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The Garden Of Stones (Echoes Of Empire Book 1)



Synopsis

Shortlisted for the 2014 Gemmell Morningstar Award - Best Debut Novel When the Shrovetide Empire explodes into civil war, fighters of all kinds flock to the banners of their lords. Indris, a skilled swordsman and brilliant sorcerer, seeks to end the bloodshed once and for all. He knows this war is simply a ruse – a power play by a ruling Family desperate to take control of the Empire by any means necessary. Indris cares little for the politics except to see that justice is upheld. But even he can't see the terrible price his opponents are willing to pay to secure their legacy. A true epic, the first book in the Echoes of Empire series creates a spellbinding new world. With its twisted politics, new races, compelling heroes and villains, and unique magic, The Garden of Stones is a lyrical fantasy on the grandest scale.

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Customer Reviews

It began rather quickly from the first page. Once I was able to figure out the different races and terminology, I was able to enjoy the story. A unique 'magic' system tied to some sort of technology left me wanting more. I'm looking forward to continuing the series.

I enjoyed the description of the book, and thought that there was some potential for an interesting book. Although the book promised political intrigue as a large component of the plot, it seemed more akin to a series of Mafia families who had taken over a nation than the game of houses/game of the council intrigues I have seen from other authors. Because of that, I had a little bit of a slow start. However, as the characters gain deeper development through the course of the novel, it becomes very engaging, as the complex interplays between the characters start to drive the story, and the characters become less archetypal and more relatable. One thing that did make things difficult for me was the use of made-up words for so many things made it difficult to really lose myself in the story as I was often stopping to try to recall the meaning of the unfamiliar word. I will definitely be continuing the series though...I was not ready for the book to end.

Good. Not great. Lots of potential but overly complicated in the beginning. Looking forward to the other books in the series and the author's growth.

It was a difficult read in the beginning and almost put it aside. But once the characters coalesced, the story kept me enthralled. I look forward to the continued story!

Hope not sucked in by the free book. Not bad for an author's first offering. Would recommend to other people.

Loved the aspects of this story....the families, castes and somewhat oddly developed language....amazing! I will search out the sequels, for sure

The book was a little hard to understand at times and I couldn't fathom pronouncing some names; however, it was a thrilling adventure.

I found this novel to be rich and complex, with layers of agenda, extensive detail, sparse exposition. If you like a book where you have to leaf back occasionally to remind yourself of the context, then this may well be for you. Keep up, there's a lot going on. Mark's implementation of magic is novel and well considered. Any parallels I could suggest with other texts I have read would be an injustice to both sides of the comparison. I can honestly say that I have not encountered anything quite like disentropy. This is a narrative of Houses Warring, but not warring as houses do, but don't. A story of

a Federation near five-hundred years old that comes of an Empire yet older still. Old debts awaiting settlement, old deeds unforgiven, reasons only dimly remembered. Enmities as ancient as empire itself. This is a world after a fall. Made technology exists as items so old that for the most part only the simpler intact examples can reliably be made to work. The personal manipulation of the disentropic field - long known and practised - pre-dates made technology. A skilled practitioner is capable of harnessing the power of disentropy for manifold purposes. Healing. Seeing. Protection. Destruction. Old artifice can match the ancient skills but with capabilities matched only by rarity. A general agreement that what secrets these artifacts may keep, should remain kept... This could be a world of a wider Empire. Found, exploited, and discarded in search of other things. I'm a third of the way through Obsidian Heart, which certainly added to my appreciation of Garden of Stones. It just gets better. In the interest of transparency: Thirty years ago, I RPG'd (they role-played, I tried to keep up) with several delightful and talented people of which Mark was one. It's been quite a while. A sock-puppet would do Mark no favours by recommending a book that is rubbish. I really enjoyed this book. Would I consider purchasing the sequel? Stop skimming.

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