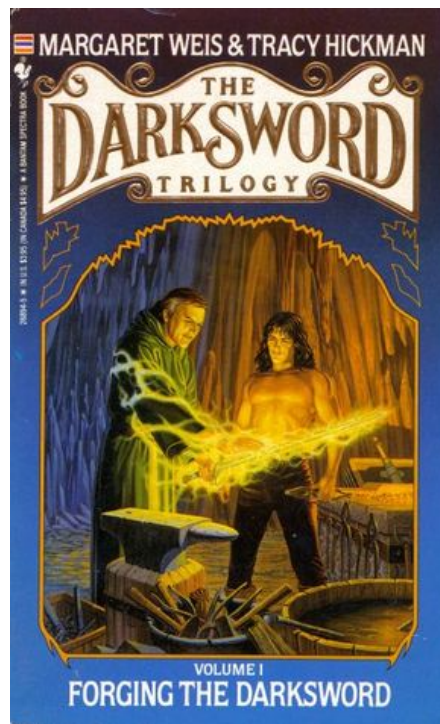




Forging the Darksword

Margaret Weis , Tracy Hickman

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In the enchanted realm of Merilon, magic is life.

Born without magical abilities and denied his birthright, Joram is left for dead. Yet he grows to manhood in a remote country village, hiding his lack of powers only through constant vigilance and ever more skillful sleight-of-hand.

Forced to kill a man in self-defense, Joram can keep his secret from the townspeople no longer: he has no magic, no life. Fleeing to the Outlands, Joram joins the outlawed Technologists, who practice the long forbidden arts of science. Here he meets the scholarly catalyst Saryon, who has been sent on a special mission to hunt down a mysterious "dead man" and instead finds himself in a battle of wits and power with a renegade warlock of the dark Duuk-tsarith caste.

Together, Joram and Saryon begin their quest toward a greater destiny--a destiny that begins with the discovery of the secret books that will enable them to overthrow the evil usurper Blachloch...and forge the powerful magic-absorbing Darksword.

Forging the Darksword Details

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Author : Margaret Weis , Tracy Hickman

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From Reader Review Forging the Darksword for online ebook

Werner says

This isn't an actual review of the book (since I only read the first six chapters), just a short explanation of why I didn't finish it. This is one I was reading out loud to my wife, but neither of us were getting into it. (As Barb put it, "It's not getting any worse, but it's not getting any better, either.")

Normally, we both like the fantasy genre, so we were game to experiment with two new-to-us authors, having found the trilogy at a yard sale. But to me, the world-building here wasn't very plausible, in several respects, and the world Weis and Hickman create isn't inviting or appealing. I also didn't connect emotionally with any of the characters. Granted, six chapters in, main character Joram isn't introduced yet. But that points up another problem I had: the story structure and pacing is VERY slow and ponderous (and I have a higher tolerance for that sort of thing than most readers!). The authors were obviously intending to develop a magic vs. technology theme, and maybe other serious themes; but while I'm not sure where they were going with any of these ideas, I wasn't interested enough to find out. Facing a whole trilogy written like this was too daunting a prospect.

Weis and Hickman have an enormous following, so obviously there are readers who really like this. Barb and I just aren't in that company.

Samuel Elizondo says

En mi opinión, es un excelente libro, a pesar de las malas críticas que llegue a leer aquí. Demasiado bien escrito, lleno de intriga y una buena historia, recomendado al 100%.

Excellent book, perfectly written, with an amazing story! 100% must read if you like fantasy!

Angie says

I enjoyed this book and read it only because it was given to me as a gift. The beginning was great.. though I will say the end kinda slowed down. I will read the next two books. Glad for once a series does not go on and on and on. I am interested to see how the "prince" was saved from being killed.

Alex says

This book called to me as a teenager. Sadly, a teenager with very little money for books, and my friend's library, which I continually raided, didn't include this one. It was me, after all, who had the slight Dragonlance fetish. It seems too easy to get hold of these things these days and so perhaps slightly obscure books with butch men forging swords on the cover have lost their otherworldly charm and mystique a little, and yet I still felt a little boyish excitement picking this up, despite the inevitability that it would just provide another 3* time filler as opposed to great literature.

Well, I plumped for 4 stars in the end and I have a little smirk on my face. No, of course this book isn't **that**

good, but blow me if Weis and Hickman didn't shoot for something a little more earthy here, that you could get your teeth into away from the cliched types and exclamations of "look, a dragon!!! "look, a villain!!!! Look, a MAGIC SWORD!!!" Yes, despite being called "Forging the Darksword" this book is a conscious attempt by the authors to, not exactly subvert fantasy cliché, but at least to sidestep it a little and bring it along only where it suits the story they are trying to tell. And it's a roaring success -

that is, if you're a little patient.

See, it's not really structured like a typically fantasy saga either, even though it's ostensibly the tale of an orphan finding he's part of a prophecy ETCETERA There's an odd, awkward, preamble involving other characters that sort of feels gratuitous, but isn't. There's a prologue and then another semi-prologue There's then a jump back to the orphan-figure, but the story then shifts back elsewhere and doesn't ever seem to decide if it wants to be full of subtler intrigue and psychology or rootin-tootin' adventure. You could argue that Weis and Hickman are just plain confused, or you could suggest that they are trying to weave in elements to their tale previously missing. Well, personally I would argue that those elements are not entirely missing from their Dragonlance stories, it's just that people didn't notice that they were there, through the fog of all that fantasy cliché and high adventure. Subsequently, what Forging the Darksword feels like to me is both a progression and more the sort of book that the authors always wanted to try and write.

It's really not perfect. The narrative doesn't feel stable, and whilst the viewpoint switching does add another dimension to the storytelling it also alienates us from the characters a little. By the end I didn't feel that I loved either Joram or Saryon but I'd been asked to adventure along with them in the second book. However. I did feel that I had a strong sense of their situation and their motivations and how the world works. I didn't feel engaged with the world politically or geographically, but I did feel enough of a connection that I wanted to know more. (Interestingly, the Death Gate Cycle really does go on to perfect the sense of place that's lacking here). I think what surprised me the most is that this duo can write, and write well once they drop the cliché. No, the prose doesn't hit you with its lyrical description, but W@H have finally developed an uncluttered, unobtrusive style that serves their narrative beautifully. It's blissfully free from the pretension of worse fantasy writers, - if the overall structure of the book feels wonky, on a chapter-per chapter basis it reads like a charm.

What of the central conceit. A world where everyone is filled with magic, such that if one is without it one is considered "dead". I doubt this is entirely original but it worked as a spin on the tropes going around nevertheless and if nothing else it allowed that really nicely written prologue about the perfectly alive baby being declared dead that, for my money, showed that Margaret Weis is indeed in love with Charles Dickens and those odd little bizarre occurrences whereby he shows what ought to be abnormal as normal. It got me on board with the whole saga. In terms of characters, Joram is also a fairly interesting anti-hero. he's sympathetic, but not loveable and seems to be dabbling with powers outside of his control. There's little gung-ho about him and he's not naively charming; he wants revenge for his mother's death but his impulses and dramatic urges are never painted as ridiculous Saryon's lack of courage, or his failure to see through on his initial rebellious streak makes him a character with also a little more to offer and as a sidekick for Joram it should go on to make for some unusual situations and interactions. The main villain of this piece is slowly revealing his true colours, whilst the side-quest bad guy in the final third I really warmed to as a nasty piece of work. it was fun seeing him brought down and our "heroes" bonding over his downfall.

I don't like reviewing book one of a trilogy - I don't know where the story is going or how it will progress. Maybe book 2 will tear down all of the good things this opening entry in the series has set up. It's tough writing 1,000 pages of solid story, though and that's one reason I can forgive a little narrative jumpiness here (or an apparent slow pace that others have commented on - it's not slow, it's about right for a 1,000 page epic). Weis and Hickman's catalogue is variable, that's for sure, but I'm quietly confident that book 2 will deliver the goods.

Simon says

Of all the Weis & Hickman books, this trilogy was my favourite. Looking back, it was the most original and interesting (in terms of characters, world building and premise). Far outshining the much beloved (and far more well known), formulaic "Dragonlance" books that preceeded it. Freed from the shackles of having to write a fantasy trilogy as a companion piece to the D&D module packs, they were able to explore their imagination more fully and structure the plot more appropriately.

Okay, if I read it now I probably wouldn't rate it quite as highly but I still think that it stands up fairly well, unlike most other books they wrote before or since.

Quintin Zimmermann says

I generally love pulp fantasy (see definition in other reviews). Unfortunately, this dark, foreboding entry into the Dark Sword Series by the generally bankable duo Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman really disappointed.

A solid start and premise meandered into a slow plot caught in a snail pace with unlikeable characters that couldn't break the constraints of their archetypes.

For pulp fantasy it committed the cardinal sin of being boring and burdensome.

Definitely not pure escapism...

David says

I got this trilogy from a rental store. I wasn't expecting much of it given it's poor condition at the time but I decided to try it as I noted that it was written by the ones who wrote the Dragonlance Chronicles trilogy.

Boy was I surprised. It turned out to be another original work coming from those two and it was an atypical fantasy story. The protagonist and the supporting characters are very well fleshed out and very interesting - the bitter and unloved Joram, the amusing but enigmatic Simkin, the amoral Bishop Vanya, and the empathic flaws and burdens of Saryon. Add powerful characters to a very well described society and culture made the story that much more evocative and intriguing. Definitely a good read.

Richard says

The trilogy that got me into reading as a teenager. My rating probably reflects this. It's a great one for teenagers just getting into fantasy books etc...

Sam Grace says

God, I KNOW Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman suck. Man, my middle school obsession was Dragonlance, for goodness' sake! But it was just sitting there in my office while I was babysitting the copy machine, so I picked it up. And, just as I remember, every character is undeveloped, every event forced, the only thing they've got going on is some half-decent worldbuilding and the sorta pathetic twist that the "evil Sorcerors" (secretly the good guys, right?) are actually NON-magic users in a world of magicians. Color me unimpressed. Still, it was more interesting than watching the copy machine copy for four hours, so I'll give it at least one star.

Cass says

Very good. These two writer are a great pair. This one reminds me of their other books, which just made me content. Theme was dark and ... damp. Deliberate tempo, filling it with explanations and character building which I enjoyed, with pace raising at the end. They created an interesting and believable form of magic, called "Life" and showed how this reality developed routines, predigests (against those who were Dead") even changed architecture by never cutting wood, stone but growing it instead. (They grew the trees into huts, loved that picture.) I have the next 2 in the series at the library. Cant wait to devour them.

Ithlilian says

I wasn't going to write a review on this book since I had a negative experience with it, but after a look at the other negative reviews I felt the need to give an educated opinion on Forging the Darksword. The sequence of events in the beginning of the novel is a bit hard to get into, but I enjoyed the events being presented, so I continued reading. Though I usually don't like books that start when an ending and then go back in time, I continued with this one because it wasn't really the ending, but the middle that the novel started with. Even after the way the novel opened, the plot was interesting. The magic system was explained, and an interesting character was described. I lost a bit of interest when the book changed point of view to the child Joram. His upbringing was of little consequence and lasted far to long for me. My interest was lost completely when fairies were thrown into the equation. Strange babbling Simkin and the outlaw camp plot was extremely boring to me. The evil mage felt flat, he was certainly evil, but when the time came for him to do something bad I was so uninterested that it hardly phased me. I knew that a sword would be created, and that it would be evil. The war that was hinted at a few times did not seem important, and it didn't really seem to involve the characters of the story either, so I see no reason to continue this series. All of the events that occur in this novel are summarized on the jacket, and I feel that nothing special was added by reading it. Another disappointing Weis/Hickman read.

Wired76 says

I am happy to say I was pleasantly surprised this book didn't suck as much as I was worried it would. (That opening says a lot about where I am with Weis and Hickman at this point.) That said, Weis and Hickman generally do a solid job when it comes to the first novel in a series. "Dragon Wing" was a really great start to the "Death Gate Cycle," and "Will of the Wanderer" was equally solid for "Rose of the Prophet." It's usually the last book in a series -- the "Seventh Gates" and the "Prophets of Akhrans" -- that dissolve into rushed

endings, divine interventions, and character assassination. I'm hoping we avoid that fate this time. After all, I have four more books ahead of me.

"Forging of the Darksword" soars when it comes to worldbuilding. Thimhallan is unlike any other world I've encountered in fantasy. Its concept of magic as a universally held (if differently practiced) ability is revolutionary. All people are born into one of the nine Mysteries that define how they will come to use magic. This caste system creates interesting power dynamics, such as the catalysts (i.e., the "Darksword" series' priest class) possessing little magic of their own but controlling everyone else's access to it. However, Weis and Hickman make it clear everything isn't going according to plan. Over time, two of the nine Mysteries -- Spirit and Time -- have disappeared, robbing humanity of the power to speak with the dead or create portals through space. Moreover, the Mystery of Technology was banned after the church blamed it for the widespread destruction of the Iron Wars; the practitioners of this Mystery now live in exile in the Outlands. Weis and Hickman will return to this theme of a system not working the way it should in the "Death Gate Cycle."

But, Thimhallan faces a more direct threat to magic as this novel opens: an increasing number of people are born "Dead," lacking any access at all to magic. (Weis and Hickman largely ignore this development in this novel, but it seems likely to drive the action in later novels.) Moreover, Thimhallan's origins are also innovative. (view spoiler) Overall, I would say these well timed revelations about Thimhallan's secrets are really what kept me turning the pages.

As usual for Weis and Hickman's post-"Legends" output, characterization is the weakest part of the novel. That said, it isn't as bad as it could be. I have to give credit to Weis and Hickman for the darkness that pervades this book: the protagonists range from depressed asshole to fallen priest to unrequited lover. No character could be described as the good guy at the start, and that description would fit everyone even less well by the end. (view spoiler)

Looking at the next two books, we have some obvious questions Weis and Hickman are going to need to address. (view spoiler)

Despite some drawbacks, though, this novel was really a page-turner for me, and I'm excited to move onto the second installment of this series.

Jakk Makk says

I keep acquiring these Weis books out of some misplaced nostalgia or unknowable impulse. Perhaps because I liked the Dragonlance characters, but never read her books. I never finish them. I've tried at least four. I asked a friend why this might be. She said, "Well, didn't they suck? Quit buying everything with a sword and a logo."

Chandra says

A very different fantasy novel set in a world where magic is the norm and the non-magical is considered an abomination. This is the reason fantasy exists. To examine issues that occur in modern times, but without all the baggage and politics that comes with those issues in reality. This is usually more effective than writing about an issue straight forwardly and allows readers and writers to explore the theme in safety.

From what I've read, this was inspired by groups which targeted Dungeons and Dragons in the 80s as being Satanic without really understanding or having played the game. But the ideas can be pretty applicable to many modern controversial subjects.

While there isn't much in the way of action in this volume (at least not until the very end), I was compelled to continue reading for the unfolding of the culture and the world building aspect. I have already started to read the second book now that I have a handle on this fantasy world and look forward to the character arcs and growth.

Pam says

Nope, don't remember this one at all. Clearly recommended to me in 1995 by my boyfriend, Joey...hee hee he's my husband now...this is not the type of book I typically chose then or now. I have a list that says I finished it on 7/14/1995, so I'll go ahead and believe that. But, since it's a trilogy and I never read anymore books in the trilogy...not sure how much I enjoyed it. Good to see I was branching out back then, though!

entered into goodreads: 6/7/2015

PS Just asked my former boyfriend if he remembers the book, and he went on to describe it capably according to the summary on goodreads. He's probably read 1000+ books since then, so the fact that he can remember this one totally blows my mind. It may have been the first fantasy trilogy he ever read. <3
