



Harshini

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Medalon has surrendered to foreign invaders, Tarja is once more an outcast, the Defenders have scattered... and their only hope is Damin Wolfblade.

But Damin has his own problems--the High Prince is dead, so Damin must lift the siege on the Hythrun capital and defeat an usurper before he can come to Medalon's aid.

For R'shiel, time is running out. She must find a way to bring peace to the divided southern nations, to free Medalon from Karien occupation, and to find the strength to put an end to Loclon. And she has finally accepted her destiny as the Demon Child, which means *she* must be the one to defeat Xaphista--soon, before the Harshini are destroyed.

But how can she kill a god?

Harshini Details

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Josh says

I have a really big bone to pick with Jennifer Fallon in this book, other than the titles (Medalon, Treason Keep and Harshini) which turned out to be little more than three arbitrary elements plucked from the story. No, worse than that was the fact that she got halfway through the book before it dawned on her that the whole Harshini magic system was flawed beyond belief and that for the ending to have any credibility whatsoever, she was going to have to introduce a few more rules that had somehow never come up before. Um, hello? WE'RE IN BOOK THREE!

The climax was a spectacular fail almost on par with Jemisin's Kingdom of Gods (I've been really raking poor JemJem over the coals lately). I've said this time and time again, yet it seems to be an acceptable norm for some fantasy authors ... just because you're using magic doesn't mean you can throw all sense of logic and reason out the window. Your protagonist cannot just draw on some incredibly powerful and unprecedented level of whoop-ass, making some flashy lights and then pass out, only to find everything has miraculously turned out the way you hope. Fallon dedicated the better part of two whole pages to the fate of Xaphista which as I recall, was the point of the whole three novels. And he really didn't put up much of a fight.

This was where the series really fell down for me. In the end, R'Shiel's quest took a back seat to everything else that was happening. Fortunately, the 'everything else' was absolutely fantastic. Unfortunately, because the poor demon child received so little screen time the whole thing became a half-arsed effort and detracted from the series as a whole. All she really did was get some powers, pretend to look at some scrolls, put in a token effort to appear helpless and overwhelmed, and then miraculously defeat the bad guys in less time and little more than rolling over in bed.

Throughout Treason Keep and most of Harshini I really hated R'Shiel. She was very similar to Harry Potter in Order of the Phoenix ... you know when he goes all annoying and angsty and everyone wants to hit him over the head with a stove? R'Shiel is so inconsistent and in fact has no redeeming qualities whatsoever. Towards the end however, this was pointed out by Fallon in a not so subtle way, that in fact she's meant to be like that. Her brutal upbringing, her confusing heritage and her unwieldy powers have all contributed to making her a selfish and annoying bitch and just because she finds herself the heroine of a fantasy series doesn't automatically make her a noble and gracious warrior goddess. Hmm ... maybe I underestimated you Fallon ... you can have this round.

Adrina and Damin were once again in fine form, providing some much needed witty banter and more than a few comical moments. Actually, one of the funnier moments was Brak and R'Shiel's arrival at Talabar at which I actually laughed out loud. I think this was when I started hating her a little less.

The world-building is quite strong in this series and the history and politics between the four nations is what makes up the bulk of the narrative (at least the interesting part). I would really have liked to see a little more of Karien and perhaps some part of the story from a Karien point of view. In fact now that I think about it, the story could have included a lot more and did feel a little rushed.

Harshini like its two predecessors was incredibly easy to read and is a credit to Fallon's uncomplicated and flowing prose. From this point of view I really enjoyed reading it - it was really only the eye-roll-worthy moments and the gaping plot holes that were a little disappointing.

Carolyn-anne Templeton says

I started reading this book a bit worried... the last Fallon series I ended did not end as I would have liked, but the depth of this author's worlds and character keep me reading even when I'm upset with what's happening to them. The book started off the same. The say that I was a bit panicked about Tarja's change of personality would be an understatement (I might have cheated and skipped to the last chapter... evil, I know.) However, the way she weaved the story and plotpoints kept me reading even though I knew what was coming. Moreover, she completely convinced me to the point where the conclusion of the story was both perfect and incredibly sad. I would love to spend another week in this world. As it is, I've become a serious fan of Jennifer Fallon. She now ranks among my favourite authors.

Kat Hooper says

ORIGINALLY POSTED AT Fantasy Literature.

Up till now I've enjoyed Jennifer Fallon's Demon Child trilogy; her writing is competent (not beautiful, but competent), her characters intriguing, and the story was interesting enough. But I always had this feeling ... the same feeling I get when I watch my 2 year old daughter constructing a tower of blocks by stacking the big ones on top of the smaller ones

Sure enough, just like my daughter's tower, in Harshini, it all comes crashing down.

R'shiel finally embraces her role as Demon Child and we at last see her putting her riding leathers to good use -- she actually rides dragons in this novel (though it doesn't help much when taking a trip on a flying dragon takes just as long as it does in a rowboat). And that's probably the nicest thing I can say about R'shiel. She was never a particularly loveable heroine, but in Harshini, she's just a b*\$\$. She is suddenly an outspoken expert in world politics and military tactics and the rulers of all the lands jump to obey her (even though she has no political or military experience and her grand plan in the last novel was a complete disaster). If they don't obey, she threatens to sic the gods on them. She's a bully, and it's hard to like people who act like that.

Then we still have the problem with the arbitrary activities of the gods, the demons, and the Harshini. Gods and demons are called on to help at random times in random ways. I was really ticked when a demon popped out of nowhere to protect Brak from a crossbow bolt and Brak informed us that "the demons live to protect the Harshini." Huh? If this is true, why haven't we seen them protecting Harshini before now? R'shiel is supposedly undertaking this very dangerous and important mission, so where were the demons when she was beaten, raped, captured, stabbed in the gut, etc.? And, if they exist to protect the Harshini, why are they running around trying to gather believers so they can become gods? And, about the Gods: okay, I can understand a goddess of love, but a god of thieves? And, if Xaphista (the "bad" god) can so easily coerce people to try to kill R'shiel, why does he only try it with one person (who fails)? Why not several people? He's bad, but he's not smart. And I won't even get into the hypocrisy of the Harshini not being able to do anything that might indirectly cause death -- there are too many logisitcal problems with that.

The climax and ending of the novel was also random -- R'shiel's weird idea for killing the "bad" god was just plain silly. Most of what R'shiel does to solve problems is arbitrary and easy. She puts on a glamour to escape. She puts on a glamour to help other people escape. She threatens someone into doing what she wants them to. She gets crazy ideas that end up working. This randomness causes the reader to never be concerned that things won't work out in the end. I never felt any sort of fear or tension. Got a problem? Call a god or a demon, or do some random magic trick. Fantasy novel needs tension, and Fallon fails to deliver it in the last Demon Child novel.

But, she's a good author -- I will not hesitate to pick up another Fallon series someday.
Read more Jennifer Fallon book reviews at *Fantasy Literature* .

Tiffany says

Well, the series wrapped up with a sense of regret. I did enjoy these books, and went out immediately to buy up the next series. The Wolfblade series is in the same world. Somehow, I feel this is the end of the story for both series. *Sigh*

Good to get lost in, I really enjoyed this trilogy. The main characters were interesting, and there was less repetitive bores in the plot in the second two books. Really to see it come to an end. Let's just say, everyone gets their just desserts. So the ending is at least satisfying.

Off to read the next series I found by her, the Immortal Prince and Tide Lords. I must admit, Fallon does a great job creating a world you can get lost in. It's the point of fantasy fiction. Bravo!

Jessica DiFelice (thefanaticreader) says

This was a great conclusion to a fun series! I really enjoyed the character growth and how the plot ended up culminating! It was entertaining, kept me engaged, and really told a great tale. I really enjoyed how R'shiel's character developed and reading more about Damin and Adrina's relationship.

The ending about how Xaphista was defeated felt a little anticlimactic, yet was really fitting for how the world and magic system and the gods were developed.

Overall, a great series! I am also excited to keep reading books set in this world!

Also though, the cover is hilarious - (view spoiler)

Sarah says

BRING BRAK BACK!

Maggie says

I think the payoff at the end of this book is so worth the chore of reading the first book (and suffering through the boring arcs of the second book). Love that wasn't! Mind-blowing one night stand! Really interesting method of killing someone! A+ revenge on a rapist!

Tina says

Final book of the Demon Child trilogy.

R'Shiel (the Demon Child) accompanies Damin Wolfblade and his new wife, princess Adrina back to Hythria so that R'Shiel can help the Hythrians accept the unorthodox marriage and to cement an alliance between the Hythrians and the Fardonyhans. Once they arrive, people are awed by the Demon Child but dismayed by the marriage of the heir to their throne and the daughter of their enemy. While R'shiel, Damin and Adrina try to convince them all of the necessity of the marriage and the alliance, civil war breaks out and Damin must fight for his rightful place as High Prince.

Meanwhile the God Xaphista is not content to wait around to be killed by the Demon Child. He is busy planting doubt and attempting to suborn those closest to R'shiel to kill her first. R'Shiel is on her guard, not knowing where betrayal may come from.

And Medalon is a kettle ready to boil. Joyihinia, now possessed by the sadistic Lochlon is issuing orders that are subtly overturning centuries of Medalonian law. The Defenders are quietly preparing for rebellion and the Harshini may not be able to hold Sanctuary for long as King Korandellan is dying.

This series, which started less than stellarly for me, finished up quite nicely. This book was well written and quickly paced. I like that Fallon jumped from Hythria to Medalon to Fardonyha and back again so you could see what was going on in each place. She ratcheted up the tension very nicely.

As I reflected back over this series I couldn't help but compare it to other series (trilogies especially) that featured a central, pivotal female character. Elizabeth Moon's *Deeds of Paksenarrion* trilogy, Raymond Feist/Janny Wurtz's *Daughter of the Empire* trilogy, Elizabeth Haydon's *Rhapsody* trilogy and even Jennifer Fallon's own *Wolfblade* trilogy all spring to mind. I enjoyed these trilogies very much. And I can acknowledge, first book notwithstanding, that I enjoyed this *Demon Child* trilogy very much. However I know that my enjoyment of those other series was largely because i very much liked the main characters. Paksennarion, Mara, Rhapsody and Marla were all quite engaging and easy to root for. I can't say the same for R'Shiel. I actually had a very hard time with R'Shiel and instead gravitated to the secondary, yet infinitely more interesting Adrina. Rather than liking this series because of R'Shiel, I liked it in spite of her.

I do respect the fact that Fallon didn't go easy routes with R'shiel. In the end, R'shiel is a Godslayer. A very powerful person who affected great change in her time and place. So great that she basically united four warring regions and restored a persecuted, dying race back on the road to their former glory. Having accomplished all this it would be easy to give R'Shiel a nice, simple Happily Ever After. But she is denied that. Sure she triumphs and she is granted justice, but her road isn't the walk into the sunset that almost everyone else gets (even though, I think in the end R'shiel does literally walk away as the sun is setting...but you know what I mean). And I liked that very much. It felt very apropos.

Also while this book was overall a great read, it does lose a few minor points with me in it's portrayal of Marla. My impression of Marla is very much one that I formed reading the *Wolfblade* trilogy, which was written after this one. And I don't believe that the Marla she created in that trilogy would have reacted to Adrina the way she did in this book. I agree she would have been appalled at the political implications of Damin's marriage to Adrina, but the personal scorn of Adrina seemed out of character given how both of these societies view sexual relations. It just seemed to strike a discordant note with me considering how well she maintained continuity with Damin's character from one trilogy to the next.

Erica Anderson says

This is the third book in the Hythrun Chronicles. Don't even try to jump in here if you haven't read the first two books--you'll be completely lost. Of the three books, I would say that this one is the weakest, but it's still miles beyond most fantasy out there.

My major gripe is the structure of the ending, which will *not* please romance readers.

SPOILER

The book ends with R'shiel confronting and defeating her nemesis Loclon. While this is a necessary plot element, I was disappointed that Fallon chose to end the book with this scene. A stronger, and more optimistic ending--which, as a romance reader I would have vastly preferred--would have had R'shiel setting off to find a way to resurrect Brak. While Fallon does provide sufficient set up for the reader to understand that this will likely happen, I would have preferred that she spell it out and end the book on a high note.

Bottom line: The Hythrun Chronicles is a great fantasy trilogy with a bit of romance. Fallon has created a complex world of political maneuvering and religious bigotry that will please those who enjoy accurately drawn social conflict in their fantasy.

Joy says

A smooth read with likable characters and equally despicable villains. Best to read these three before book 7.

Dominique "Eerie" Sobieska says

Still had a hard time with the final volume of the original Hythrun Chronicles. I felt disappointed we having figured out that Damin and Adrina would end up together.... I wasn't a fan of R'shiel and am not a fan of her.

I am trying to find the newest Hythrun Chronicles by Fallon with are set about 10 years after the events of Demon Child... Kinda hope that the characters from Wolfblade Trilogy will be there, as there was no progress for them in this set of books... Hopefully I won't have too much R'shiel...

Connie53 says

Weer een heerlijk deel van de Hythrun Chronicles. En het is nog niet afgelopen.

Addy says

Amazing - as all her books are!!

Jenny says

I loved the attention to detail and the unwavering personality of each character. The story was well developed and characters grew and changed in a believable, yet unsuspected way.

But seriously, the author loves making people who hate or dislike each other fall in love. First book it was Tarja and R'Shiel, second was Damin and Adrina, and finally R'Shiel and Brak. Same trick throughout the trilogy.

Steve says

I found this book just as hard to put down as the previous two in the series. It leaped right into the action and built to a rather long climax. The climatic battle of the book was a little short, to my mind, but was then replaced with a second climatic battle. Some of my quibbles were resolved in the final chapter, which was more an epilogue rather than wrapping up the story. A few storyline threads were left unresolved which I would have preferred tied up into a neat bow, but I can cope with how the book ended.
