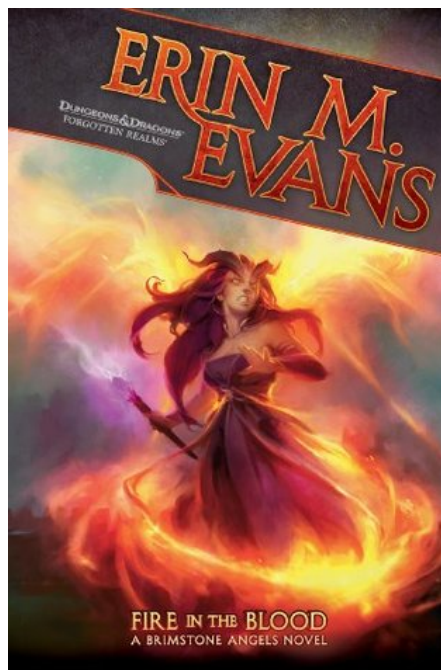




Fire in the Blood

Erin M. Evans

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SCRIBE- award-winning author, Erin M. Evans, continues the riveting tale of her Sundering character, Farideh, as she becomes embroiled in a Forgotten Realms-flavored game of thrones.

In a direct follow-up to the third book in the Sundering series, *The Adversary*, young warlock Farideh falls into the midst of a battle for the throne of Cormyr. As the war brought on by the Sundering rages across Faerûn, princes and princesses, wizards and rogues scheme to capture the seat of power of the Land of the Purple Dragon—with Farideh and her allies caught squarely in the middle.

Fire in the Blood Details

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From Reader Review Fire in the Blood for online ebook

Nicolas Carrillo-Santarelli says

This book was a really nice surprise and, to tell the truth, among the most fun and exciting fantasy books I have read in quite a while. Furthermore, the book, while remaining faithful to the things and staple that make many love fantasy and pseudo-medieval literature, offers many things that other books in the genre do not, and does so quite well: the portrait and handling of feelings and romance in an interesting way. As a male reader, I can say that this aspect was quite intriguing and interesting, and that apart from the plots related to warfare and court mysteries the romance aspect is as much fun as the others.

From the point of view of style, it can be said that Ms. Evans is a very skilled writer, and keeps the reader interesting and, truly, unable to put down the book, which is part of a broader series. Regarding this, I had not read previous books in it but, being familiar with the Forgotten Realms (which is not, in my opinion, the best setting of D&D, with Eberron and others having quite interesting aspects, and so I miss novels in other settings, that the publisher has not endorsed in a long time), it was not difficult to understand what is going on. Moreover, the internet eases things nowadays. That being said, the book is not the last in the series, and so the reader will likely bemoan and be quite impatient awaiting for the next book: yes, it is quite good and, as I said, Evans is a very good writer.

From the point of view of the plot, the book deals with a potential problem of succession in a kingdom that is being attacked and is embroiled in a difficult armed conflict, and different characters engage in different operations: some try to discover agents trying to weaken the realm from within by means of espionage and investigation (helped by mystical powers) while others seek an heir that may have died or not. As can be seen, it is very interesting. The book is long, but because of how fun it is, the reader will want for more in the end.

On the other hand, it must be noted that the author subtly endorses certain aspects of the so-called "culture wars", and while I do not agree with all their implications, freedom of expression and the fact that the author does so openly do not make the book be negative in that regard, in my opinion. After all, respectful exchange of ideas is important.

That being said, in my humble opinion, and aware that others may think otherwise, the book is not perfect, and that is because of something substantial: how certain things, basically supernatural ones, are handled. This is because of two things: firstly, because the two tiefling characters deal with fiendly powers and gain abilities from them and exchanges with others, and still it never feels like they may be corrupted or endangered as a result. In fact, the character Farideh is portrayed as nigh incorruptible, and while I support the idea that those who deal with evil powers may be redeemed, she (and Havilar) are depicted as almost pure and without being tainted in any respect. Actually, in the end she casts a quite evil spell dealing with the dead, and yet it has no consequence according to the writer. On top of this, good and benign beings are cast in a bad light: paladins, for example, or good powers/deities, as Torm, whose healing is described as almost cruel and painful. I honestly disagree with this and think that the easy depiction of evil beings detracts from the tension and plot of the book, actually making evil appear as irrelevant and not real. I do think that the characters, by dealing with evil powers, may not be as pure as they are shown to be in the book, and may have opened the door to quite serious and evil consequences or serious risks, which yet are totally missing. Of course, things may change in the next book, and I hope they do.

Thus, the book is quite fun and engaging, but it was difficult for me to like the sections dealing with the supernatural, which may reveal an ethical relativist stance I disagree with for theoretical reasons, and because the consequences of acts are not taken to their full extent.

Troy Taylor says

I picked up *Fire in the Blood* at GenCon, intending to have Erin Evans sign a copy -- but the autograph line to her booth stretched too far around the wall for me to stay -- it was GenCon after all, and I had appointments of my own to keep.

So while I didn't come away with the author's signature, I did have a 464-page work, another rousing story of the adventures and romances of the tiefling twins Farideh and Havilar. On balance, a success.

I am not to be hurried. And in truth, I wasn't about to be hurried with this, which held the promise of being Evans' best effort in the series to date. This one I wanted to savor. And so I did, reading a section here, and a section there, stretching out my enjoyment over several months. This was a novel you could set down for a few days, read a portion, and never feel you've left.

Not a thing to be rushed.

The novel lived up to the billing -- mostly because Evans resolved the structural issues that sapped her previous work in the series, *The Adversary*. Havi's story, and those of the other supporting characters, took on more meaning -- and with the addition of a certain, well, shall we say, ally, (no spoiler here) some much needed punch to her characterization. Fari came out of her funk, and her story was sizzling crisp. Her scenes in the palace, especially with the beleaguered regent, Princess Raedra, were juicy, political interplay at its best.

Moreover, Fari's done mooning over her brightbirds, Lorcan and Dahl. She's a full adult now, a woman finding her way in some difficult relationships -- but meeting them head on as a hero should. The teenage angst is gone. This, above all else, makes Evans' characterization of her loves and romances a fresh addition to shared-setting fantasy fiction. I am still not sure what Fari exactly **wants** from Lorcan and Dahl in these relationships -- maybe Fari doesn't yet either.

Even so, the author has moved beyond infatuation and into the kind of territory you don't usually get from these novels. Again, it is refreshing to see these things being explored in an adventure tale.

She even threaded a needle not of her construction -- one of the restraints of writing in shared fiction, in this case, the "world" that Ed Greenwood and Jeff Grubb constructed for a roleplaying game: The "law" that Cormyr nobles lose their spot in the succession if they are resurrected. In dialog, one of the characters calls it a "silly law" and I couldn't agree more -- at least within the context of a *Dungeons and Dragons* novel. It was an artificial construction that took some of the steam out of two very powerful scenes in the novel. Yet, Evans navigated the restriction as well as anyone could -- and still came away with a strong moment, a powerful sacrifice, and the chance for our heroines to shine. (I contend the storytelling would have been stronger without the "silly law", and the sacrifice more meaningful, especially making one character's motivations deeper and more heart-rending -- but an author must work within the parameters of the setting.)

The ending on Page 444 was satisfying. I could have done without the epilogue that follows, which reads more like the first chapter of the next novel in the series. But we live in this age of the "false" cliffhanger, the lure for the next installment we only used to have to endure from monthly comic books and the daily soap operas. It didn't figure in my rating, however. I just lament it. This is a four-star novel, outstanding and enjoyable. I don't need a dangling storyline to bring me back for more of Farideh and Havilar adventures.

Daniel says

An immediate continuation to *The Adversary* (Evans' contribution to *The Sundering* series of loosely-tied together stand-alone novels detailing world-shifting events to the *Forgotten Realms* shared universe), *Fire in the Blood* is also the fourth novel in her successful *Brimstone Angels* plot line. I entered into Evans' series with *The Adversary* and reviewed it here, explaining that it worked remarkably well for a reader who was unfamiliar with the characters and storyline. Moreover I was staggered over how much I enjoyed her rich characterization and pacing, remarking that it was easy to forget this was a media tie-in, which while frequently fun aren't noteworthy for originality or depth. Most all of my thoughts on *The Adversary* held equally true for *Fire in Blood*. In many aspects I think it is even improved.

The one caution I mention is that I'm not sure this would be an ideal entry point if you are unfamiliar with the story/characters. To Evans' credit, she does a great job at summarizing what has previously passed without making it intrusive on the current story. So it is possible to start here, but not the most logical choice. Go back at least to *The Adversary*, or as I have just finally done, find a copy of the first *Brimstone Angels* novel and enjoy the catch up. This is a series for fantasy fans worth investing in even if you don't read *Forgotten Realms*, as long as one likes classically styled epic fantasy with compelling characters male and female both. Evans is an asset to this shared universe, and judging by comments she made in an interview in *Women Destroy Fantasy!*, her style and concerns for diversity may hopefully become more familiar and present in the world of media tie-in novels.

But back to *Fire in the Blood*...

To start with, *Fire in the Blood* already improves over its predecessor with a more compelling title, an evocative description of Evans' characters, particularly the twin stars Farideh and Havilar. These women (tiefplings) have had difficult lives with various forces mortal and immortal trying to influence and control them, to possess them. Yet despite these forces of the world seeking to define them, they remain strong-willed individuals with fire inside to keep struggling for independence and a bit of their own happiness. The theme of forces larger than an individual forcing people into difficult choices and compromised promises and principals is common to all of the characters in *Fire in the Blood* and *The Adversary*. It is the heart of what makes the books so interesting and characters so compelling.

The plot of *Fire in the Blood* adds complexities from previous events, twists and turns that are almost Whedon-esque. Sometimes enemies are not so clear, and assumed friends may not be able to really support someone because of complications in their own lives, plots. I won't try to summarize all the different plot elements here in the story, the official blurb for the novel is somewhat vague presumably because so much is happening here, much dependent on what has gone before. The plots are a complex web, encompassing a large extended cast of characters that include even additional numbers from the previous installment. Erin Evans is a superb juggler. The pacing stays tight and the various balls of each plot element are kept in play, blending and separating with no breakdown in the trick. All of this while still recovering details of the past to make sure that readers don't become lost. Impressive.

In *The Adversary* one of the things I didn't enjoy much compared to the rest was her male characters. They seemed to be stronger 'types' than the females, not as rounded, and not nearly as interesting (except for Lorcan) compared to the others. In *Fire in the Blood* these male characters grew more on me, particularly due to escalating dilemmas for the character of Brin who is facing engagement to a royal, and his heart isn't really in it. As I became invested in more and more of Evans' characters the more the entirety of the plot and the world opened to me, like the best of epic fantasy reading experiences.

A healthy mixture of action, romance, and rich characterization in a nicely readable package makes this one that I'm looking forward to rereading within the order continuity as I go back to start at the beginning before the next volume comes out.

Disclaimer: I received a free advanced reading copy of this from Wizards of the Coast via NetGalley in

exchange for an honest review.

Timothy Pecoraro says

When I heard that Erin Evans was doing a sequel to Adversary I was pretty surprised. Not because Wizards of the Coast is unknown to do sequels even sequels within a series as Adversary was in the Sundering Series. But more because, the book was so middling. It seemed like the author created it for something else and then transplanted it into the Forgotten Realms rather than making completely from the ground up for the world. When I read the book, I kind of imagined that the author owed Wizards a book and this was her way of fulfilling your obligation. I guess I was wrong and I must to some degree apologize to Erin Evans for this supposition; because Fire in the Blood is an excellent book and while it took me almost a month to read it. When I reached the end I could hardly believe that I didn't want it to end.

Everyone from the first book is back and while I was very critical of the characters the first time around. I have to admit they grew on me. I was less excited about the setting as the whole Netherese War is REALLY wearing out it's welcome. But the actual plot and the characters who participate in it are interesting and I was surely hooked all the way to the end. Also, as this appears to be the first in a series of it's own. I was pretty happy that the author executed on it so well. All of the things I disliked about the first book seemed better explained and the quality of the writing itself was better. The end was especially well done. While I was a little put off by the fact that one of the major plot lines that at least is represented to the reader as a major plotline, is not dealt with in the end. I can certainly understand that the author is using this to get people to read the next book in the series. Which is good, often Wizards books have no through line plot which makes each one almost too self contained.

While this series is definitely not my first choice in the worlds of Wizards of the Coast; I have to say that from my perspective it gets the award for VERY MUCH IMPROVED. If you even liked the characters from the Adversary you owe it yourself to read this book. But if you haven't read the Adversary you need to, I've seen a lot of people complain about not being able to follow this book coming to it cold. Which is understandable, and while I didn't love the first book; I did give it three stars. So it isn't bad, it just wasn't great.

Frank says

I am glad I made it this far into the series. The best Brimstone Angels book I read so far.

Awesome!

Jonathan says

[Brin's engagement (hide spoiler)]

Brandon says

General Discussion Responses and Review:

Prior to reading

1) Why this book? What do you know about it? General comments, etc.

This is the 4th book in the brimstone angel's series by Erin Evans. I begin the series with book 3 (the Adversary) and loved it. Obviously there was a lot that I missed by not reading the first two. Specifically, some of the intricate politics of the hells can be confusing without the background, but it's not enough to spoil the story.

This book should give us a look at the fallout from the events of the adversary, and what life will be like for Farideh and Havilar as they attempt to assimilate back into Cormyr after losing 8 years.

During Reading

1) Favorite character - who do you relate to the most?

I can easily relate to Farideh and Havilar feeling out of place at times, like outcasts. While literal here, it's an interesting comparison to the real world and people who struggle with fitting in. When someone seems to care about them, the first response is: no you don't.

More than anything though, I relate to Dahl. He's fallen from grace in a way. He used to be in the favor of Oghma, but he lost that favor and it's been a mark on him since. He's constantly searching for answers as to why, trying to validate things, but it's only when he finally stops and reflects on everything that he realizes his faults. His quote that he "cared more about being right than being true" is an important ideal. I think at times many others (myself included) do the same thing. We care more about being right than about what the truthful right thing to do is. Sometimes we have to put egos, arrogance, etc., aside and simply be genuine and honest.

2) How do the secondary characters contribute?

There are a LOT of characters to keep track of here, and the line between main character and secondary character is pretty blurred.

Sometimes they create interesting side relationships as with Dumuzi becoming a house companion and pseudo bodyguard for Farideh, Farideh and Raedras budding (almost sisterly) relationship in Havilar's absence, Dahl's ongoing feud/relationship with Vescaras, the Sairche-Lorcan sibling rivalry (taken to a terrifying level). These side relationships were complex in and of themselves and helped to develop the main characters as well.

3) Favorite moments, passages, quotes

Two moments that stand out to me are Farideh's confrontation with Lorcan and Dahl's "aha" moment. Farideh grows a lot in this book, and she finally stands up to Lorcan when she says enough is enough. It's the first time that Lorcan doesn't seem to have the upper hand with her. He's at a loss for words. Words are his weapon, so when this happens, he's basically unarmed.

Dahl's prayer to Oghma was a really pivotal moment for me. He realizes his faults, and that he should focus on what is true - being honest with himself. He simply said and did things in the past because he thought they were the right thing to say or do, and in some cases he cared most about being right. But this isn't what Oghma teaches.

After Reading

1) Themes?

"Weight" of war - apparent throughout the novel. It drives many of the characters into developing against their will, or forces them to make decisions that they aren't comfortable making. In a time of war you sometimes have to decide between what you "want" to do, and what you "need" to do. In many cases this means following your brain over your heart, or weighing the lives of few against many.

Choices - These novels are very good at making us question what we would do if we had to choose between the lesser of two evils. Quite literally, since several choices in the book revolve around making a deal with a devil. How do you choose between the good of your country and your heart? There are several instances where havilar/farideh/dahl make a choice that will hurt a few to save many.

Acceptance and Redemption - Farideh finally realizes that shes being manipulated - a pawn in a bigger game. Havilar is able to think with her head instead of her mind and realize that the relationship with Aubrin is not something in her best interest anymore. Maybe most importantly, I thought Dahl's story of acceptance and redemption was the most moving - his fall from Oghma's preference was due to him wanting to be right rather than seeking the truth. By realizing this, and forgetting what is "right" and rather looking for the "truth" he finds redemption with Oghma.

2) Describe the characters and how they interacted with the main plot? How did they develop throughout the story? how strong/important were the relationships between primary and secondary characters?

Aubrin, Raedra, and Havilar were at the mercy of the plot for most of the book. Raedra increasingly has the weight of her familial responsibility to Cormyr on her shoulders, but needs the support of Aubrin to hold the country together. The deaths of her family members, the disappearance of Aubrin, and the impending seige all move her forward faster than she wants to go.

Aubrin has been put in a situation (albeit by his own doing) that he wants no part of. His responsibilities to Cormyr are also weighing on him. In a way, his "quest" is nothing more than an escape from what appeared to be the inevitable - that he would have to marry Raedra and convince Havilar to be his mistress. The plot doesn't seem to have any holes for him to escape from this inevitability, and it slowly drives him crazy, to the point of really becoming a different character altogether. By the end of the story, his only way of vindicating himself is to "start over"

Havilar is caught in the middle of the major plots for both Raedra and Aubrin. She's "along for the ride" so-to-speak. The position changes her, makes her realize what's important, and ultimately helps her to build a tougher skin when it comes to her relationship with Aubrin. She also can't stop the powers of Asmodeus from transforming her into a chosen, and by the end of the novel seems to embrace it.

These three characters created a very complex love triangle. Complex because it wasn't necessarily a triangle, but, as Raedra described it, two completely different battles being fought. Raedra may have once loved Aubrin, but doesn't now; instead, she's trying to fulfil a duty and unite a country. Her relationship is more a responsibility. Havilar began a relationship out of love, but realizes that it becomes something that will require every second of her attention just to keep it afloat, and at the expense of Cormyr.

On the other side of the coin, a few characters drive the plot forward through their own developments. Farideh's rejection of Lorcan and acceptance of Dahl will have major repercussions. Lorcan is slowly losing his grip on Farideh, and it will be interesting to see what response will come from the hells because of it. Bringing Dahl into her life subjects him to potentially dire consequences.

Dahl finally makes good with Oghma. It looks like he's on his way to becoming a chosen yet again and returning to the order of Paladins. He's become increasingly involved in the main plot, and I'd expect him to continue to develop in the next book.

Lorcan is slowly starting to lose his control over the protagonists. While he seems powerful throughout the series, it's evident that his power only comes through manipulation, which is only possible through his words. When his words lose their weight, so does his manipulation and power. Farideh has begun to see through this, and without Sairche's support, he'll likely lose hold of Havilar as well. He's got the eye of asmodeus on him, which is never a good thing, so he'll be under immense pressure to succeed from now on.

The secondary characters added some very interesting relationships as well:

Dumuzi appears to be a set-up for an important future storyline. He developed a protective "bodyguard" relationship with Farideh, which allowed him to get close enough to the family to hopefully work with Mehen.

Sairche would appear to be moving toward becoming a main antagonist in the future. While she's been controlled by Lorcan for so long, she seems to have partnered with the brimstone angel. While a symbiotic relationship, they're both evil and out to dismantle asmodeus, so we'll have to see where this goes.

4) What was/were the setting/settings? how did they contribute to the tone, mood, plot, themes, etc?

A war-riddled Cormyr. It feels like the pressure of war and siege are around every corner. Every decision has the future of the country involved. This constant feeling sets the mood for the entire story.

While Brin, Havilar, et al spend most of the story in the Cormyrean countryside, I wish we could have "seen" more of this. It seemed like they were close to the front lines of war, but you didn't really feel like you were experiencing it at all.

5) What are some of the unresolved issues?

Lorcan - He's in a very compromised position at the end of the story. While it seems he's "taken care" of Dahl, I don't think Farideh is buying it. If he can't get her back, he'll have to answer to a lot of devils

Sairche - maybe the most intriguing cliffhanger. Sairche has partnered with the brimstone angel in what appears to be a combined plot to bring down the lords of the hells. This has only just begun, and will probably escalate in the future.

Farideh, Havilar, Mehen, Dumuzi - At the end of the story, it looks like they're all "going home." We'll probably see a non-Cormyr setting in the next story, and some clan-politics as well

Dahl - He's in a rough spot. Technically, he chose his family over Farideh, so it will be interesting to see how he gets back to her.

Ilstan - another intriguing antagonist of the future. He appears to have survived the tunnels and has embraced being the chosen of Azuth. Since Azuth is the god of spells, I imagine he/she may get stronger as the spellplague comes to a complete end.

6) Rate the book against others you've read. Compare/contrast.

I thought this was an extremely well written book. Specifically, the dialogue and character development were very compelling. Some of the intricate politics of the hells and the family trees were a little confusing at

times, but I wonder if much of that has to do with missing the first two books of the series. I would probably rate the prior book in the series (The adversary) slightly higher, but would still put this near the top of my forgotten realms books. The adversary had an interesting plot, but less character relationship development. Fire in the blood had a slower moving plot, and it seemed the plot was secondary to the character development. Should be a good starting point for some interesting storylines in the next book in the series.

Abhinav says

You can read the full review over at my blog:

<http://sonsofcorax.wordpress.com/2014...>

Erin M. Evans' Brimstone Angels series has proven to be quite a good one as it has progressed. These novels feature the tiefling twins Havilar and Farideh as the main characters, with a great cast of supporting characters, each of whom is different from the other. And as great as the characters are, the plots themselves have been fairly engaging on a minimal level. I love reading the adventures of these two, with Farideh struggling to learn more about her warlock pact with the cambion devil Lorcan, and Havilar falling in love with a fellow young adventurer Aubrin Crownsilver, and both of them managing all of that while also taking down the bad guys one by one.

In the recently released Fire In The Blood, the fourth novel in the series, we pick up from where we left off at the end of The Adversary last year. The characters have all made their way to the city of Suzail, the capital of the Cormyr empire where Aubrin happens to be a noble, and even one with a half-strong claim to the throne itself. Things have been pretty rough for everyone, and Erin M. Evans revisits the concept of "damned if you do, damned if you don't". Each character has to face a great many personal challenges as they are assaulted by tons of things on all sides, and have to figure out what they really want out of their lives and the events around them. Goes without saying really that Fire In The Blood is a pretty damn good novel and is certainly the best in the series so far.

With Farideh marked by Asmodeus, the archdevil God of Sin, as one of his Chosen by the end of The Adversary, it is clear that her personal troubles have gained a whole new complexity, the kind she doesn't need or want in her life. And with Aubrin (Brin) supposed to marry Raedra Obarskyr, a Princess of the Royal Blood of Cormyr, Havilar's life has taken an unfortunate turn as well. The sisters have faced down some really tough enemies in the past, but this time their enemy is life itself, for no sooner do they find themselves out of one predicament than another finds them, and now they are living in one of the most hostile cities on Faerun, in that they are rather unwelcome in Suzail and are also the butt of endless gossip.

But that's the kind of environment that Erin appears to thrive upon. She introduces several new characters in the novel, and each of them recommends himself or herself in one way or another. The two most significant of these characters are Raedra Obsarkysr and one of Cormyr's many War Wizards, Ilstan. Thrown together with these two at every turn, Havilar and Farideh must, in turn, fight against inherent racial bias and also prove their worth to everyone around them. The followers of Shar, the Goddess of Loss, are on the march for war across Faerun, and their current target is Cormyr itself, which is where the new characters come in and where the old characters rediscover themselves.

I've always loved Erin's characterization and she absolutely does not disappoint here. Farideh and Havilar are consistently presented as tough individuals, whether physically or mentally, and they are joined by the headstrong, but no less determined or decisive Raedra who certainly gives them a run for their money with the story here. Sure, with the cast being so big, not everyone gets to shine, but Raedra gets a lot of page-time

in the novel, and as the pages turn and move, she also undergoes a rather epic transformation that is sure to get you excited as you follow along on her journey.

Justin says

Having survived the Shade's internment camps and come to grips with the missing years in their life, Farideh and Havilar travel to Suzail, capital city of Cormyr. There, they hope to give Brin time to work out the problem of his engagement to the Princess of Cormyr, Raedra Obarskyr. At the same time, Farideh must wrestle with the recent discovery that she is a Chosen of Asmodeus, and the terrible power that comes with such an arrangement. Dahl and Vercaras also are in the city, and hope to investigate the disappearance of one of their Harper operatives in the city. But hoping for any respite to get one's bearings proves impossible, for Cormyr is at war with the Shade, and life in a country at war is anything but predictable.

This is my second Erin Evans book. I began reading with *The Adversary*, which I thought was excellent. This book, however, was another step forward. The challenge in the *Adversary* was largely one of isolation. This book, however, puts Fari and Havi at the center of a vast conflicts that erupt not just among political factions within Cormyr, but also between the nations of Cormyr and Netheril.

All of the major characters undergo a great deal of development in this book. Havilar must wrestle with the strains that reality place on her now-adult relationship with Brin, who is pulled between duty to his country and his love of Havilar. Farideh must continue to struggle with her relationship with Lorcan, the half-devil, and the question of whether to pursue it as a romance or write it off as nothing more than the pact. The character, however, who really surprised me in this book was Dahl. After returning, unexpectedly, to field operations in the *Adversary*, Dahl is back in full action in this book--and proves time and again to be exceptionally good at his job. He continues to be plagued by his fall from paladin-hood with Oghma, but his regrets over his past no longer smother him. In fact, he often thrives, and may be the most effective character in the book. We are also treated to a full development of Princess Raedra, who proves to be a nuanced, powerful figure in her own right, with no shortage of humanity. In many ways, this book is her story, and it's worth every page turn.

As with the *Adversary*, all of this goodness is rooted firmly to Forgotten Realms lore, both on Toril itself, as well on other planes, including the nine hells. There are nods to current events in the realms, including the current Tyranny of Dragons storyline. There are also references to events in other recent Realms books, such as the siege of Marsember in Troy Denning's *The Sentinel* and the future massing of armies to attack Myth Drannor, as told in Ed Greenwood's *The Herald*. I also found neat connections to other Realms stories that I'm reading. For example, Raedra made mention of Alusair Obarskyr, the Steel Regent, a prominent figure in Cormyr's history. She also an appearance in Tiberius's *Neverwinter Nights* module, *Saleron's Gambit*, which I was playing as a read this book. It is these kinds of connections that makes reading and playing in the Forgotten Realms so much fun.

This was the best book I've read all year long, and I've had a lot of fun reading this year. Highly recommended to everyone.

Shadowdenizen says

After the mediocre "Sundering" tie-in last book, this series is back to it's fine form.

Jay Quietnight says

Still engaging and unpredictable after four books. This is shaping up to be the best epic fantasy series I've ever read.

Kim says

I first entered Farideh's world when I explored the Sundering Series last year through NetGalley. The series was comprised of six distinct novels about the separation of two worlds and its impact on their respective peoples and gods. Farideh and her journey as a Chosen, one blessed by a specific deity for an unknown purpose, were explored in the third book of the series entitled The Adversary. Her journey continued in this new novel and involved many of the same characters that interacted with her in the previous book.

While much of the story centered around Farideh and her search to understand why she was called to be a Chosen, there were many moments when other characters had their moment in the spotlight. Her companions from the previous novel, including Havilar, her twin; Mehen, their father; Brin, lover to Havilar and betrothed to Readra; and Lorcan, archdevil that has Farideh under a pact, made up a large portion of the action and adventure in this novel. Even though much of what happened in the book followed the events of The Adversary, the author did a wonderful job inserting necessary information about the characters and their past decisions that I could have learned about them without having read the previous book beforehand. They were very much a mixture of good and evil, sinner and saint. Some were happy to switch sides whenever necessary while others were bothered greatly by the mere thought of going against their beliefs.

Struggles of the heart, struggles within the royal court and struggles on the battlefield were all on display in this particular novel. The pace of the story varied according to whatever was happening in the chapter at hand. Some of the chapters went by fairly quick as there were battles or fighting which propelled the story forward. Others moved slower as the intrigue and political maneuvering within the royal court between the nobles weighed the story down. There were three vastly different settings in which events took place. Each of these places also played a part in the speed at which the action occurred.

By the very end of the book, I was happy that I requested the book. The story answered many of the questions that lingered after reading The Adversary. It also left its own set of questions that I hope will be answered in another visit to Farideh's part of the world. Even with the few bumps in the road, there were many funny, sweet moments that mixed well with the serious ones. This book was written as a sequel of sorts, but it did very well as a stand-alone type of novel, in my opinion. If you're looking for an unusual heroine to root for in an abnormal adventure or simply love the world within the Forgotten Realms, then this book should be among your TBR pile.

James says

A great story about the slow corruption of a person using temptations within the gray zone. Some fun combat and encounters.

KostasAt says

8.5/10

In 'Fire in the Blood' Evans returns once again to her own, good style after the disappointing Sundering book (and the whole series too I could say) with the story becoming again more entertaining, with lots of fun, action and some very interesting new characters.

In this book Evans takes us to, the long-promised, Cormyr and Brin's hometown, with Farideh and Havilar getting entangled this time in a palace that is full of intrigues and machinations, as the highborn are fighting for a place to the crown, and with their own problems becoming only bigger; while also they will have to face an enemy that is threatening to destroy them all.

Evans's writing for me is one of the things, and probably the best, that keep me in this series and, although 'The Adversary' felt really forced, this book is no exception as she has done a very good at handling both the new characters and the story, and also continuing the events of the Sundering combining all that very beautiful.

Of course, sometimes the book feels that it has, perhaps, more stuff than needed but that doesn't stop Evans from making it into a highly entertaining adventure with lots of action and some nice twists, like she did with the first two books in the series.

Overall, this is a pretty good book and definitely an improvement from the previous book as Evans brings back that which we loved since the first book.

Joe says

In a follow-up to The Adversary, from the Sundering line of books, Evans follows Farideh and her crew in their further adventures in Cormyr. And while this novel has many of the elements I have come to expect from a D&D themed book, it also includes most of the elements I have come to expect from Evans as well. Specifically, characteristics of stories within the genre, but not the Forgotten Realms line. The political intrigue in this book swings for the levels reached by Martin, while the moral intrigue keeps up and even passes Salvatore in spots.

Additionally, there's a feel to the characters in her novels that doesn't ring similar to the other series in this line. In consideration, my only thought would have to be her recent entry into the Forgotten Realms line by comparison. I know it revived my interest in the setting from a fiction standpoint. Which, in turn, renewed my interest in it as a game setting. Sit that with Farideh being my favorite use of the warlock archetype (a favorite from the last incarnation of the game system), and the series will have my attention.

If you are new to the characters, enough of the past is set into this novel for it to still be viable as a launching point. It is the beginning of a series. Kind of a "further adventures of Farideh" sort of thing. But don't let that stop you from going back to read the past novels with these characters. Or Godcather, another stand-alone of hers in the Realms setting. All are surprisingly fresh for old school D&D folks (like me), but inline with other novels in the genre to interest people new to Forgotten Realms. All of this wrapped up in tightly entertaining prose.

This is one that I would purchase (and have), as well as give to friends. I give it...

4.5 Stars

(I'm taking a half star for a slight cliffhanger.) ;)
