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Stone of tears book review

This satisfying sequel to Goodkind's powerful debut novel, Wizard's First Rule, has everything one could ask for in an epic fantasy. In the earlier book, Seeker of Truth Richard Cypher tricked the sorcerer Darken Rahl by using Wizard's First Rule (that people are stupid and can be easily misled) into opening the wrong Box of Orden. Though this saved humanity from the evil mage's tyrannies, it also tore the veil between worlds, so the diabolical Keeper of the Underworld can now reach through and seize permanent control of the living. To stop this from happening, Richard must now learn how to be a wizard. The Sisters of the Light promise they will teach him to wield his powers, but they require that he wear a collar of obedience, something he has sworn he would rather die than do. Events sweep Richard and his betrothed, the Mother Confessor Kahlan Amnell, apart from one another; later, in one of the most vigorous battle sequences written for a heroine in modern fantasy, Kahlan leads her underage troops against battle-hardened soldiers, the young warriors naked except for a spectral coat of whitewash intended to make them look like ``spirits.'' Those who like their fantasy big and brassy will revel in this exemplar of the genre. (Oct.) I felt like I was reading an adventure video game. The main character went from one obstacle to the next. If he had failed, I'm sure the game would have ended. Despite a few instances of mediocre writing, the book was spectacular. There were times that I was frustrated, but that was because the characters were stubborn, and didn't do what common sense would tell them to do. So they did things the hard way, and paid the price. But that was completely in character, and nothing wrong with the book, itself. Spoiler review: The second book in the Sword of Truth picks up not more than a few minutes after the first book ends. Richard and Kahlan have gone back to the Mud People on the back of a dragon, both to deliver the young child back to them, and to get married. I found that they spend a little too much time with the Mud People. Although they are interesting, and the relationships created during this time are necessary to the later plot, I think it could have been cut down significantly. This book was about Richard, and how he deals with prophecy and his Gift. For he is becoming a wizard, much to his chagrin. And so the Sisters of the Light have found him, and plan to teach him how to control the gift. If he doesn't, it will kill him, through headaches. He likes the idea of controlling the gift, so that the headaches stop, but he cannot accept the condition they place on him, that he wears a collar. For he wore a collar once before, when he was Denna's prisoner. Richard is convinced that he tore the veil to the underworld, and he must find a way to mend it. So he calls for another gathering of the spirits. Unfortunately, he calls forth his own father, Darken Rahl, who goes out into the world, and intends to rip the veil completely. He nearly kills Richard, but Kahlan and the spirit of Denna save him. The result is a deal between the two women that Richard must go with the Sisters, wear the collar, and live. So Richard ends up with the collar, and hates Kahlan for a while. And so they go their separate ways. This is the story of Richard, but there are some sub-plots, which are really meant to keep those who could help him away from him for the rest of the book. Zedd fights a creature from the underworld, then goes to get the sorceress Adie, so that she can help him figure out how to mend the veil. They are infected by another underworld creature, and lose their magic. They must be healed by three sorceresses who live essentially on the other side of the world. Their healing is much too quick for me, and maybe splitting this book into two would have accomplished it better. This keeps them away from Richard and Kahlan up until the last few chapters. Kahlan chooses Richard's nemesis from the Mud People, to guard her as she travels north to her hometown, the city of the council of the Midlands, and to Zedd. Chandalen reluctantly agrees, but as they travel north and see the havoc that has been wreaked on the Midlands, he grows closer to the Mother Confessor, and sees it as something more than his duty to protect her. They stumble across the scene of a massacre, where all the men have been slaughtered, and all the women, down to twelve year olds, have been raped. Rape has been used too casually in this book, I think. The author implies that without any threat of retribution, all men would rape all women, and treat them as slaves and whores. True, people like Chandalen have their blood boil to see this, but most of the men in this book are without honour. The scene sets Kahlan to chase this army, and the army of soldiers who are hinting them. She takes charge of that army, and kills the wizard who is in command of the evil one, vanguard for the Imperial Order. This is a mysterious political and military group who have vowed to destroy all magic, and I believe will take a major role in the next book. Kahlan declares war on them, and she with her army, begin to pick them off in the night. The battles are spectacular, and the descriptions had me cheering at them, as these men got what they deserved. By the end, Kahlan's army wipes them out to a man, but that brings her army down from five thousand to three hundred! I would have liked to read a whole book about their battles! Finally, Kahlan realizes that she must get to her home, figure out what to do about the Imperial Order from the council, and find Zedd. When she arrives, she is immediately imprisoned by a dark wizard, her status-long hair cut, and she is thrown into a pit with a bunch of criminal rapists. She manages to use her power to turn the biggest one to her side, and Chandalen helps her to escape. She finds Zedd, who seems to be under a spell. He is furious that she would give Richard over to the Sisters of the Light, and sentences her to death. But Richard is the one who will fulfill the prophecies. He travels with Sister Verna, and they grow to hate each other. The characterization is very well done. They are both stubborn enough that they can never have an actual discussion. Richard grows stronger with his sword, and flies into a rage every time things don't go his way. At times I hated Verna for doing this to him, and at other times I felt the deepest sympathy for her. During this time, Richard orphans a young gar, who then befriends him. The sole purpose in this book seems to be to give Richard a way to see what Kahlan sacrificed for him, so that he wouldn't be killed. I'm sure there will be advantages in the next book, to having a pet gar, but for the moment, it was wasted. The ordeals they pass through to get to the palace were well done. Most had me turning pages before I had even finished them, trying to figure out how they could possibly end without Richard being killed. But I think that there were too many. Again, lots could have been cut, without detracting from the story. This guy needs a good editor! The time at the palace has Richard in a rage just about every day. His teacher, Pasha, is in tears because of him at the same time. But as much as I hated what she was doing to Richard, I was nearly in tears myself when she fell apart on him. Especially when she described how she had been looking forward to him for so long, but had prepared everything assuming he was a child. She didn't want to embarrass him by giving him children's things, so she kept them to herself. The entire scene was gut-wrenching! Richard, of course, cannot stand the sight of her crying so, and decides to accept her teachings, so that he can control the gift and get out of there. But evil things are brewing in the palace, as the Sisters of the Dark are turning all the wizards to evil, or taking the power from those who will not turn, and taking it upon themselves. The author was tricky (and wise) in that he didn't reveal who the evil sisters were. So when Richard finally got to the palace, we had to guess. I guessed some right, and some wrong. I immediately knew that the nicest sister had to be evil, and that Richard would end up becoming closest to her. And, of course, she tried to kill him, and steal his gift. I was wrong when I assumed that the Prelate was dead, and that the evil sisters were issuing orders in her name. Richard learns how to become invisible, and how to get around the restricted areas of the palace. He meets with the prophet, and a wizard who studies the prophecies. He is pushed into leaving the palace to try and save Kahlan from being beheaded. In his wanderings, I think the evil wizard Jedidiah, who was built up from the beginning, was wasted. They didn't even get into a fight. And so Richard overcomes more obstacles, and reunites the old and new worlds, by destroying the wizard towers, and saves the world from Darken Rahl and the Keeper of the Underworld, by repairing the veil. He is too late, however, to save Kahlan. When he enters the city, he kills all the council members, who sentenced her to death, and then has a vision, where he gets to meet with Kahlan, who was not killed (Zedd cast a spell over everybody else, to make them believe it). They make love for the first time, and are very happy. And the book ends. There are several loose ends to tie up in the next book (or the few after that), but what was needed to accomplish in this book was done. Richard accepted himself for who he was, and although he isn't with Kahlan by the end, they know where each other is, the soldiers of the Imperial Order were all killed, and the worlds have been united. In the next book, I assume the threads of the Imperial Order government, and the evil sisters (which seem to be related), will continue. Whew! Too long was the book at nearly a thousand pages (though I enjoyed it thoroughly), and too long is this review, as well. The length of the book, as I said about the last one, ensures that I will remember these characters for a long time, and will still care about them whenever I pick up the next book. Most of the action was great. There were no parts of the book where I became bored, or uninterested. There were some things that I thought could have been cut without affecting the story, but that is different. The ending was quite abrupt, too, but the story was not really about Richard saving the world. He would rather have saved Kahlan, his love. The story was about trying to get back together, and it worked wonderfully. All in all, I loved it, despite its few faults.

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