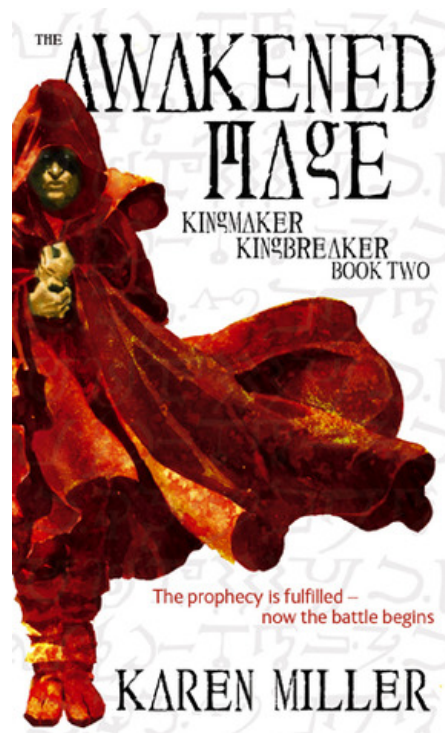




The Awakened Mage

Karen Miller

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The Awakened Mage Karen Miller

Asher has come a long way for a fisherman's son. Together with his friend Prince Gar, he has defended their kingdom against its bitterest enemy, but at great cost. Now the evil mage Morg is preparing for his most deadly assault. Desperate, trapped in a broken body, Morg has little time and fewer scruples.

The Awakened Mage Details

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From Reader Review The Awakened Mage for online ebook

Lucas says

What a turn about from the first book. After the first 200 pages, this book was utter drivel. The characters totally fell apart and constantly acted in ways that I disagreed with. I'm not usually one for spotting inconsistencies in books, but this one was littered with them. In one scene the characters can't leave on a journey at night for fear of attracting attention with their lights. They leave following morning only to travel throughout the day and then light torches. gah. In another scene it has been raining for days. torrential downpours. the worst weather you can imagine. the author wrote that the sky "bled rain" is was coming down so hard, yet a few lines later there were burning buildings. uhmm, okay. seriously this is the worst book I have read in five years easily. What a shame since the first was, although not perfect, quite charming in its simplicity.

The best parts were:

- finishing it.
- the cuban cigar I smoked while reading part of it.
- the bookmark that Delia made for me.

I could go on, but seriously, why bother?

Thomas Lambrecht says

With much more suspense then the first book, the innocent mage, it was an enjoyable book...

Connor says

[2.5 Stars] This duology should have just been a standalone. There are probably 400 pages of fluff that could have been removed between the two books, and then it would have been great. Only the last 100 pages or so of this volume we're actually interesting to me. The ended was alright, so at least I'm satisfied with that.

Paxnirvana says

already feeling the need to gnaw own leg off

...this isn't getting any better is it? *sigh*

Dan says

It would have gotten two stars like the first book of the series, but honestly, the ending aggravated and frustrated me like few books have ever done. The ending to this book feels like Miller was at the publisher's

deadline, and just needed to submit something. There are loose ends that don't get resolved, the big finale was stale and just ends almost abruptly. The worst possible event that comes to pass, has almost no effect. It was just a terrible, terrible ending. I don't think I've ever really wished this, but I'd like my time back from reading the last 100 pages of this series.

Blodeuedd Finland says

First, this is book 2 of course there are gonna be spoilers from book 1, duh.

Book 1 ended with a bang, for a book that is pretty light then that was sure an evil ending. She killed almost the entire royal family, only prince Gar was left standing. Yes evil indeed. So that is where the book starts. What on earth will happen now? Prince Gar recently found his magic. But can he keep the weather in check? Can he keep his keep stupid Lord Jarralt away from the throne? Can Ashe be safe as others around him think he has risen too fast. And what about Morg, trapped in Durm's body? All hell will break loose if he gets what he wants, which is everyone and everything dead and eaten.

I know it's a total cliché to say it BUT in this book the pages just flew by. Such a cliché thing to say but they did. I read it in record time. The book was 700 pages? What? No, it was like 300 cos it was so light and suddenly I was 300 pages into the story and the next time I was done. The pages turned themselves.

I wish there were more books though, I think it had been better as a trilogy. Then the suspense could have grown bigger and bigger and ended with the OMG! NOOO! thing and the next book could have been a battle. But hey I am not complaining, the series is done and I am happy it all worked out. There is another series with 2 books that takes place like 20 years after or something and I will read that one soon too. I can't wait.

Light, good, fun fantasy.

Ariana says

soo it was an ok read. The first book kind of dragged on and on. The second was more interesting. I think I would have liked it better had there been more history of Barl et al. All you got was like a page of what happened 600 years ago, in the last 200 pages of the book. I didn't feel that was in depth enough. I still have questions as to why can't Olkens use magic? What happened between Morg and Barl?

Mark says

My review of Book 1 admired the story-telling and the page turning nature of its narrative, though was slightly disappointed by the (admittedly comforting) safeness of its tale. The (erm) cliffhanging ending, however, left me interested in the tale's outcome, so I was not too upset at taking on the slightly larger second volume.

However because of the book's nature, following on from Volume 1, there are points that I'm going to have to develop.

MINOR SPOILERS FOLLOW.

The second volume starts just before the point we left it in Volume 1. As the story takes speed, the disastrous consequences of the deaths at the end of Innocent Mage leave us with some intriguing puzzles: how are Prince Gar and his friend Asher to deal with the kingdom of Lur turned upside down? How is Asher to meet his prophetic future, to be the Innocent Mage, born to save the world from blood and death, when the prophecy tells of apocalyptic proceedings as a result?

Well, as you might expect, there is a change in roles and responsibilities. Prince Gar now becomes King Gar, Weather-Worker for the nation. Asher is promoted from his assistant position to Ambassador for Olken Affairs. Dathne becomes Asher's assistant to help deal with the increased workload as a consequence of Gar now being King Gar.

The city of Dorana deals with the royal deaths with stunned grief but is partly calmed by King Gar showing that his recently-found ability to manipulate the weather works. What they don't know though is that, due to the earlier actions of Morg, Gar's magic has failed and that it is actually Asher who wields the power: an action punishable under Barl's law by death. As Morg becomes more powerful, the kingdom is split by upheaval and deception.

END OF SPOILERS.

I said in my review of Volume 1 there were niggles that could make the well-read reader of Fantasy less enamoured of this book than those new to the genre or those looking for nothing more than a comfortable read. There was little here to change that view, though the pace was faster, the niggles slightly less – niggly – and some of the consequences of earlier actions quite interesting in their resolution. Karen is a skilful writer in engaging the reader with traditional plot developments and enough action, particularly in the last section of this book, to keep those pages turning.

Having said that, parts of the book definitely did not work for me. In particular for me, love scenes between two of the main characters were just cringing in their expression and execution. In addition, there are plot resolutions that may be too convenient for some. Despite these areas of concern, ultimately the story is resolved, the prophecy is achieved and the story is ended in a manner which is satisfactory, though not really unpredictable.

In my review of Volume 1, I said that the book was 'Not clever, not particularly original or uniquely stylish, but written well enough to keep the reader's interest, this is a book that will create a warm sense of comfort for many Fantasy readers out there who wish to be charmed rather than challenged.' As the books clearly run together, I would still stand by that for Volume 2, and with that view in mind I am ultimately pleased (though with some reservations) with the way the duology has developed and completed. There will be a lot of readers out there who will read these books in order to be no more than uplifted and entertained by them, and as such there is, in the end, much to get pleasure from. Those who enjoyed the first book will be further contented to find much more to enjoy here.

(And as a footnote, it has just been announced that Karen will be writing more of Lur soon: according to Karen's website ([link below](#)) 'there'll be a standalone prequel telling the story of Morgan and Barl, and a double-barrelled sequel following on from the events of Innocence Lost/The Awakened Mage. The sequel is due to be published first.')

Kristy says

The Innocent Mage wasn't a bad read but a vast majority of it was filler. It was a nice way to introduce the cast but it drug on for a rather long time before actually getting to the "meat" of the book. *The Awakened Mage* feels the same way. It drags on for so long, in fact, that over halfway through the book I began to wonder if there would be a third installment simply because I couldn't imagine this book wrapping up in time. I was shocked when I realized that this is, indeed, the end of this part of the story; I was on the edge of my seat wondering how Miller pulled it off.

It has a little more to it than *The Innocent Mage* but way too much time is spent inside the minds of the characters rather than on the main plot.

What's even more disappointing is that, despite the large amount of time the author dedicates to everything *but* actively pushing the main plot, most of the characters fail to grow. The main character begins the series as an annoying jerk and is even more frustrating by the end of the tale. He's no hero and yet he's referred to as a good guy all throughout the series. Having everyone say he's a good guy isn't enough; you actually need to show it which Miller failed to do.

Then there is the female lead, Dathne, who starts out as a strong, intelligent woman but turns into a blathering fool. Her dialogue by the end of the series is so unlike her it's uncomfortable to read.

The only character that really makes much of a change is Darran. I don't think that spending this much time on "filler" should result in undeveloped characters... So much potential wasted. I don't want to hate my hero! Give your readers something - a redeemable quality, an interesting backstory, anything.

Also an issue is the fact that all of this magic exists and it all ties together somehow and yet by the end of this book, you aren't really sure how. You know this does this and that does that but have no idea why. You don't understand why Barl made the decisions that she did or why she was treated like a holy figure.. And once you realize why Morg is so evil, you can't help but go, "What? Really? That's *it*?!"

I think the idea is interesting but the execution was sloppy. If you want me to invest more time in reading your work, give me a good reason to. Between the two books you are already looking at over 1200 pages; I don't think I should have to delve into yet another installment to understand certain plot points when the first two books were so disappointing.

David says

Urgh. Everything cliched and wrong about the Fantasy genre is on full display here. Way too many pages for the little bit of story contained therein. Padded to the extreme. Cliched plot and character. Utterly dreadful.

Liviu says

The final book of the duology is much weaker than the debut degenerating into run of the mill "big bad lord" taking over, almost winning, but tripped at the last moment by the hero saved by his loyal friends and the villain's blind spots...

Still a page turner so 2 stars for what is a very mediocre finish to the series that started so well in Innocent Mage.

Desertorum says

Well this would have needed some editing and some of the characters were truly annoying.

Aaron Negoba says

While an improvement from the first half of the story, this book is still not that rewarding. The buddy relationship between the main characters is first strained and then torn apart for most of the book. The Mage finally gets his magic (how can you go through an entire book titled "The Innocent Mage" without the character in question ever using magic or even knowing he can?), but loses his humor. Asher's humor and friendship to the common people gets stripped away while his surliness and pride remain. So much duty and the weight of the world on everyone.

At least the plot moves. The bad guy comes out and gets nasty, the hidden prophecy-bearers have their day, there's a final battle. But some of the plot devices are laughably bad. (spoilers...a look alike character appears out of nowhere to take Asher's place on the chopping block, has almost no second thoughts, and is gone once his pitiful plot purpose is achieved...seriously one of the worst cop-outs in the history of fiction. The hated sniveller gets his by being dropped on the concrete in a pile of blood and fat??? We're in slapstick parody land now.)

Karen Miller does write better prose than some fantasy authors such as Feist or Sanderson. But her actual storytelling is just not there. She also has a gruesome sadistic streak that she actually explores in Empress, the only book of hers I found interesting. (And also one of the most cruel stories I've ever read.)

If this duology had been one book it would have been passable pulp. 1200+ pages, don't waste your time. There's lots of alternatives that at minimum have entertaining storylines.

Melanie says

I read the first part of this series pretty much exactly three years ago and have only just now got around to reading this. Not because I didn't have it - I received them as a present as a set - but because I just plain couldn't bring myself to do it. I'd already pushed through 500 pages of nothingness and I wasn't looking forward to another 600 pages of the same. But, it was a present so I had to, right?

And I've got to say, I enjoyed this one a lot more than its predecessor. Because stuff *finally* happens! Like, all the things. If I was to say anything it's that almost there's too much going on. I don't remember having all the different view points in the first books (my bad memory or their lack of presence?) but their inclusion here meant that you quite often got like four or five POV characters in a chapter, and when things really got going their sections were often only a page or two long at a time. And I've never been a big fan of chopping and changing POVs.

There was also quite a lot of gratuitousness. Stuff happening for the sake of it happening. Quick! We need a

shocking death! [Character dies for no real reason] *gasp*

But for all this it was a heck of a lot more readable than The Innocent Mage which almost - *almost* - makes me want to go back and read it again. Maybe I wasn't in the right frame of mind the first time around? Maybe I wasn't quite old enough? But then I remember just how much I struggled and ultimately decide against it.

Mike (the Paladin) says

I finished this a couple of days ago and am just now sitting down to review it. I was greatly taken with and even somewhat surprised by the first book in this duology. From the synopsis I thought it would not be the "type" book I generally like. In some ways it wasn't/isn't but it's written (in my opinion) exceptionally well. I was drawn in and wanted to follow the story.

Here I have a slight caveat about the second book. It's still well written, it's still a good story and I still give it 4 stars. If you know how I rate books you know that is an excellent rating, I give few 5s. BUT this book isn't quite (again in my opinion) as good, as absorbing, as "interest holding" as the first.

So...first the sulfur. As we follow the story of our protagonist and those who surround him and those whose lives he intersects there are a few bumps. For one thing the angst is so thick you can cut it with a gutting knife (view spoiler). We cover the basics on emotions but then we go on, and on, and on, and on....and on ad nauseum. Then there are a few places where the book is just a little heavy handed (view spoiler). There was a point in this where I came to a "this is a long book" moment. Not good and not something that happened with the first volume. Also, one final "whine" (and I hate whining) the climax feels sort of abrupt. Like okay I promised you a final confrontation so here it is. Could be just me I suppose.

Okay, you've had a bit of the sulfur (without major spoilers involved) now the molasses to help it go down. The plot is still sound. The characters are pretty much true to themselves (even more so in the "woe is me" category). All in all...or over all this is an excellent book. While I've listed the negatives that doesn't mean I don't like it. I do. I recommend both these and only want to give a heads up that the second may not be quite up to what the first leads one to expect. These are excellent novels and I will most likely try other books by the writer.

Recommended.

Sharon says

This book. Ah, what to say about Awakened Mage. I have so many mixed emotions with this story. So let's start at the beginning with a brief summary:

Now that the Royal family is dead, Gar is the only one left, King by default and left with sputtering limited magic that was given to him by the Weather Master Durm who is currently possessed by Morg. Not that Gar knows his magic is limited or was given to him—instead he 's convinced he's a late bloomer and all is somewhat well—or as well as can be, until the magic fades and then the meat of the story begins. (and there will be massive spoilers so, be warned)

First the good:

Asher: He's a wonderful lead. I love how he has an accent and uses words like nowt and scumbling which really adds to his sort of backwoods nature. Even though he's not the most well-educated, he's hard working and does his best to support Gar doing his various duties as Olken Administrator. He is also realistically selfish in the beginning, not wanting to get in trouble for first seeing Gar preform magic and later performing the Weatherworking himself—since he has a great deal more to lose should things go wahooney shaped. I really loved to read about his interactions with most of the other characters, namely Gar, Matt and Pellen. Though, I don't think his relationship with Gar is as strong as it was in the last book, which is understandable given the circumstances.

Gar: Gar is the one I enjoyed reading all the way to the end. Ultimately he was doing his best, for his people and for the Olken people. He wanted to continue his father's legacy for others, not just for himself and was willing to bear the pain. Even when forcing Asher to do the Weatherworking, it was only because there was no other choice. Even betraying Asher in the end, it was for the good of the many Olken. His back was against the wall and he made the hard decisions and suffered for it. This is what makes him a strong king in my eyes. Yes, some things were regrettable, but he did what he did for the majority of the Olken who would have suffered greatly from Jarrault/Morg's purge.

Matt: Matt was really enjoyable to read. He was the sensible one, much beleaguered and in the middle of things too big for him. I really appreciated his levelheadedness about things even when hurtful things were happening. Though I can't exactly say I loved him. But I appreciated his character. I also really loved his interactions with Asher. Scant as they were you can really tell these men like and respect each other.

As for the story itself, for the most part it was enjoyable up to a certain point. The grieving was realistic and even when there were some moments of character stupidity in order to get the plot rolling (both on the heroes and the villains part) it was easy to look around and enjoy. And then we come to the bad. And when I say bad, I mean it made me want to throw the book against the wall. Of course this is all your mileage may vary, but, this is my mileage and my god, was it hard to sit through these parts.

Dathne: Oh lord this woman. This is going to be a rant in two parts. The first part reflects her characterization—which is not necessarily a mistake. That is to say, it's okay to have supremely annoying characters and not everyone will like the same thing. But she was annoying as hell. She was manipulative, harsh, and in some cases just blatantly a dumbass. Also she was a know-it-all, letting her title as Jevall's Heir go to her head. She was okay to read in the first book but in the second every scene got harder and harder to read. But yes, she was annoying, fine. I could stand that. . .
If not for the romance subplot.

Oh my god. The romance subplot. Dear readers, I hated it. I loathed it. First and foremost, their great love came right the hell out of nowhere. There was no build-up. It was just love. Which can work, except that I didn't see any reason that they should be in love. They didn't have anything in common. They don't talk about anything other than business or how much they love each other. They're somewhat attracted to one another. I suppose because mostly they had zero chemistry and I felt like I was hit over the head constantly with:

They're in love! Omg epic romance! Believe in their love! How tragic! How beautiful!
No. Just no. Sometimes I had to outright skim those parts. And some of the problem stems from that, again, all they talked about was plot related stuff or love. Also... and remember you're under a spoiler cut—and this is either a big spoiler or a stupid spoiler or a little bit of both...

But one morning, Dathne feels sick to her stomach.

Guess what? She's pregnant!

Oh man was I pissed. I don't even know why. Other than it's such a trope and cliché that it set my teeth on edge. But, you know, if the baby had some impact or purpose in the story—no...no none. Nothing at all. Dathnae stayed behind on the first foray into the city to rescue Asher. I thought, okay, fine. She's pregnant. So wouldn't want to get into a situation where she could get caught/tortured...

Except that she goes with Asher into the city when all freaking hell breaks loose and there are demons and shit. There was no reason for this pregnancy now. None at all. I don't mind if it would have happened later but—just, it bothered me.

Though, on the flip side, one scene I really did like with them as a couple, was after Dathnae and Asher had made love (not their first time) Asher is sleeping and Dathnae wakes up and it's snowing indoors because of some kind of subconscious power from Asher. That was beautiful. I really loved that scene and I almost, almost could buy them as a couple.

The relationship aspect was really the only thing that really really bothered me. The rest was tolerable and/or disappointing.

Morg: Not much to say here. He was conniving and failed sometimes which was interesting and a neat take. But in the end he was just a flat one dimensional villain, most of them were. Also there was this huge buildup where it would take time to tear down Barl's wall but no—no it happened pretty easily. He was evil but just being evil especially for someone once human, doesn't really cut it for me. I wished he had something else.

Asher's Magic: Yeah I knew he was the Innocent Mage. I mean you knew from the first book. But I never felt that he was all that integrated with it. Except for the Weatherworking. I really love that scene with Gar in the tower where he's Weatherworking with him. Or rather for him. Knowing all the symbols. That seemed really peaceful and natural. But then all of a sudden in the end he was calling up demons and warfire it's just too abrupt and too easy and we never see really how that feels or how he feels about it.

Asher himself: He got really annoying by the end. It was one thing to be irritated with Dathnae because how do you discern between what is love and what is meddling because of the prophecy? But his loathing of Gar was just really annoying. Actually most of his yelling at Gar and wanting to pass the crown to someone else was really irritating. It was as if he didn't understand there were other lives on the line than his own. Like it wasn't his responsibility. I mean, yeah I get that he was afraid and he just wanted his boat but he never seemed to want to help others.

The entire end of the book where Asher is preparing to face and facing the big bad is way too rushed. People are killed for no good reason other than to...I don't know inspire drama I guess. I don't think it was really necessary and also I think it was told from the wrong POV. Asher is the one who has the power and responsibility for this. We should have seen it through his eyes, not Dathnae's who shouldn't have even been there if she was pregnant. I mean, I'm all for women going wherever they want and doing whatever they want within reason while pregnant but come on. You want to get the both of you killed? Even if Asher does save the day he's going to be devastated if you died.

I'm also really conflicted on Gar's death. I think he blamed himself too much and reorganized things so that he would die as he should rather than Asher as he was meant to. But in the end, there is no need for a Weatherworker, so why can't Gar be king? Why kill him needlessly? I guess Asher can't die because he's the hero but really I felt like Gar was the strongest character out of them all.

In the end, I would recommend this book. It's not a good ending, but it's a decent ending and the character relationships, for the most part, are fun. But I think it could have been so much better than it was.

Nikki says

I give up I give up.

I was still willing, at the end of *The Innocent Mage*, to see this through. I love Gar. I kind of loved some of the more minor characters too (Matt, who seemed about the only person with sense sometimes; Darran, because he's not always nice but he's so *loyal* to Gar). But god I can't stand Asher anymore, I don't care about Dathne, and if Morg launched into the greatest hits of EvilMcEvilPerson laughs, I wouldn't be surprised. And the pacing, aaarghhh. And I started being able to guess the entire plot, chapters and chapters ahead.

So I got my girlfriend to tell me the whole plot, and then chucked *The Innocent Mage*, *The Awakened Mage*, *A Blight of Mages*, *The Prodigal Mage* and *The Reluctant Mage* off my shelves. I will still attempt the Godspeaker trilogy, but my patience will likely be quite short.

So much potential, but it needed someone to say, and sternly, that changes needed to be made. In my opinion, anyway. Gar might've been the more typical choice for a hero for a book in this genre, but he almost always came out better than Asher, to me (except when he acted uncharacteristically), and I wish it had been all about him.

Tora says

When I finished the previous book, *The Innocent Mage*, I had enjoyed it enough to eagerly seek out this one. But by the end of this book, I no longer cared about the characters or what happened to them or their country, and finished it only because I hate leaving books unfinished and as I was listening to the audio version, I was able to do productive things like cook and wash dishes while I finished, so it didn't feel like a complete waste of time.

The protagonist has come into his power, and spends the whole book whining about how he doesn't want it, didn't ask for it, he's just a fisherman, he only ever wanted to be a fisherman, etc. It's probably supposed to show how the power hasn't changed him, and how he hasn't come to despise his humble origins, but it did nothing so much as annoy me and remind me of Dante's slacker lament in *Clerks*: "I'm not even supposed to be here today!" Also, he constantly refuses to listen to what other people have to say. When an author wants to withhold information from a character or the audience for plot or effect, it's probably okay to have a character refuse to listen to someone once, but to use this device over and over again is not only obvious and annoying, but makes the character look like an arrogant jerk.

I was so annoyed with the protagonist by the end that I was relieved when it was over. The final battle was just boring and annoying because I really didn't care if he lived through it or not, I just wanted to be done with the book.

Aside from issues with the protagonist, both this book and its predecessor have one major flaw--the author tells us, over and over, that the two peoples have different kinds of magic, that it works differently, etc., but never actually explains or shows the difference, except in the vaguest terms. And given her vague description of the difference, that the Olken magic is natural and works with nature, while Doranen magic is flashy and presumably, unnatural, then the whole situation that explains why the Olken accepted the Doranen rule in the first place...makes no sense at all. Personally, I got the sense that the author didn't carefully think through the

systems of magic she created, and just had whichever magic do whatever was convenient for the plot at the time.

Personally, I quite enjoy reading books set in a world which has different rules from our own, or I wouldn't read fantasy in the first place. But even a fictional world should **have** rules--a clear sense of what works and what doesn't, what magic can do and what it can't--or it stops feeling like a "real" world, and starts feeling like a construct that can change at any time to suit the convenience of the author. And that's part of why I lost interest in the characters and the fate of their country--because it no longer felt like a real place.

It's a shame, because there was potential here, but altogether, in the end, it was very disappointing.

Cori Reed says

Whilst I still enjoyed this book, it really did feel too long. I feel like there could have been 150 pages less and we would have had the complete story.

The middle dragged, but I enjoyed the ending. I really appreciated the amount of hatred that Asher had, and that he wasn't willing to immediately forgive the betrayal that came to him. As much as I love it when everyone just gets along, it isn't realistic.

Essentially, I would say ignore the mixed reviews on this, and try it out!

Dawn says

This progressed a little slowly for me.. Maybe that had a little to do with the fact that I read half of it, then went on vacation and didn't pick it back up for over a week, and am just now finishing it... But I don't think that was all of it. Book one ended in a huge cliffhanger, and I expected book two to be a nonstop fast paced progression to the conclusion. Instead, not much happened until the last few chapters, the rest was just set up for the final battle. People going here and there, talking and puttering away time. I still really enjoyed it, I just expected more from it.

I did like the ending though, and as a whole, I really enjoyed the duology. I'll be trying out the prequel at some point for sure, and then maybe someday the series that follows this one.

I definitely recommend this duology to any classic epic fantasy fans. It's good old fashioned magic stuffed fantasy done well, which I haven't run into in a long time. 3.5 stars for this one, and over all I'd give the set of two 4.25 stars.
