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Spells Of Old (Ancient Dreams Book 2)



Synopsis

Having successfully driven off an assault and freed captives of Kelvanis, Sistina begins fortifying to defend those she cares about from further attacks. Yet with all her power within her halls, she cannot grant those under her protection true freedom. To truly bring hope to her love, Sistina must delve into who she once was, and bring forth every scrap of magic she has to become a shining beacon of hope. Sadly, Kelvanis' plans are only mildly impeded by her efforts up until now, and they will stop at nothing to bring their ends about. The only question is, whose side is time on?

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Customer Reviews

I have to say that Benjamin Medrano really impresses me. I started out a bit ambivalent towards this series. The lack of focus on just one part of the world felt like he was forcing too many plot threads together. Now after reading book 2, I still think he's trying a bit too hard to have lots of plot threads. He also has a bit too much of a fetish for demonic transformations of female characters. However, once you get past the scenes involving the capital of the villain's kingdom and the antics occurring there, you have an extremely solid tale surrounding Sistina and the people affected by her existence

as a dungeon resting over a ruined Elven capital. I just wish he could remember to keep the focus on just that. He has so much to write about that the jumps to the capital just break the narrative. But he definitely has me looking forward to book 3. And that must be the final criteria.

I'll start by saying that I received an ARC of this book in exchange for a fair and honest review. Now that that's out of the way... I loved this book. I thought *Ancient Ruins* was fantastic, so obviously jumped at the chance to get an ARC of the sequel. The story picks up pretty much right where *Ancient Ruins* left off, and develops from there. Pretty much every time Phynis and Sistina were alone they proceeded to be ridiculously adorable. How they handled things with the Jewels, while mostly left to background, was well done. Kelvanis continues to be nasty and thoroughly unpleasant, though it would appear all is not quite as it seems on that front. Further insight into Sistina and who she once was is given, and contained a couple of surprises, at least for me. The epilogue definitely raised some questions I can't wait to read the answers to. By the end of the book, the board has been set for a pretty major confrontation, which will have dramatic repercussions regardless of which way things go (though one would hope it will go well for our heroes in the end, obviously!) and I eagerly await the conclusion in *Halls of Power*.

I just recently read book one and was really excited to find out book two was coming out so quickly. This book, and the series, is really good. There is growth in the characters, a complex world, good bad guys, bad good guys and some really cool magic. Read the sample of this book, you end up buying it and impatiently wait for the next one!!

I gave this book the highest rating because it does EVERYTHING right. The characters have personalities and depth and you see them grow with the story. The main antagonist is not one-dimensional evil guy, and you can appreciate why he chose the means to his end. The story is well crafted. Even though there are gods and high magic there's no impression of anything being over powered. Every power has a cost and preparation behind it. The pace is steady and never boring, jumping between all the characters so that you know of, or at least get glimpses, into all the political and magic machinations occurring in this story.

Potential to be a 5 star book but falls short. The characters were difficult to relate to. Only the main character Sistina engaged my interest and that is likely because she unfolded as she remembers more of her past. I disliked the first book because evil was done and not punished. While I realize

this may be reality it aggravates me reading stories when this happens. I am also particularly annoyed by forced sex/rape. Sapphic love does not bother me and was handled discreetly. In second book some come upence is delivered. Sistina seems to be her own most dangerous enemy as nobody else can match her in her domain. Her biggest weakness is incomplete memories and she can't safely leave her domain. The side plot of a dungeon with monsters and prizes for clearing a level seems silly . It only makes sense as a launch for game. This book is better than just a launch pad and this dungeon stuff just distracts and confuses. The most annoying thing about this series is that the books do not really stand alone, coming to no end point. Consequently if the author wanted ot publish this as a trilogy she should have brought out all three books I would therefore suggest you wait until all three books are out and decide if you want to commit to reading three books. It actually seems like it may be worth it. I hope the author does not renege and decide to try and lengthen this into more books, milking the series. Assuming the third book comes to a conclusive end I could recommend this series.

This is a pretty wild take on the dungeon genre. The world and politics surrounding it are very well fleshed out. I feel this second book spent a bit less time giving enemy points of view which I much appreciated. The whole enslavement and identity death stuff certainly makes it obvious who the bad guy is. Yet even then there's nuance and redeeming qualities. All in all, great stuff, looking forward to the next book.

To give perspective on my reviews, RAH's "The Moon is a Harsh Mistress", and most of his other published works, are 5 Star works of speculative fiction. Weber's "Honor of the Queen" is a solid 4 Star book. For Mr. Medrano, I can easily assign a 4 Star review. Mr. Medrano is an expert with his chosen tool, the written English language. No missing letters, no missing words, the correct spelling of "their" and "there" in context. And he actually knows the proper use of "then" and "than". The plot is complex, the small details make the story line interesting. The characters are diverse and well developed as individuals. I look forward to the next volume.

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