

Saga of Lyn: The Reawakening

Aric C. Carter

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Interwoven plots and a strong title character begin this promising new fantasy world.

Featuring an unlikely protagonist and his enchanted weapon, a seemingly ageless martial soldier, and a kingdom plagued by “monstrosities born of nightmares,” *Saga of Lyn: The Reawakening* is a promising first book in a new fantasy series by emerging writer Aric C. Carter.

After establishing some historical context and characterization, the action begins with violent tragedy inflicted on Tegain, proprietor of an inn called the Hooded Lantern, at the hands of a mysterious stranger. With practically nothing left of his old life, Tegain’s pursuit of retribution quickly ensnares him in a mission that unfolds over numerous physical and psychological battlegrounds.

It is clear from the overall tone and critical foundation of the novel that the series has ontological as well as artistic goals. For example, the ancient mental power of Cyning—a quality that generally separates the major players from the benchwarmers in the land of Krysin—is grounded in philosophy and mental mastery rather than mysticism, and supports the premise of a reemerging warrior culture.

Literally and figuratively, the strongest character by far is the titular Lyn, Princess Lavi Yael Nashi, who carves a streak of compassion and wisdom (backed by a welcome sense of humor) throughout the text. Scenes exploring the growing relationship between Lyn and Tegain are tender and well-crafted, and raise interesting questions about love, fidelity, intimacy, and autonomy. Themes of personal power and discipline emerge as Tegain evolves, developing heroic features already inherent in the humble villager.

Anticipation about the fates of the characters is created by dividing the narrative into a pair of interweaving plots when Tegain and his ally Karl become separated. Through various tests of strategy and strength, both characters are individually revealed as seemingly unstoppable soldiers. This tactic could have augmented the level of suspense surrounding more major plot revelations; instead, several crucial moments are buried within chapters.

The book would have benefited from editorial tightening: in particular, the abundance of sentences beginning with “however” has the effect of weakening descriptions. Use of the word “suddenly” where a variety of other phrasings could have relayed the action just as well or better also becomes repetitive.

The writing is at its best when the story is developed through dialogue. Longer narrative sections devoted to providing insight into characters’ pasts, though useful in establishing motivation, could have been more subtly integrated into the flow of this compelling tale.

As much as *The Reawakening* stands on its own, there is a definite impression of having merely lifted the cover on this legend. While structural polish could have improved this entry to the series, the scene is set for several large unanswered questions to propel even greater action.

The prospect of what the future will hold for Tegain and Lyn, and the unavoidable clash between the heroes and their still-elusive nemesis, leaves a wide territory to be explored in subsequent installments of the saga.

PATTY COMEAU (December 4, 2014)

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