



All Good Things

Emma Newman

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As the Iris family consolidates their hold on Nether society, Will finds himself more powerful and yet more vulnerable than ever. His strongest supporters are gone, and his wife has left him, a fact that will destroy him if it comes out. To keep his position and to stay alive he needs to get her back, whatever the cost.

Cathy has finally escaped the Nether but finds her reliance on Sam's protection chafing. When the mysterious sorceress, Bea, offers her a chance to earn true freedom, Cathy makes a deal with her. But can she and Sam work out the best way to navigate Bea's plans for the future without becoming another of her victims? Meanwhile Sam finds that good deeds bring few rewards in the Elemental Court, and that the path to saving the world from self-destruction is strewn with blood, lawyers and sleepless nights.

Max and the gargoyle struggle to protect innocents as Rupert continues to be obsessed with finding Bea. As their fundamental beliefs in the way the Worlds work falters, they have to make difficult choices about where their loyalties lie.

Amidst death, deceit, and the struggle for freedom, friendships are tested, families are destroyed and heroes are forged as the battle to control the Split Worlds rages on to its climatic conclusion."

All Good Things Details

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Author : Emma Newman

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From Reader Review All Good Things for online ebook

Sarah (CoolCurryBooks) says

All Good Things is the fifth and final book in Emma Newman's Split Worlds urban fantasy series. You absolutely must read the series in order! Seriously, you will be totally confused if you pick up this book without the context of the previous books. If you're unfamiliar with the series but fae and feuding families sounds like something you'd be into, go check out Between Two Thorns. Oh, and avoid the rest of this review because this late in the series there's literally no way I can avoid spoilers for Between Two Thorns.

Cathy has finally gotten away from Will, but she's now dependent on another man, Sam (Lord Iron). When Bea offers to teach her sorcery, Cathy leaps at the chance. But that involves going along with Bea's plan for the future, which is more disruptive than even Cathy could have imagined. Meanwhile, Will is under huge pressure to regain control of Cathy. His family's grip on power is increasingly more tenuous, even as Iris continues to try and enact a mysterious plan. Max and the gargoyle need to figure out if working with Rupert is really the best way to keep protecting innocents. Does he really have interests other than his own at heart?

Back when I was doing the Split Worlds read along, I started keeping track of various questions that I had. For instance, one already answered question is "What is Cathy's painting?" By All Good Things, we already know that Cathy's painting is significant for containing the secret of Sophia's existence. But many questions remain. Why is it so important that William and Cathy have a son within a year? What's Lord Iris's plan? Why would the Prince be angry at him? And of course, how can Cathy possibly succeed in improving human rights conditions within the Nether? All these and more are answered in All Good Things.

At the end of A Little Knowledge, I had no idea how Emma Newman could possibly wrap up the story arc in just one book. Overcoming a whole society is such a huge task! And every time it looks like Cathy could possibly have a success, she's thwarted somehow. When she ran away from William at the end of book four (good!), she seemed almost farther than ever from her goals. How could Emma Newman go from the end of A Little Knowledge to a satisfying ending in just one book?

I don't want to give any of the plot away, but oh my goodness, Emma Newman wonderfully succeeded with All Good Things. The book marks the definite end of a story arc, although I think there's still more that could be explored if she ever decides to come back to this world. It's a monumental ending that I will remember for a long time to come.

I hope that all other fans of the Split World series will find this ending as satisfying as I have. I really don't think they'll be disappointed.

Originally posted on The Illustrated Page.

I received an ARC in exchange for a free and honest review.

Liz says

(My first review got eaten by my wifi and now I'm sad.)

This series. In some ways, this review is for the entire thing and for Newman totally sticking the landing and

successfully pulling everything together. I was about 1/5 of the way through and watching her unravel ends that had already seemed tidied up and wondering how she was going to finish it all in one book, but she did it, weaving everything in and getting it off the needles before it grew too big. (Here endeth the knitting analogy.) I really enjoyed it; it's exactly the sort of urban fantasy I like reading: clever, British, and feminist.

But I have to talk about Will. Because he really is the hardest character to get right and Newman just does it effortlessly. The question is not whether he is the villain of the story (or at least a villain. Everyone's the villain at some point) but whether he can successfully sell us as readers on his vision of reality. Being inside his head is disorienting because Newman shows us how his justifications work and his remorse and all the good things he does. She shows us how evil happens at the hands of those who don't see themselves as evil and who deeply regret it. It's up to us--and to Cathy, who has been Will's victim one too many times--to see through him and to recognize how well meaning people who would never see themselves as evil still do horrible things. The book asks us to think about how we deal with people who mean well and do ill, who lack evil intentions, but create evil consequences. And it answers, rather brilliantly, destroy the power structures that let them perpetuate their evil. It's not about punishing Will; it's about making sure no one will ever be in his position again.

There's a reason that I consider *The Split Worlds* to be paradigmatic of a story trend I've seen recently. I've been watching the growth of what I think of as Social Justice Speculative Fiction - that is SF where the concerns of the plot are deeply imbricated in issues of social justice. (I cannot believe I have to add this disclaimer, but) This is not derogatory; on the contrary, it's an example of SF doing what it does best, speculating. As speculative fiction, it either predicts or mythologizes elements of the world we inhabit in order to better understand the way that the world works. Fantasy, in particular, is no longer merely the genre of the mythic past that idealizes *The Return of the King*, but equally the genre of the mythic present via defamiliarization, holding the fun house mirror up to life to reexamine what we thought we knew about war and colonization and feminism and queer representation. It's a brilliant achievement and (speaking of disclaimers I shouldn't need) makes for better crafted narratives with more polished prose than the tired rehash of the Hero's Journey. Newman's work fits into this form neatly and for that I love it. But Newman's social justice fantasy is also fundamentally the fantasy that magic can be a force for social justice. Spoilers for both *Split Worlds* and *Wonder Woman* ahead. (view spoiler)

Helen says

I was so happy to get my hands on an ARC of All Good Things! I'm a big fan of this series, I've been avidly following Cathy's journey through the first four books and I was excited to see how the story would conclude.

Cathy has been on a massive journey. From the scared young woman in the first book to the Duchess of Londinium trying to effect social change, she has now grown into a true leader, Princess Leia rebel style.

For the first few books, Cathy was mainly ineffective, complaining but not actually doing anything. In the last two books she has made grown in confidence, started caring about other people, and made some real changes, but what she does here is just brilliant. I love the way this book ended.

The side stories were neatly wrapped up too. Though I do feel like there was a lot of wrapping up in this book, and at times a lot of the stories felt rushed. Will and the Fae princess, for example, seemed to be a bit crammed in.

I'm not happy about what happened with Lucy. (view spoiler)

Max and the gargoyle have been my favourite characters by far. I'd love to see some more of them, I feel like Cathy's story might be done but those two have a lot of work to do now.

This has been one of my favourite series and I'm sad to see it end, but I'm also excited to see what Emma Newman does next.

I received a free copy from the publisher in return for an honest review.

Carly says

I a stalwart fan of Emma Newman through her powerful work, *Planetside*. Although the tone and plot of the Split Worlds series are very different, I loved them all, devouring the previous four books in less than one week. After waiting for the final book for almost a year, I found it a satisfying conclusion to the series. As with the previous books in the series, *All Good Things* deals heavily with themes of feminism, environmentalism, agency, and responsibility.

This book is the completion of a long story arc, and I don't believe it should be read without the rest of the series. All of the characters from previous books have returned. As always, I wasn't quite sure if I actually liked Cathy, the major protagonist of the series and the driving force of the story. Cathy is a fierce feminist who wants to bring change to the changeless Nether world, but to me it feels like she is driven by a selfish, myopic ideology that often stops her from seeing the harm her actions inflict on others. This selfishness is examined in the novel: Cathy seeks to bring dramatic change, and this is bound to have negative impacts on others. What right does she have to make these types of decisions for so many others? As one character puts it:

"To create change, to disrupt a system of control, one must carry out radical acts. One must be prepared to destroy so that something new can be created. Those in control will never give up the power afforded to them voluntarily. It must be taken. If that requires the deaths of a few to give freedom to the many-- and *survival* of the many--then so be it. This is not a gentle act."

But who has the right to decide to make that sacrifice? Does having the power to carry out the act give you the right to do so?

Fortunately, the other characters-- Sam, Lucy, Kay, and the gargoyle -- are more sympathetic. However, there's a big "anyone can die" and "anyone can betray" vibe in the novel. There is no easy division into protagonists and antagonists in the novel: everyone is driven by their own motivations and secret loyalties. Because of this, there have been many different antagonists in the story, with protagonists easily morphing into enemies. Sometimes, the changes felt too facile to me, the deaths of characters too superficial, the betrayals too unrooted. I particularly disliked how anticlimactic some of the dismissals of characters we've grown to care about throughout the series were, and how easily the characters were forgotten and set aside.(view spoiler) At the same time, I loved some of the twists of *All Good Things*: one of my favourite aspects of the book is how antagonists morph into allies and how an abrupt twist brought the one true villain of the series into sharp relief.

At its core, the novel is all about control and ownership and responsibility, and however surprising the

ending, I found *All Good Things* a satisfying end to the series. If you've read the other Split Worlds books, I don't need to tell you about this book because you're going to read it anyway. As for me, I can't wait to see what Emma Newman has in store for her readers next.

~~I received an advanced reader copy of this ebook through Netgalley from the publisher, Diversion Books, in exchange for my honest review.~~

Cross-posted on BookLikes.

Jane says

I have loved this series so much. Thank you for such a glorious ending.

I would have liked to have seen some Characters more fully explored but that's just nit picking.

Gorgeous well paced fabulous.

Dann Todd says

This is a solid 4-star review.

The concluding book in the series was a very good conclusion that almost stuck the landing. While I thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the series, the conclusion really failed to fill out the rest of the world building. In fact, it sort of undermined it.

Early in the series, we were treated to a comparison between late 19th century-ish England and a modern 21st-century world. The 19th-century version is dominated by fae and magic that maintains a rigid social order that is controlled by men. Our protagonist is a young woman who ran away to the parallel world is supposed to be non-magical and it largely is. It has also benefitted from the progress of over a century's worth of social advances.

As the tale unfolds, we have humans, the fae, sorcerers, and an elemental court with interests that are in turns competing and parallel. By the end, our young protagonist has successfully turned these groups and the world upside down. Sort of like a female version Captain Kirk that destroys social conventions and then sails away to leave the upended society to sort things out for themselves.

The entire series is both fun and thought provoking.

The last book barely misses as the entire creation of these split interests....or worlds to reference the title....is blamed on "the patriarchy". There is no explanation of why "the patriarchy" established the 19th-century magical society. There is no exploration of any potential advantages to that arrangement.

It's a modest bit of niggling, but it took a bit away from the final book to have one of the central themes of the series remain unexampled in the ultimate entry.

Katie says

I am really happy with how this series resolved!! I honestly had no idea what to expect. More thoughts to come soon.

Kaitlin says

I adored this :D This is the conclusion to the Splitworlds series by Emma Newman who has quickly become a new favourite author for me with this series. I started this series as my first reads of this year, and I finished it with this. I'm so sad it's over, but I loved the experience of reading it :)

This is quite tricky to explain without you having read the previous books but essentially it's set in a world which is split in 3. We have Mundanus, the human world, Excillium, the prison of the Fey and the Nether which is a magical in-between for Fey-touched. Cathy (our main character) is a Fey-touched who despises the Nether and the way things are there (it's very like Victorian England) and she wants things to change...

This book cemented my love for Cathy as a character because she's SO badass in this book. Not only does she prove everyone who doubted her before wrong, who does so in a really damn epic way, and with some amazing feminist moments I just couldn't get over!

What I love about this series is the representation of men and women is equally brilliant. We don't have black and white characters, we have a whole load of flawed grey characters who fall in the cracks of society and are manipulators and the manipulated alike...

The set up of the magic and these worlds totally fascinates me, and I love the way that the worlds ended up, even though I did want SO much more. I would 100% read more in this world or a similar one, and I cannot wait to see what Emma does next because this was truly brilliant.

I haven't been giving out many 5* ratings this year... I AM SO HAPPY that this one is a 5* read through and through :D <3

Megan Leigh says

This review originally appeared on Pop Verse.

All Good Things is the fifth and final instalment of Emma Newman's Split Worlds series. It is likely, by now, that you know whether or not you are on board with the style, characters, and plot, but as the final instalment of a successful series, we do have to ask: how well does she wrap it all up?

I enjoyed this series. It is silly and incredibly easy reading. The characters are very flawed and the 'messages' embedded in the novels are, at times, painfully obvious and heavy-handed in their delivery. Then again, a lot can be forgiven for a yarn that is total escapism. And I forgave a lot, up to a point.

All Good Things was a little disappointing for me for a few reasons. Over the course of the series, Newman

has introduced multiple plot threads. My biggest problem with the final instalment is that many of these plot threads are dropped rather unceremoniously. Characters and politics that were central to previous books are mentioned as side notes here. While I appreciate that wrapping everything up in a neat little bow can also feel less than satisfactory, there was just too much that was almost forgotten entirely in this novel. As a result, I didn't feel that All Good Things did justice to the Split Worlds series.

‘To create change, to disrupt a system of control, one must carry out radical acts. One must be prepared to destroy so that something new can be created. Those in control will never give up the power afforded to them voluntarily. It must be taken.’

At the end of the previous book, Cathy discovers Will has been magically manipulating her and runs to Sam for protection. If she was desperate to change the Nether and its lack of human rights at the beginning of the series, she is now dangerously determined. But how far will Cathy go to see her dream come true? And at what point does a singular goal blind you to other issues?

The worlds were never meant to be split. Long ago, the sorcerers split the worlds as a way to imprison the fae, enforcing their rule over both mundanus, Exilium, and the Nether. With the help of Bea, the powerful magic-wielder responsible for the murder of all but one sorcerer, Cathy and Sam attempt to re-join the worlds. As they worked to bring the worlds together, Will finally stands up to Lord Iris and attempts to gain power over the fae. But power always comes at a price and such decisions are never easy.

‘All he wanted was the purest freedom of being so powerful that no man, no Fae, could ever tell him what to do again.’

The Split Worlds series is hardly one to take itself too seriously, embracing the fun, entertaining side of fiction. But that doesn't excuse the lazy use of excessive coincidence. All Good Things is chock-full of undercooked resolutions and deus ex machina. Cathy wants to put an end to the Nether – she meets a powerful woman who wants to do just that *and* has the means to. Cathy has a problem with Bea's ethics – she happens to have a handy device that will kill Bea. Will wants to find the woman Lord Iris used to be in love with – low and behold he happens to check into the hotel she is also staying in... These are just the tip of the iceberg. Perhaps if she'd hung more of a hat on it or made tongue-in-cheek references to how easy everything happened for the characters, I might have been able to get on board. But as it stands, I just groaned each time a new coincidence manifested to save the day.

I have never been a fan of the ‘chosen one’ trope, and while Newman avoids many of the pitfalls, she still falls into a few. Cathy's potential is a theme that runs through all of the Split Worlds books, a potential which is later defined as ‘destruction’. She is destined to be the destroyer. But of what? Her potential – or fated ‘chosen one’ – manifests in an uncanny ability to pick up sorcery. In the previous four novels, the sorcerers were built up as powerful and their magic as complex and difficult to master. And yet... Cathy picks it up without breaking a sweat. It was all just far too convenient and undermined the set-up of the magic system that had been developed in the other books.

‘How can the pawn abandon the game by choice and leave the board of its own volition?’

While All Good Things is as readable as the previous entries in the series, I couldn't help feeling like Emma Newman can do better. It felt rushed and poorly plotted out. There were simply too many balls dropped to make it a solid completion to a light-hearted series.

Verdict: A disappointing finish to an otherwise thoroughly digestible series, full of plot contrivances and

lacking many characters and plot threads we had previously been exposed to.

Paul Trembling says

Maintaining a fast pace, continuing to develop characters and keeping a sense of mystery - these can be difficult to manage in a single book, let alone a series of five, but Emma Newman has managed it excellently. There are new twists to the plot thrown in all the way along and new things to learn about her 'Split Worlds' which kept me absorbed all the way through. I read the entire series one after another, and it kept me up late a few nights!

Of course, it is crucial that Newman has such a smooth writing style, with no awkward phrasing or badly chosen words to break the flow. But Newman has more than just wordcraft, she has superb worldcraft as well, on which she has built this entire series.

I have very few criticisms. I would have liked to have seen more of Beatrice, the Sorceress - a fairly minor character in terms of the time spent on her, but a major one regarding her influence on the plot. In fact, you could argue that she is the pivotal character, since without her activities much of the rest of the story couldn't have happened, even though that only becomes evident later on. Her demise, though very nicely crafted and entirely consistent with the flow of the story, still felt a little sudden.

There is material here for another book, or a whole other series. The huge change in the world that the series finishes with opens up all sorts of possibilities, and the characters still have a lot of life in them. Well, some of them do. I would particularly like to know how the Sorcerer Rupert copes with the changes, and what he might do about them. But Newman has paid her dues to this series and has moved on - I couldn't blame her if she decides to leave it at that! A good job well done.

Natalie aka Tannat says

I'm kind of sad that this series is over but I'm reminding myself that I can enjoy it all again on a reread!

Jennifer Jamieson says

All Good Things is the final installation in the Split Worlds series.

Cathy and the new Lord Iron--Sam--have banded together to keep her safe from the Irises as well as figure out how to bring Nether society into the 21st century. Women in the Nether are treated less like modern women and more like the property they effectively were in the Regency era.

Since the fae-touched residents live in a pocket world where time isn't a factor, generations of Nether society have gone on for hundreds of years without aging. Social change has moved correspondingly slowly.

Sam and Cathy team up with the murderous sorceress Beatrice when she brings them a proposal that makes a lot of sense, and will change all of the Split Worlds forever.

All Good Things is a fitting conclusion to a great series. Cathy has come into her own, and becomes far less the main character who complains about her treatment and knows nothing of how to change it--and far more the woman ready to move worlds to get things done. We also see a lot more of Sam, Max, and the gargoyle--and their own great strides in character development.

David Harris says

This is the 5th and final part of Emma Newman's Split Worlds sequence (quintology?)

Across the previous four, she has spun an extraordinary number of stories and deployed many characters (a list might have been helpful by this stage!) Tying everything together would be a formidable challenge for any author. Doing so - as Newman does in All Good Things - while still keeping the story fresh and maintaining a sense of narrative drive must have been even harder. Yet All Good Things succeeds triumphantly. The book moves closer in on its climax like an ocean liner chasing down the Blue Riband, Newman wringing every last drop of emotion - triumph, despair, rage, fear, acceptance - from both characters and reader. While it's tightly plotted throughout, new elements continue to appear. This series has not tired itself out, the writing continues to dazzle and the description of Exilium (Newman's fairyland) is seriously haunting and beautiful.

The book goes to some very dark places indeed - including long sections narrated from Will's point of view. We readers have now long known - and Cathy learned at the end of the previous book - that he's a liar, a murderer and a rapist, having used magic to obtain her compliance with his wishes. He continually makes excuses, but it's hard to sympathise with him (and nor should we). Yet this story demands that we stay with him, that, to a degree, we understand him. It's very uncomfortable in places yet makes the book very raw (at the same time we are also seeing Cathy's point of view, with her outrage, shock and PTSD. Rest assured she directs some choice swearing at Will...)

That isn't the only dark aspect. There are several deaths here, including those of well established characters. I felt that in a couple of instances these were handled a bit briefly and at arm's length, but possibly it reflects a desire not to dwell too much on suffering: the fact of what happened remains in the story and perhaps we don't need detail (in both cases the context of the deaths added to the shock - sorry if that sounds a bit convoluted: spoilers).

The redemption, though, is that, for the first time in the series, Cathy is fully aware of what's been done to her and of the realities behind the Fae, the Arbiters and the Elemental Court. And therefore for the first time she is able to fully match herself against her enemies (both persons and things) by practicing magic herself: relentless angry swearly sorceresses FTW! So in All Good Things we get the confrontations and conflict that we've been waiting for - and perhaps a sense of release that very distantly echoes Cathy's sense of liberation. It's been a long time coming but the wait was worthwhile.

Some thoughts on the series as a whole may be in order. I think these books are not only a terrific example of storytelling but, with its completion, we can now see that the books are also very important in the present moment of SFF storytelling. Newman has taken an old fantasy idea - the possibility of a fairyland and of dealings with those who live in it - and upended things, creating a mythology of sorts, and one that doesn't retread tired ideas about princesses, princesses and magic. Instead her theme is power: individual power, power structures and our relationships and responses to them. The books explore a number of possible reactions to the codified privilege embodied in the Split Worlds - acquiescence, quiet dissent, collaboration

(get to the top and then we'll sort things out - Will's self justifying refrain right to the very end), more or less polite agitation and, in this book, an additional option, burning the whole place down. (But what then?)

It's clear that, by this point, nobody's hands are totally clean (though some are dirtier than others), nobody has a certain answer, and nobody really knows what's going on. To a degree everyone here is a victim, but that doesn't make them all innocent.

That's not only true of the Fae and the puppets of Society - it applies too to the resource barons of the Elemental Court where Sam faces the same dilemmas as Cathy, to the Arbiter Max and his Gargoyle and to the Sorcerors as well. (Let me just taken a few moments to appreciate how Newman also twists the trope of the bluff, no nonsense industrialist - that would be Lord Iron - in contrast to the foppish toffs (the Fae touched).

What's the answer? Not an easy one, I'm afraid. Newman shows courage I think in even raising these issues - this definitely isn't escapist fantasy - and it would be wrong to expect her to announce an entire political platform as well. Truth, friends and courage feature: as Cathy goes into her future at the end of the book it's clear that more challenges are ahead and that she will need all those. A "Happily ever after" is far from certain, although taking command of one's own life is a beginning.

In short: I loved this book, and the whole sequence. The writing starts good and gets better and better and the books deserve a wide audience. I'm grateful to Emma for writing them - I hope they find and delight many, many readers for a long time to come.

imyrl says

A satisfying conclusion to the story overall, but I didn't enjoy the reading as much as usual - I found it clunky in places, and don't feel the secondary characters (notably Tom and Lucy) got the breathing space they needed to make their actions feel entirely natural.

That said, it's still an entertaining and emotionally satisfying ride - Emma Newman is to be commended for both neatly wrapping up her loose ends AND managing to completely surprise me more than once.

3.5 stars

Full review

I received a free copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Imani says

William, William, William.

I am so disappointed in you.

I truly am undecided on what kind of ending I want you to have. You are so far redeemable now. You don't

deserve Cathy at all. You cowardly twat.

I hope that Gargoyle does punch him in the face! William has become the very enemy both him and Cathy swore to fight. The lack of resistance and rebellion from him is turning him into disgusting sissy just like every sexist 'gentleman' from the Albion society.

I am scared for Sam and this 'Beatrice' that he has no idea who she truly is, which is not good for him and his vow to her.

Now I wonder what Cathy will do. Whatever it is, it's going to be good and final. Ready for the last book. I want this series to release me from this obsession to know what happens to everyone!!!

After reading the series, this was a collection of murder, political scheming and civil rights.

The topic of the lack of women rights in a historical setting but stuck in the middle of a present day Earth. Cathy's fight was admirable and just. So glad she reached her true potential.

The author's writing is just as amazing in her recent work. She definitely knows how to draw out suspense and a good mystery for the plot. I'm impressed by some characters development and arches. Sam's rise to the devious and power hungry Elemental Court and Will's spiral into a dangerous and maddening decisions, for a desperate man is a dangerous man. To Max and the Gargoyle Matthew coming to an unified understanding of equal parts of emotion and focused logic. As well as Tom, for learning of his family's cycle of miscommunication and abuse and stopping it to be a better man, brother and friend.

I love them all.

This is a compelling series with a hopeful but open for interpretation ending. Well done.
