



King's Wrath

Fiona McIntosh

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The thrilling conclusion to the breathtaking saga of power, blood, birthright, and enchantment.

The barbarian King Loethar may have gained his throne through brutality and bloodshed, but he has ruled Penraven with unexpected wisdom. Now his innumerable past sins threaten his reign—as Valisars who escaped slaughter prepare to rise up. Loyalties shift and new alliances are formed as the truth of history begins to emerge.

King-in-exile Leonel hungers for revenge against the man he considers the usurper of his throne. Yet Leo is unaware of another who wields the enchantment he covets—the once-charming "halfwit" brother Piven, now a powerful youth whose exceptional cunning is matched only by his ruthless desire for the throne.

But the efforts of all three to hold or gain control of Penraven may well be in vain, for the true inheritor of the Valisar Legacy is being called home . . . to claim her crown.

King's Wrath Details

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From Reader Review King's Wrath for online ebook

Rebecca says

The first half of this book was a little heavy going, but after that I really enjoyed it. This was a strong trilogy and I am looking forward to reading the other trilogy I have by Fiona McIntosh.

Adam Bourke says

In my experience of reading McIntosh's previous books, the endings have been fairly weak and anticlimactic. If it wasn't for the fact that the first two and a half books of her trilogies are generally extremely good then she wouldn't be one of my favourite authors. This series however, and particularly this book, was the exception. The majority of the series was, while still well-written, loose and unfocused. But the ending was possibly the most exciting one that McIntosh has written.

Unfortunately, I can't say too much about the ending without major spoilers, but where previous series have had the final confrontations all but skipped, there is actually some fighting at the end of this one. Which makes it automatically better in the first place. But I will talk about the rest of the novel, and by extension the whole series. I said above that it was unfocused. And the biggest reason for that is the lack of a main protagonist, and the lack of a main antagonist. The characters are no longer clearly defined as they were in the first book, particularly Piven, the mentally handicapped prince. And while it does make it all a bit more realistic, it makes it difficult to actually want any one person to win the conflict.

The best character in the novel is undoubtedly Loethar. Considered the antagonist before the general confusion, he's an interesting, intelligent character. He isn't the only one to go through changes of character, but he's the one that it seems most natural for. He's written well, and almost seems to be the main character in this final book. On the other side of the coin we have Piven. He felt like the main character in the previous book, but in this is relegated to just a handful of viewpoint scenes. Even the (effectively) new character Evie gets more scenes than him.

And mentioning Evie brings us onto the idea of different worlds. If you didn't know, all of McIntosh's fantasy books are set on the same continent, but in different countries - so it makes sense that if something happens in one, it can just as easily happen in another. Throughout her books there is a common theme of different worlds. And the idea of sending someone to a different world until they are needed/considerably older is one that she used here, but also in the Trinity Trilogy. As is the idea of segregating those with magical powers, although for different reasons. Similarly, there are other ideas that I saw repeated in this story arc that were used in her previous novels, so I felt that some originality was lost there. However, on saying that, there were plenty of new ideas in this series, including the idea of an Aegis, and the method of unlocking their power. I also liked the slightly less central idea of the tatua, which identified which tribe the Steppes people were from. Overall, it WAS a new story, although there were some familiar patterns behind it.

I did enjoy this book. I enjoyed this whole series. But it's not the best of what she's written (I can't decide if the Trinity or Quicken Trilogy is best). Nor is it the worst, and the ending is considerably more satisfying than some others have been - although she could have still made it a bit more "epic". If you've read the Percheron Trilogy, then I'd say that there's a high chance of you liking this. If you've never read McIntosh

before, this is still good, but I would recommend the Trinity series as the best to start with (it's the one that I started with, and I've read all of her fantasy books now).

Jenny says

I'm not a deeply analytical person about reading this sort of stuff. I love a good story that gets you involved and this was it. I liked some of the twists, and enjoyed the build of tension to the ending, which I also really liked. Just a good ole fashioned fantasy read.

Pierre Debar says

As this is the final book of the Valisar trilogy, I have reread the two previous tomes before reading this one.

King's Wrath is the weakest of the three. I enjoyed most of it but suddenly it feels like McIntosh had to rush to finish the story.

Surely, the end is exactly like she had in her mind but it is not as well developed as the rest of the saga.

McIntosh is able to create very likable or hateable characters and make us witness their trials, errors, moral dilemmas, moment of happiness or sorrow...

When the time comes to finish the story, I had the impression that it I was reading something more akin to a list of historical facts than decision to be taken by the characters. I agree that all the decisions are logically linked to the rest of the story but the cascade of events felt a bit dry to me instead of a climax.

Nonetheless, this is a great trilogy with a memorable world and some of the best characters to be met in fantasy books.

Danie Cutter says

Great book in the usual tradition of McIntosh. However it seemed too much of a "answering" everything, maybe another book was needed to make it more of a story and less of an explanation. The wide and varied narrative of the previous two in the series set a precedent that the third book did not live up to.

Having said that it was entertaining and I will be buying the next series but maybe downgrade it to a "wait for the paperback".

Quigui says

It was with some trepidation and apprehension that I approached the final instalment of the Valisar Trilogy. In the year that has passed since I read the second book of the series, I managed to read the Percheron Trilogy, and found it lacking in the ending department.

Much had happened already in last 2 books, and I was expecting another action filled story. There was a sense of finality to this book - all the players were known, they were all getting into position, showing their cards, all converging to the same point.

It took me a bit to get (re)used to this world, to remember some of the minor characters and what had happened. But once I was fully reacquainted with it, the pages flew by, and I kept wanting to know what would happen next.

Like the previous two books, this one also is not for those who are easily squicked, as it provides a good example of the darkness of the human mind, and what people are willing to do to get what they think is rightly theirs. Mind you, it isn't all dark and evilness; there is a balance, with some great characters that are the reverse of that coin.

As an ending to the series, King's Wrath fills its purpose. Yet there are still some questions left unanswered (albeit only minor ones), and there is a thread left hanging in case the author ever decides to revisit this world.

I'm of two minds regarding this book. On the one hand, I really liked how my favourite character turned out, something that I was kind of expecting (since book 1), but it was quite nice to see it come to fruition. On the other hand, it all seemed a tad too easy. I was expecting a bit more struggle and uncertainty to the difficult decisions that some of the characters were facing.

I also liked that the problems and ideas I had while reading certain parts, were properly answered a few pages after - seeming like the author thought of other possibilities besides the obvious.

All in all, I enjoyed reading King's Wrath. It didn't disappoint - there was a lot of action, and good characterization. Also, it didn't confirm my fears - it was a good ending to the characters' story, there is a resolution to the biggest problems, even if at points it might not be the one we wished for.

Also at Spoilers and Nuts

Ruth says

I'll start this out with a positive; despite not being too excited about the first 2 books in this series I kept reading because I wanted to find out what happened in the end, which is always a good thing. There were interesting plot points and enough of them to keep me guessing and I hate leaving a series unfinished. But I seriously considered just not bothering with this one. The main problem with the series and most particularly with King's Wrath is that I just could not care about the characters. I don't just mean that they were all evil so I didn't have anyone to root for (although there is an argument for that), no I could have got behind a good villain and supported them as much as any hero. But not a single character offered something to admire. None of them stuck with any characteristics for long - someone could be absolutely evil one moment and then suddenly the very picture of benevolence, someone 'good' you might have supported could just flip the coin and become bad. With no real reasoning whatsoever! I could have handled a change of heart that was well developed and thought-out but nothing was reasoned. People fell in love with the snap of a finger and not one character felt real. Each was weak - there was no depth to any of them, and so I couldn't care less in the end who 'won'. There's no point to a story where you cannot get behind even just one character - there's no motivation or excitement. And to add to that the ending was ridiculous, I hate endings where everything is

just tied up nicely in a ridiculously simple and neat way. Despite the attempt to veil the end with a seemingly tragic and complicated solution, it falls apart with a light push and you see that everything has just been pushed into a box in any old way just so the box is closed. The basic plot of this series could have been done so much better so I'm just frustrated that the lack of any real character-building prevented that.

GingerOrange says

What an exciting turn of events!

There was so much going on in this novel. Very action packed with loads of plot twists. Kept me hooked to the last page. Although some plot lines and scenes felt a little convenient and unbelievable.

Overall, a really interesting turn to the story.

Annie Castaneda says

Omg! A cliffhanger? There better be a 4th book! Despite the bad editing and the bad reviews, I really enjoyed this saga!

Swiftsea says

Completely unbelievable an ending. Everything builds up then falls in patters, returning to solid ground. Without missing of course, Fiona McIntosh's notable traits of almost-seeming worthless deaths. Moreover, the incredible bounds of magic that interplay, though striking and awe-inspiring, lead to the pointlessness of the magic existing in the first place.

I really dislike the mish-mash excuse they often place in fantasy stories. Where everything is because of a 'god' or 'goddess' decree. It's played upon too much in this book. For goodness sakes, by the end of it all I was pretty much just screaming for the Valisar bloodline to end. We don't need more of the utter Valisar Legacy nonsense. Land can be ruled with the absence of magic. PLEASE. The damn goddess (mentioned in the epilogue) is just plain lazy- wrecking havoc where she can't be bothered to control. If this is the best ending I can get from Fiona McIntosh's writing, I doubt I'll try reading any more of her trilogies -- as much as I enjoyed the Quickenings.

I would have honestly liked to give this novel 4 stars but the last few chapters drained a star out. The endings of both the trilogies I've read of Fiona McIntosh's are incredibly vague. However, I have to admit that the last few chapters of this trilogy, or climax so to speak is a lot better than that of 'the Quickenings'. I still recall cringing when I was forced to understand balance in the world was restored through a 'Bridge of Souls'. Yes, I somehow am still able to remember the title of the last installment of the trilogy because, plainly put, it was unfathomable and too incredible a way for a story to end.

Among the things I'm most frustrated about in this novel:

1) Leo's character development. He turns into a tormented fellow. Made me really miss his cute, lively, perceptive 13 year-old self in 'the Royal Exile'. I wanted to cry for him, Lily and Gavriel.

2) Corbel just HAD to die didn't he. His death made me dislike Genevieve's character even more.
3) The stupid 'true love at first sight' between Genevieve and the old man Kilt Faris. It happened way too quickly. No wonder Corbel wanted to die. He's been with her for 20 years! And Kilt Faris, within just a few hours wins her heart. WTH.

This is why by the end of the whole trilogy, readers will pity every single character except Genevieve.
4) So Piven becomes this amazing youth, that... what? Turns into a mindless child again? Oh, great! Back to square one.

Ditchthebun says

I am actually going to write about the whole series here, I figure if you got to this book then you have read the first two right?

Okay I suppose I should preface this review by saying that I am a huge fan of Fiona McIntosh's work (except that Myrren's Gift series, I just cannot get into that series – have tried 3 times now haha). For years her Trinity series were my favourite books, I adored the Percheron series and now this series... well...

The characters were great, I think the development and depth to Loethar was my favourite. I have to say though that across all three books there was quite a bit of "consuming" in general. For the most part it was vital to the plot though so I could overlook it, I guess you could say it was needfully bloodthirsty :) Very well done though, strangely the only time it really grossed me out was when they were "consuming" hair and nails – please don't ask me to explain why I find this grosser than general human eating because I do not have any kind of reasonable response to that.

Some of the plot lines I got, but not all of them – I always love when that happens. There were a couple of nice twists in the final book. To have to understand the development etc. with Leo I think I would have to read it again because I am unsure as to what happened here honestly – which I am aware is a vague critique, but I am trying to avoid spoilers :) I really liked the character Kilt Faris (who was pretty much Robin Hood right?) until right towards the end of the final book, I guess the whole love at first sight thing is plausible and all, but I just didn't really buy it and the whole "consuming" thing... oh just not going there.

Let's go back to my short and sweet reviews shall we... Love Fiona McIntosh. Loved this trilogy even though there were some things I would pick on from it :) If you love good fantasy then give this a whirl! Please note that this is definitely a book aimed at adults. Although to be honest if your tween got through the Hunger Games they should be fine, read it yourself first :)

Katie says

5* for the story
3* for the editing

Whoever edited this didn't do a good job. As far as I could see there weren't any spelling or grammatical errors but there were inconsistencies. For example, at one point Brighthelm was called Brightelmstone, Queen Iselda was called Isadora, and Leo was called Loethar's half-brother instead of nephew. Bit confusing.

The story was really good though and it leaves it open for another book! However, I must admit I did find the ending a bit rushed as I would have liked to know more about the new administration and the people's reaction to it along with the lost Valisar princess's return and Loethar being a Valisar.

Becky says

A climatic end to the series. All the surviving characters from the previous books are drawn together to see who will end up ruling the Empire. Lots of loose ends tied up and a few surprises! If you like magic and suspense combined then go and start at the beginning of this series or even to the first of 12 books by Fiona which are set in the same fantasy world.

Aimee says

If you've read the others and don't mind them then you will be okay with this one as it's more of the same. Same characters with annoyingly unclear motivations, falling in love with perfect strangers, making odd decisions just so that the plot can work out okay and characters can meet 'fortuitously', etc. It just got boring by the end.

The plot twists would have been good if it wasn't for the way the author tries to make you like unlikeable characters in a really awkward way, 'revealing' inner goodness they never showed in previous books. I just didn't buy it, and in order to make it work she has to make previously nice characters into nasty ones so that by the end I really didn't care who won. None of the characters feel real either, or act in the way you'd expect them to. For instance, (view spoiler)

Another reason for the two stars is the lack of decent editing. At one point, at least in the edition I'm reading, the city known as Brighthelm for the first two books becomes Brighthelmstone for a whole chapter then goes back to Brighthelm later on; and at the end of chapter 15, (view spoiler). I know this might seem petty but it breaks the immersion and leaves me feeling annoyed when what I really want from a book, especially fantasy, is to fall into another world that leaves me entranced. This trilogy really didn't do this for me.

Holly Anderson says

Ultimately this was an adequate final book in an okay series... It's a shame as the 1st book was bursting with real potential... Whilst the 2nd book plodded along and kind of dragged a little bit... And finally, the 3rd book began very similar to the 2nd book, but gradually picked up speed until it felt like the final 3rd of the book was racing too fast, and finished too quickly.

I felt that some of the characters personalities changed too radically throughout the books... It would have been understandable for the characters personalities to have been adapted inbetween books 1 and 2 due to the 10 year gap in time... However, the characteristics of some important characters such as Leo, Loethar, and Gavriel (although it is more understandable with Gavriel due to his amnesia being healed and therefore he does realise he is a different person as a result of his experiences and his sense of duty) changed so radically during the short period of the 3rd book that the story didn't seem to flow, despite the story becoming more intense and enjoyable.

It did seem to end almost abruptly... And I guess this can happen quite a lot in the fantasy genre, where the

ultimate hero/heroine 'realises' that they had the power all along to save the world, but it feels like so many characters lives during the series were wasted needlessly merely because the powers-that-be did not want to get involved too much... I realise that there would be no storyline without that sort of thing but I guess it just bugs me that there is so much selfishness and cruelty in some of these books for no apparent reason... I much prefer a story to end due to the hard work and character building and yes sometimes luck etc of the heroes of the story... It makes it easier to accept the reasons for so many innocents to be killed-off if the entire journey seems more essential to the ultimate result of saving the world.
