



Starspawn

Wendy N. Wagner

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The Stars Are Wrong

Once a notorious pirate, Jendara has at last returned to the cold northern isles of her birth, ready to settle down and raise her young son. Yet when a mysterious tsunami wracks her island's shore, she and her fearless crew must sail out to explore the strange island that's risen from the sea floor. No sooner have they delved into the lost island's alien structures than they find themselves competing with a monstrous cult eager to complete a dark ritual in those dripping halls. For something beyond all mortal comprehension has been dreaming on the sea floor. And it's begun to wake up...

From Hugo Award winner Wendy N. Wagner comes a sword-swinging adventure in the tradition of H. P. Lovecraft, set in the award-winning world of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

Starspawn Details

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Author : Wendy N. Wagner

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From Reader Review Starspaw for online ebook

Bart Vervaeet says

"meh" is the first thing that comes to mind.

There's nothing wrong or amiss with the story (at least nothing I can put my finger on), but on the other hand there's also nothing that grabs me in this story. It's an attempt to bring Cthulhu mythos to Golarion, and it didn't quite succeed.

Laura Scribner says

This book was such a disappointment to me. I've never read any other Pathfinder books except for the Jendara stories (Mother Bears and Skin Shifters). I'd loved those! So I was very excited for another book with this character by the same author.

First, the narrator switched on Audible, and this narrator was breathy at all times with weird pauses in the middle of every sentence. It didn't match the story (fantasy and action) at all.

Secondly, it felt like more and more and more and more issues for the characters to deal with... with very little resolution, even at the end. That was overwhelming through the story and frustrating when "finished."

Craig Steinhoff says

I enjoyed the book, there were moments where it did not seem to flow well or was maybe a little confusing. But all in all it was a good adventure tale. I did really like the main character Jendara and I am planning to read the first book in the series, Skinwalker.

Joel Flank says

Sequel to Skinwalkers, Wendy N Wagner returns to tell another tale of Jendara, and her crew in the islands of the Ironbound Archipelago. When a tsunami hits her home, Jendara is barely able to survive along with most of her village, but their homes are ruined. She quickly learns that her crew have spotted a mysterious island which surfaced out of the ocean, with a ruined city upon it. Seeing an opportunity to hunt for treasure on a previously undiscovered ruin, she sets off with her crew to find enough wealth to at least help her village recover, if not become rich.

The set up and premise of the book all seem fine on the surface (pun intended), but things quickly go off the rails. Jendara is really the only member of her crew which has adventuring experience, and as they explore the island, she quickly sees how poorly things go with crew who are fine sailors and merchants, but not good fighters, spellcasters, or adventurers. They quickly take stupid risks, get lost, get injured while fighting monsters, native fish people living in the city, and other invading fish people of some different sort. She

realizes it's a bad idea almost right away, exploring with novices, but nevertheless, continues doing so, until they suffer losses, and then feels honor bound to find her missing friends. It's frustrating to read a story like this when even the main character acknowledges that the smart thing to do would be to leave before getting too involved and someone gets hurt or killed....and then ignores her own best instincts to do so.

On top of that, he mute teenage son stows away, and while she's angry, she lets him join in as an even bigger novice. For the most part, the book involves them blundering around, not really getting what's going on, with the ruins, or either variety of fish people. There's way too much time spend on them wandering labyrinthine tunnels and being lost, and mostly just hoping for the best. They eventually piece together that one fish people race is trying to summon a starspawn (of Cthulhu), while the other is trying to let it wait until the stars are right. But really this seems tacked on - it has little to do with most of the events in the book, and only comes up at the very end. Also, her mute son randomly seems to have psychic powers, but no explanation is really given for why, and it comes across as a deus ex machina instead.

While the first book about Jendara had a pretty coherent plot, despite some issues, I had looked forward to a sequel to hopefully find improvement. Instead, this is a step in the wrong direction, and I'm afraid I won't be reading any future adventures of Jendara and friends.

Brandon Smith says

Not as good as Skinwalkers, and a little meandering at times, but altogether a fun romp.

Nikky44 says

I won this book through a Goodreads giveaway. It was an interesting read mainly that it. Is not a genre I am attracted to!

Blaine says

Good mash-up of genres with compelling characters. There was a bit of Lovecraftian fan-service line at the end I found just a bit of a fourth wall break. I'd have harsher critiques if I didn't enjoy Jendara and Kran's interactions so much (or if I wanted to give spoilers).

Brandon says

The book had a unique pairing of fantasy and horror.

Brannigan says

Previously Published at TheQwillery.com

Starspawn by Wendy N. Wagner was the best book for me to read to get me back into reviewing. It has pirates, natural disasters, a mysterious island crawling with all kinds of half-man, half-fish creatures. A Lovecraftian monster, treasure hunting, battles, creepy crawlies and even a dolphin being sacrificed to a dark god by the deep ones. I mean really!? What more could I want in one book. Nothing that's what. Now, let's get into the juicy bits.

The protagonist is Jendara, an ex-pirate mother of a mute son named Kran who's married to Vorrin, the captain of the pirate ship Milday. Jendara was in a previous book entitled Skinwalkers, also by Wagner. There are several mentions of past adventures that took place last year, which I assume is from the first book, but thankfully I never felt lost in this book. I was able to enjoy the current adventure without needing to go grab a copy of Skinwalkers, but if you're like me, you will want to read more about this crew. All right, back to Jendara. She's a very nice character: a strong woman, mother, wife and adventurer. Wagner did a great job balancing all the sides of this character and in the end helped her feel completely real and relatable.

The story starts off simple enough with Jendara and her son Kran on an island in an archipelago, when a tsunami hits and destroys most of her village. Right after the event, her husband and his crew of pirates arrive to offer aid, and explains that an island has risen out of the sea nearby and is covered in ruins and riches. Jendara and her son join the crew on a quick treasure hunt/exploration of the new island in hopes of using it to help the islanders recover from the tsunami. The rest of the story takes off from there. Kran and Vorrin both get enough time on the page to get a sense of their characters, but there isn't a lot of detailed information given. I truly believe these bases were covered in the first book along with the rest of the crew, which didn't bother me a bit. I had enough information about each supporting character that the story warranted. The island itself is the antagonist of this story with plenty of different creatures and groups causing problems for the crew. We get hints to this island's past, but a lot of it was left hidden, which added to the mystery.

Wagner knows how to weave a story. Everything starts off nice and calm, and then wham!, the action starts and it doesn't let up. She threads in plenty of mystery about the island, the people found there and their intentions. We're left to wonder about several different character's fates as the party explores the island. Wagner colors the story with just the right amount of humor to keep things from getting too dark and stressful, but doesn't ruin the overall mood.

My only complaint would be by the ending of the book there were five different groups on the island, including the crew, and I didn't feel I got enough of an explanation about the motives and means of each of the groups. Now, that's not saying the ending is unsatisfying or rushed. I just wish I knew a little more. Wagner gives different levels of information about each group so this is a sliding scale. Notwithstanding this one issue, I still thoroughly enjoyed the book. You don't always need to know everything to enjoy a book.

Starspawn is the type of book that brings out the kid in me. There's so much going on and written in such a way that each event builds on top of the other creating a crazy ride. It's books like this one that remind me why I love fantasy and renew my love for the genre. Just knowing there are authors out there writing books like this will keep me young at heart forever. For those of you who would like to know, there is violence and minor language. I would recommend it to teens and adults.

Heather E Flanagan says

Blake is 8 and enjoyed this book.

It was gruesome at parts which I skimmed and filtered. He complains that they didn't beat a moon beast but they happened to beat the star spawn which was bigger. He wanted a bigger final battle. Ah.. spoiler alert.

Leader of the Pack says

Starspawn is the literary equivalent of a boat ride in a thunder storm: tsunamis, evil fish people and a malevolent god risen from the ocean depths. Readers, bring your rain gear!

Patrick says

One of the few weak books in the series. I'll be skipping any more in this subgroup and the Nidal subgroup (latter series isn't bad, I just don't like descriptions of torture)

Anthony says

Review to come.
