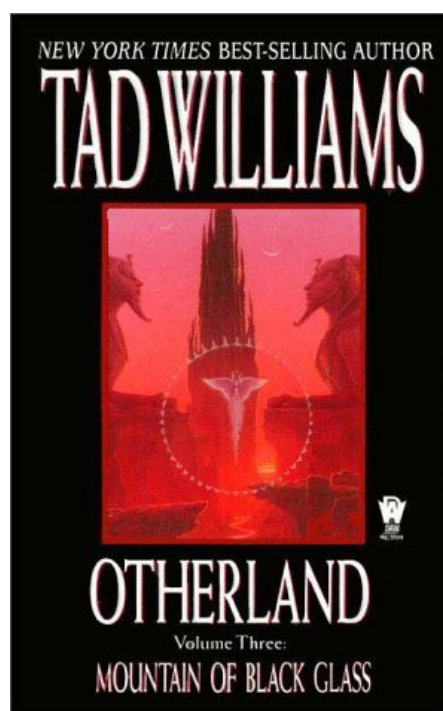




Mountain of Black Glass

Tad Williams

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Mountain of Black Glass Tad Williams

"The Grail Brotherhood has built the most powerful, sophisticated simulation network imaginable. At the same time, they have manipulated and injured the minds of thousands of children."

This proclamation from the mysterious Mr. Sellars confirmed what Renie Sulaweyo had feared to be true when she first broke into the Otherland network in a desperate search for the cause of her brother Stephen's deathlike coma.

Now Renie, the Bushman !Xabbu, and their companions find themselves navigating a treacherous and ever-changing course?from a strangely unfinished land, to a seemingly endless labyrinthine House?pursuing a sociopathic killer who has stolen one of their group.

To Renie's despair she is no closer to uncovering the secrets which could help save Stephen's life, and now it appears that something may be very wrong with the Otherland network itself.

As Paul Jonas, Orlando, Renie and the rest strive to reach Priam's Walls, in the heart of Troy, they know that their quest is running perilously short of time. For the Grail Brotherhood has finally set the date for the Ceremony when they will make their bid for the immortality, and thereby seal the fate of Earth's children forever.

But before Renie and her allies can hope to stop the Brotherhood, they must first solve the mysteries of Otherland itself, and confront its darkest secret?an entity known only at the Other.

Mountain of Black Glass Details

Date : Published September 12th 2000 by Daw Books (first published January 1999)

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Author : Tad Williams

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From Reader Review Mountain of Black Glass for online ebook

Joey says

This one was a pretty good installment of the Otherland series. There were no more numerous random simulations that plagued the second book so much and the plot seem to strengthen somewhat. It was a bit long winded in the last 100 pages or so but still enjoyable. Though it probably brought it down from 5 to 4 stars for me. This was a thoroughly entertaining read. I'm looking forward to the next one.

Beverly K says

DNF at 62%. The thought of continuing this another eight hours makes me groan. It's as tedious as my current job with nothing going for it.

I love his writing style, don't get me wrong. But this book meanders. It manages to say a lot without saying anything at all and the plot crawls forward. I just...maybe I'll come back to this. We'll see. But for now, DNF.

Jennifer says

This is my favorite of the Otherland volumes so far. There's less hesitance in the story telling, and now that all the characters have been (finally) introduced and set in motion, this volume moves forward at a much better pace than the last two. Also, there was an added sense of connection to this piece of the story for me because of so many references I recognize from Homer's classics.

Sunsy says

Wer High Fantasy mag, wird von dieser Reihe sicherlich ebenso begeistert sein wie ich. Im Grunde genommen ist diese Reihe auch genreübergreifend. Sie hat Sci-Fi-Elemente, Märchen-Anteile, aber auch anspruchsvolle Epen wie der Fall Trojas, und die Protagonisten müssen ständig Entscheidungen treffen, sind permanent in Gefahr getötet zu werden und entscheiden sich, als sie die Gelegenheit erhalten, aus dem Ganzen aussteigen zu können, dennoch dagegen, wollen am großen Ziel festhalten, ihre Freunde nicht im Stich lassen. Ein wunderbares Buch und mir die volle Punktzahl wert!

<http://sunsys-blog.blogspot.de/2017/0...>

Jeremy Hot Pants says

Tad Williams has a gift for the written word. Or, more accurately, a gift for about five qudrazillion of them because he writes in The. Most. Dense. Fucking. Prose. Ever. (And uses far too few clever literary devices such as the preceding one.) Which is a shame, really, because the story is pretty captivating and has proven to be somewhat prescient. But god to the damn, yo, my cat Nelly has a better chance of penning the next great Broadway musical than the average reader has of slogging through this entire series. And Nelly writes

exclusively sitcoms.

Nick Leshi says

"We tell lies when we are afraid... afraid of what we don't know, afraid of what others will think, afraid of what will be found out about us. But every time we tell a lie, the thing that we fear grows stronger." -- Tad Williams

One of my favorite modern speculative fiction writers is Tad Williams. Best known for his groundbreaking fantasy series *Memory, Sorrow, and Thorn*, I first discovered his writing by reading his equally impressive science fiction series *Otherland*.

I'm a big fan of myths and fairytales, and through his *Otherland* saga, Williams was able to play with mythic elements from a broad range of worlds. The premise, in which children become comatose after exploring a dangerous virtual reality and the protagonist Rene Sulaweyo starts a quest to find the cause, allows Williams to throw his characters in any environment, any scene, any situation that his imagination can conjure up.

Many of those environments are inspired by classic literary works by H.G. Wells, L. Frank Baum, Lewis Carroll, and others. Williams then takes those familiar motifs from *Wonderland*, *Oz*, Homer's *Odyssey* in Ancient Greece, and more, and twists them into something fresh and unpredictable.

The story begins in *City of Golden Shadow* as we're introduced to the diverse characters, (my favorites include Renie, her dad Long Joseph, and !Xabbu) who begin their journey to unravel the mystery. It continues in *River of Blue Fire* as the characters look for answers and are thrust from one outlandish reality to the next, each with its own unique dangers...and clues. In the third book, *Mountain of Black Glass*, the conspiracy starts to get fleshed out more as we learn more about Felix Jongleur and the Grail Brotherhood who created this cyber realm in an attempt to achieve eternal life. The series concludes with *Sea of Silver Light* as all the characters and subplots merge in an epic and satisfying climax.

The characters are memorable, from Orlando Gardiner, the young, physically challenged boy who becomes a warrior in the *Otherland*, to the psychopathic assassin who calls himself Dread. Even when Tad Williams' plot seems to be growing out of control, as many serial fantasies seem to do, he manages to rein it back in.

I'm excited to hear that *Otherland* will be made into a game (a "Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game" to be precise). Tad Williams is keeping busy with another *Shadowmarch* novel coming out and a new book co-written with Deborah Beale titled *The Dragons of Ordinary Farm*. You can also check out some of his earlier tales, like *Tailchaser's Song* and *Caliban's Hour*. I think you won't be disappointed.

Ricky Ganci says

Even though it took me a lot longer to read this one, I think I liked it better than the second volume, chiefly because stuff happened. Through the middle of the book, the narrative remained plodding, the development of each random simworld being front and center of this story, but the end was exciting and the different pieces of the story began to fit together. Paul Jonas finally hooked up with Renie and !Xabbu, et al., who were reunited with Orlando and Fredericks, and we know a little bit more about the bird chick, whose real name is Ava, and what Dread's real objective has been the whole time, and now he's actually doing it. Things picked up—bottom line. And that makes a story enjoyable, even though Williams' writing style is a

bit...tiresome. Orlando dying sucks, because he was one of the more interesting characters in the story, and his relationship with Fredericks was getting pretty interesting, especially since we were starting to see things more from her perspective—I hope that continues. Other things: Sellars needs to get his rear in gear, because everybody has spent a lot of time wondering what he's about, and the back of the van is not the place for the guy around whom the main resistance to the Grail Brotherhood revolves. There's a lot of story left to tell, and with 1000 pages, I think that Williams has a good shot of making this overlong cyberpunk story worth the time I've spent reading it, that is to say, not reading other things. That puts a lot of pressure on the fourth book, but from what I understand about Williams, he's got a habit of wrapping his stories up well. I found it slightly amusing that he had Fredericks explain why "she" didn't like tLotR because of overdeveloped descriptions of a built world, while the author himself seems in love with outdoing Tolkien by creating infinite worlds in some crazy computer simulation. One more volume to go—will they find the kids? I certainly hope so; if not, what was it all for?

Patricia Hamill says

Fantastic!

Mountain of Black Glass is the third of Tad Williams' four Otherland books, but it is definitely not least. Paul Jonas finds himself in the role of Odysseus, confronting yet another incarnation of the winged woman who haunts his dreams. His ultimate goal, given to him by the bird woman, is to find Troy, but soon he is thrown into a nightmare as he is forced to live through the tribulations of his famous character in reverse order.

Meanwhile, Rennie, Martine, !Xabbu, Florimel, T4b, and Emily 22813 (from the Oz simworld) find themselves in a building. Not just any building, but one that stretches to infinity. Yet, like in the other worlds, they find and are able to follow the river. On the long trek through balconies, hallways and cavernous ballrooms, Florimel, Martine and T4b finally reveal their histories and motivations for responding to Sellers' call to Otherland. And then, disaster strikes.

Long Joseph, Rennie's dad, and Jeremiah are still monitoring Rennie and !Xabbu in the abandoned military facility, but their stories diverge when Joseph, tired of waiting, escapes on a foolhardy quest to see his son and maybe find something to drink. Of course, he makes things worse, adding to the danger when the organization who murdered the woman who was Rennie's friend and Jeremiah's employer takes note of and begins to follow him. Meanwhile, Jeremiah, left alone finds the silence, and perhaps his sanity, shattered when the unthinkable happens: the phone rings.

My favorite duo, the ailing Orlando and his pal Fredericks now travel through ancient Egypt, where Osiris (a.k.a. Felix Jongluer, leader of the Grail Brotherhood) reigns. Soon, they find themselves irresistibly drawn to a strange temple. But the mysterious winged woman (who they remember as the sleeping woman from the freezer) had released The Wicked Tribe into their care, and these flying monkey children have a plan that just might help Orlando and Fredericks survive their encounter with the looming structure.

The villains don't stand idly by while the heroes make their way through the simulation. Dread plans his revenge against his former comrades, attempting to unlock the power of the golden lighter. Jongleur makes deals with key members of the Grail Brotherhood as the final preparations for the immortality ceremony are put in place. Dulcie, one time co-inhabitor of the sim who spied on Seller's heroes, finds herself equally drawn to and frightened by her charming employer, Dread. And the forces put in play to keep Rennie and her friends from investigating the Otherland network and Grail Brotherhood and closing in on her physical location. And, of course, there is the ever present threat of The Twins, the nasty duo that haunts nearly every

simworld.

The tension and worry for the wayward heroes mount ever greater as the story progresses. The villains are heartless and clever, unrelenting in their personal and combined quests. The rich simworlds include both the familiar and the legendary, and those with a familiarity with the Iliad will find they cannot help to wonder just how closely the tragic tale will affect those caught up in its story.

I love this third installment in Tad Williams' Otherland series and would highly recommend it to people who enjoy epic sci-fi novels and who don't mind a story that takes its time. Those who have made it this far into the series will find that this is perhaps the best one so far.

Nick T. Borrelli says

I don't know what it is about this series, but the second and third books have really been just travelling, travelling, travelling, with no real advancement of the plot. The first book was spectacular but now it seems that Williams is content with showing the reader how cool each simulated world is rather than injecting any kind of mystery, intrigue, or hey - an actual story. Really disappointing as Tad Williams is one of my favorite fantasy authors. At this point I'm not even sure that I want to read the final volume.

terpkristin says

Audiobook from Penguin Audio
Narrated by George Newbern
Length: 27.25 hours

The sequel to City of Golden Shadow and River of Blue Fire, this is the third installment (of 4) in the Otherland series. As with River of Blue Fire, Mountain of Black Glass picks up where the last one left off. Where I rated River of Blue Fire 3 stars (it was a solid "middle book" in a series), this one gets 4 because of the time spent in Greek mythology, something I've always loved.

As a "middle book" in a series, it's hard not to say things about Mountain of Black Glass that I didn't say in my reviews for City of Golden Shadow or River of Blue Fire. The story started with key characters still separated (as they were at the end of River of Blue Fire), though much of the book was spent either a) moving them back together, b) exploring their pasts, learning more about their history, or c) giving the reader more insight into the Otherland network itself and the motivations of the people running the network. Unlike River of Blue Fire, in this book, many details seemed to "finally" be pieced together, so more complete histories of characters were formed. It was also a transformative time for some of the Otherland network owners/operators, as they put the final pieces together to try to gain immortality. Other characters, such as the psychopathic servant of the Otherland founder also get a lot of time in this book, as do the police officers looking into his murderous ways. Sellers, the old man who remains quite a mystery but seems to be some of the force that brings the heroes together, also has a key storyline, though it took quite a different turn from what I expected going into the story.

An adventure from proverbial cover to cover (since I listened to the audiobook), a lot of time in this book was spent with the characters all trying to reach the Otherland's version of Troy. One of the characters is actually Odysseus, while others play key characters in the Trojan War, including Achilles, his companion Patroclus, and even Diomedes. The character who became Odysseus was forced through the Otherland

simulation to re-enact Odysseus' story somewhat in reverse, having seemingly gone through the events of The Odyssey prior to living through the Trojan War, as told in The Iliad. Our other heroes also eventually ended up in Troy, but not without enduring some trying circumstances in a few different worlds. As one might expect, though, these experiences allowed them to learn more about the network itself, and will undoubtedly help them in their quest to overthrow the Otherland founders (The Grail Brotherhood) and save the children who seem to be trapped by the network.

It's not all sunshine and roses, though. After finally learning more about each character, becoming significantly more invested in each of them, it seems that one or more of them may have actually died through the course of the narrative. It's hard to tell for sure, and I suspect I'll find out what exactly happened when I finish the series with Sea of Silver Light, but the emotional gut punch was harder than I expected it would be. It's a credit to Williams' writing that I could simultaneously know how literally frail each of these characters are, playing a life and death game where they don't know the rules and the rules seem to change, yet still be surprised and saddened when harm (or death) comes to a character. Or how much I really hate Dredd, the servant turned monster, preying on Otherland users/members for his own fun and games.

Tad Williams again seemed to have fun with the simulation worlds, making alternate worlds of popular stories such as the previously-mentioned The Iliad and The Odyssey. There were at least two other worlds explored in this book. One seemed to be an "empty" world, what someone might consider the null space of code to be...since the Otherland network is only code, after all, it does make some sense that the users (our heroes and our villains) would sometimes find literally empty space. There was another world, a world of a house, the reference I didn't connect (if there was a literary reference, which I suspect that there was). Still, the worlds all felt real, were able to bring me in. This is especially true for the Trojan War. I have long been a fan of Greek mythology, and it was a fun but unexpected surprise to spend so much of this book in that world...at least, that simulated world.

The audiobook was great to listen to, if the narration was slightly slow. I listened to it slightly sped up (using the 1.5x feature for spoken word playback on my iPhone) and it seemed perfect. George Newbern does a great job making the characters come to life. Where some narrators can seem flat or one-note, he always makes it clear which character is talking, and further engages the listener by taking on the exclamation, the feeling of the words. If someone is surprised, for example, his voice lets you know it, you don't have to rely solely on supporting descriptors. He brings the book to life.

I'm looking forward to starting into Sea of Silver Light, which is queued up and ready to go. It's a good bit longer than any of the other books in the series (~10 hours longer than this one), but that just means I'll have to find more excuses to listen.

S.S. says

Whew! Williams had worn me down with so many words. # 3 moves faster and gives more character info, which is much needed if you've gotten this far.

Christopher says

Mountain of Black Glass is the next book and continues the adventures of the very disparate gang from the

previous book in which we see them start to come closer and closer together as they go through the various virtual world in an attempt to undo what the Grail Brotherhood are attempting to do and to healthy while doing it! :D

As in the previous book the characterisation is really great with all the characters feeling very different throughout! :D As the story progresses straight after the previous book we get to see some of the harder edges that we have seen in the previous books start to get knocked off our characters and the 'team' really starting to work together as they go through even more extremes than they have before which leads all of the disparate groups to eventually meet up at a Troy simulation which to their horror is right in the middle of the closing battles which put our characters in even more danger some of the on opposite sides which further complicates things! :D

The book is on an epic scale with each virtual world visited seeming to be a epic in itself though the irony is that many of the worlds visited are based on epics and this adds a little bit of dry humour to events which throughout can get very extreme with many of the characters really being put through the wringer! :D Though there is a lot of humour throughout which helps to put into context what some of the characters are up to! :D

For the first time in these books though we get to see all the characters and events coming together though and as this happens we get to see different perspectives on them and at the same time you also get to see how some of the characters in many of the simulations are actually becoming heroes as opposed to pretending to be ones which leads the books to a sense of building confrontation with the Grail Brotherhood throughout and it shows that Grail Brotherhood are about to meet there match but they simply do not know it yet! :D

There is also a great blending of cultures and different imaginings that go on throughout which means that anything can appear in any reality within the network that the characters are travelling throughout the book but at the same this also gives many of the scenes a very surreal feel and still adds to the mystery whether the action book has some fantasy elements in though all will no doubt be revealed in the next book no doubt! :D

The book is the third part in what is really a very large novel but it is a perfect setup for the next books with characters really realizing that they have arrived at their goal but things are not quite what they seem to be or was expected due to the inference of what has almost become their Nemesis! :D Though there are many secrets and mysteries still abounding which have to resolved so you are also kept guessing and throughout! :D

Brilliant and highly recommended! :D

Rik Leaf says

Ahhhhhh....the deep sigh that comes from plugging away at a series because you hope it will pay off. The pages start to weigh several pounds each and the effort required to keep turning them becomes a force of will.

Alexandra says

Der 3. Teil der SCIFI- Trilogie kommt nach dem spannenden Finale im 2. Teil in der Qualität bei weitem nicht an die ersten beiden Teile heran.

Erstens weil die Phantasie und Innovationskraft bzgl. der beschriebenen VR-Environments massiv nachläßt. Die Geschichte findet bis auf eine Ausnahme fast nur noch im alten Ägypten und in der Odyssee des Homer statt. Der Plot ist daher sehr absehbar und ohnehin hinlänglich bekannt. Zweitens bekommt die erneut zersplitterte Geschichte durch die getrennten Erzählstränge & Gruppen durch die schnellen und vielen Szenewechsel noch immer nicht mehr Struktur und wird, obwohl man schon alle kennt, sehr unübersichtlich.

Erst auf Seite 725 fand ich die erste wirklich geniale Idee, die daraus resultiert, dass die jungen Protagonisten fast gar nichts mehr lesen und dadurch völlig unwissend durch die Illias tapen, ohne zu ahnen, was ihnen durch die Verkörperung einer bestimmten Figur bevorsteht. Im antiken Troja werden die getrennten Gruppen und Erzählstränge auch wieder zusammengeführt, der Plot kommt dadurch so richtig in Schwung und erhält Struktur. Ab diesem Zeitpunkt geht es Schlag auf Schlag und die Story wird in gewohnter Williams Qualität extrem spannend.

Ich hoffe, ich muss diese Qualität nicht im 4. Teil gleich wieder vermissen.
3,5 Sterne für ein Sequel, das irgendwie in der Mitte stecken geblieben ist.

Rob says

Executive Summary: Things are really picking up in the 3rd of this 4 volume doorstopper.

Audio book: Another excellent job by George Newbern. With books as long as these, it's important to have a good narrator, and thankfully they've made a good choice. Clear, good volume, good inflections and a variety of voices making the audio a good choice.

Full Review

Both the previous two books in this series suffer from slower parts, and this one was no different. However, I found this one to have the fewest number of slow parts yet.

We finally start to get answers to many of the questions I've had since the first volume. Additionally the pace seems much better. Everything feels more important to the story and the characters journey for answers and not just some exercise in writing for the author.

The prose are once again excellent and I find myself increasingly attached to the characters. This is especially true of Orlando, Fredricks and !Xabbu. Renie who got on my nerves at times in the last book, was much less so in this book. Paul's plotline provides some of the best reveals of the series thus far, but I found myself a bit less interested in him as I was in the previous two books.

In this novel we start to finally get some convergence of several plotlines that had previously felt only loosely related to one another. We get yet even more new sim worlds to explore, but thankfully they don't seem to be explored for exploration's sake, but with real purpose to the plot. Many of the minor plotlines are starting to finally feel more important as well.

Unlike the previous two, where I found it was easy to take a break with something shorter/lighter, there was no way I couldn't jump into the fourth and final book with how this ends. Overall this has been a pretty enjoyable series for me and I'll be curious to see how Mr. Williams wraps it all up.

Andres says

Now that I'm done with this volume, I can look back in awe at how many pages I've turned to get to this point... and yet I can't honestly say it should have taken this long. I can still remember the sequence of the plot so far but the sheer amount of words seems too many for the amount of forward movement in the story. Everything is epic, for sure, but it cooled my enthusiasm that diving into new worlds would again cause a slowdown in the narrative momentum, with new information or revelations sprinkled here and there too far and few between (or vague in meaning, frustrating to reader and character alike) to be exciting. I'm not one to give up easily, though, and am eager to finish the series once and for all. This series is recommended for those with the stamina to make it through long, detailed, yet sometimes frustrating storytelling. Kind of like the television show *Lost*, which I'm a big fan of even if it does frustrate.

Chris says

1,800 pages into William's 4,000 page sci-fi virtual reality epic, I had to make a choice - Did nearly two-thousand pages of invested time mean I should finish the series, or did the fact that I was growing bored and I could devote 2,200 pages of my life to more worthwhile literature mean I should just cut my losses. I chose the latter. Even though the "main" plot was getting more and more interesting, it was being spread out further and further apart, as more and more of the books were being devoted to wandering through ancient mythical egypt, chess-land, giant-insect-land, et cetera. Cutting 50% of this series would have made a gripping sci-fi series; as it was, it was an exercise in self-indulged writing. I hope Williams had the same payment plan as Dickens.

Andrew says

I have no problem with multivolume doorstep epics; however Williams doesn't know where he's going and it shows. Characters stumble aimlessly through worlds, Williams kills off the metaphysical side of the story, and substitutes imagery for substance.

Gary says

While book three rated the same stars as book two in the series, it is worlds better to read. And the reason for that is there are fewer worlds. Rather than just throwing as much of his imagination at us as he can, in this book Mr. Williams actually only presents a few worlds, and time is left for some really decent character development and for plot formation. It was really refreshing to have "story" once again become part of the, well, story...

Three minor notations:

*dispersed character and plot elements begin to coalesce into a whole;

*editing skills (at least in the first half of the book) were once again an issue. It appeared as if editing was done in batches, then cut&paste back together. Four or five times where this batch cut&paste occurred there was an overlap of two to three words - up to an overlap of half a sentence. This forces the reader to reread,

then figure out the overlapping duplication and manually/mentally erase the repetition to bring sensibility back to the narrative flow.

*loved the way the "House" VR was approached and described (with its nod to nation/state cultures). One of my personal favorites.

Kaitlin says

Well this book was really, really good again! I think we can solidly say that Tad Williams is now a very firm favourite author of mine. I did feel that although I really love the different worlds within Otherland and seeing our team exploring them, this one actually didn't give us that many answers in terms of the overall plot direction until right at the end. I do think some of it could possibly have been cut to make it more exciting, but otherwise this is just more of the same super world from Williams.

This book particularly made me enjoy the characters of Orlando, Fredricks and Martine. Although each of these three I liked in the previous two books, this book was the one where they all became excellent characters for me and seeing the way they each dealt with the Simulations they ended up in and the problems they were faced with was great.

Martine's diary entries, each one ended with Code Delphi, are an excellent look into her character. We get to see how a blind woman experiences the world of Otherland through static and information rather than sight, and we also see how this 'ability' to sense the network helps her and the others out of tight spots.

Seeing Orlando and Fredricks' relationship develop in this book was beautiful and I think that their friendship was taken to a whole new level. I loved seeing Fredricks as he came to terms with understanding his own feelings and also decided to act for himself and take the lead when Orlando wasn't able to. Together they make for a great duo.

I also really liked seeing the Gods getting involved in the story more and the people outside the system like Long Joseph and the parents of Orlando and Fredricks. All of them played a really interesting role in explaining more of the world outside the network and also how, if you're rich, you can investigate properly... Christabel and Sellers remain favourites of mine, and I worry about the two of them and the stuff they face! I also like Olga and her on-going quest to find out what is happening to her because I think she will become ever more important.

Renie and !Xabbu are still firm favourites for me too, and seeing them also developing as a pair was great.

The world-building of this Network which our characters traverse is great and you never know quite where you'll end up. The two worlds I most enjoyed seeing in this book were the ever-expanding and never-ending house Simulation and the Trojan War Simulation. Both very interesting for vastly different reasons :)

Basically I love all the characters here and this book kept me hooked even though it is a little on the long side. I cannot wait to dive into book 4 (the final one) and really figure everything out!!! 4*s overall.
