lament is an improvement on the Weavers of Saramyr while still not quite being as compelling as the best of the modern epic fantasy series.

Ekaterina says

This book was difficult for me to read, the same as the 1st one. The fantasy world suggested by the author is brilliant and the monsters are unique, its English is elaborate... well, it's Chris Wooding, so no surprise here XD everything is actually super nice, but the characters. I just could never come to love them, may be only Tsata and Kaiku at the very end of this book... Still it's just my opinion and I will also read the next book.

Poli says

I've already mentioned the similarities I find between this world and that of "Lord of the Rings". Here those points on common are even more apparent.

Besides the spreading evil there is also a mask which-like the Ring- corrupts those who wear it, creatures who work for the evil side who could well be compared to Orcs or Uruk-hai an entity who could well be

compared to Saruman just to mention a few.

Yes, all these influences are well apparent on Wooding's work yet the complexity of the world and characters is entrancing.

In fact some of these characters are so fascinating we just want to know what will happen next (this deserves my 4*)

For instance Asara is extremely intriguing, Tsata has a refreshing philosophy and society with characteristics from some tribes of our world, Lucia is growing a mind of her own, Cailin is all for the supremacy of her race, Mishani has two sides to her who complete each other (one more cerebral, the other, which she hides from the world, warmer...well if I were to speak about all of these characters I would be here for most of the day...

For all of the above I have chosen to forget the three moons though it still bothers me to read about them on the story, I keep hopping that there will be some kind of explanation to them which will clarify the reason why there are so many earth species on this fantasy planet.

Maybe I can find it on the third volume...

Carina says

I'll be honest that this book really only gets five stars by the skin of its teeth. That said, it is a lot better than the first book (which is strange because it was always the first book I liked best before).

This series is really starting to remind me of Game of Thrones, the political intrigue and the changing factions/loyalties especially give me a GoT vibe - this is just for younger people (though considering some of the acts of violence I would argue are on par with GoT not for much younger people).

Despite having rather little page time Asara is once again the most interesting aspect - why has she been working alongside Cailin for so long (view spoiler) I remember when I first read the series that the latter part of that sentence really shocked me. In a way Asara reminds me of Mishani's father Avun - another plot twist I didn't see coming (and actually kind of forgot in this re-read).

Near the end of this Kaiku did strike me as Mary-Sue esque when she started describing her kana as limitless - if memory serves correctly though the events in the final book negate this.

----- says

You can really feel the pace pick up from the first one with this book, and it's exciting and fast-paced from start to finish. The Weavers of Saramyr did a good job laying the foundation, but I think this is the best of the three.

Emily says

The second book in the Braided Path trilogy.

