



Vanity's Brood

Lisa Smedman

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Medusanna

A priestess of terrifying power convinces the
Se'sehen

A yuan-ti tribe from the distant jungles of Chult to serve her growing cult of
Sseth

The merciless god of the serpent people who languishes in the foul plane of
Smaragh

Where a trapped and desperate Karell can only hope Arvin will find her before the
House of Serpents

Finally destroys their last hope for freedom.

Vanity's Brood Details

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From Reader Review Vanity's Brood for online ebook

Steven Cole says

A fitting end to the House of Serpents trilogy, Smedman once again does a bang-up job in "Vanity's Brood". These reviews all sound alike, but I get a kick out of Smedman's mastery of Dungeons & Dragons minutiae. The main character's growth in power and ability is nicely portrayed, the impact of "mind magic" is loads of fun, and the plane-hopping was well done.

There was a battle going on in the background during the final third of the book which was never clearly described (either in physical terms, or even in why it was happening in the first place), so that added a bit to a rushed-at-the-end feeling to the prose, but overall, the story was still a grand adventure and fun to read.

Jesse says

The last book in this series, it was pretty good.

Once again, like in the second book, we aren't in the city of the yuan-ti very much, so all the cool politics and social stuff about the serpent people is missing. We do get to some of them in the jungles of Chult, but not in any real depth. I did like how different chapters segway into the Abyss from the material plane. This is more about yuan-ti mythology and stuff, but I would have preferred more about the city Hondalth.

All and all, I think there should be another series focusing on this race; perhaps one with a yuan-ti protagonist, that actually takes place deep in the culture of the serpent people.

If you are a fan of the realms, check this series out.

David says

Hmm... I can't help feeling a teeny bit disappointed with the final book of the trilogy. It feels different from the first two books.

The book is still a nice read and the author is still great at taking advantage of the rarely used setting and game elements - specifically yuan-ti, psionics, and this time throwing in Chult and the Abyss. Bits of lore abound to keep the reader interested too. All the unexpected twists are present in this book and they still delight me that I didn't see them coming.

What's disappointing is the return of the feeling of things being just so convenient. If Arvin really did worship Tymora instead of just paying lip service, I'd at least be inclined to believe in his luck. As it is, there's too much lucky situations and convenient coincidences.

There's also very little character development and growth this time around. If you didn't read the first two books, you'd know very little about these characters. Zelia, the villain, was the most aggrieved. She went

from being Arvin's lethal nemesis, to a rather flat villain. The showdown with Zelia was good and invokes a sense of Arvin's tension, but not very satisfactory. The Secession was brought back right at the end, feeling like an afterthought. The "complications" Arvin has with the Guild also seems conveniently put aside.

I like how Lisa Smedman adheres to D&D rules and restrictions, even to the point where it feels like she just describing the rules. Too bad she breaks this consistency with the fate link psionic power, not once, but twice, to bring about Arvin's victory. Still, readers not familiar with it won't notice - although his psionic powers being so powerful that not even demons and half-fiends can't resist requires a little suspension of disbelief.

Still, the great pacing of the plot, the tying up of loose ends, and the nice plot twists all make for a good read, enough for me to suspend disbelief at Arvin's good fortune. Overall, a satisfactory end to this trilogy.
