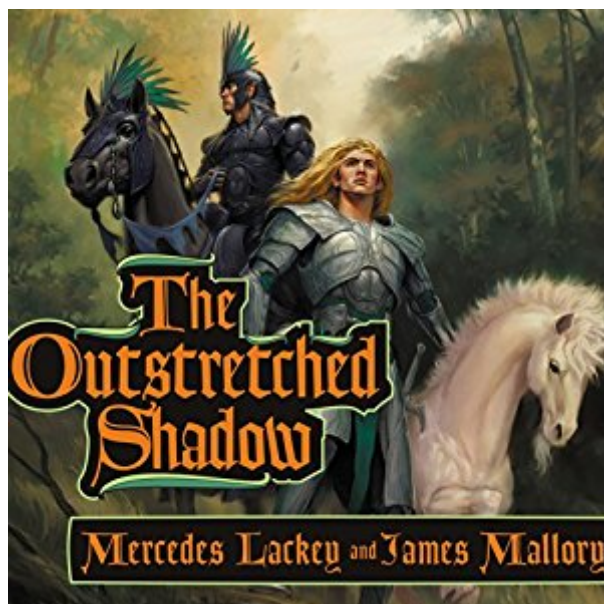


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The Outstretched Shadow: The Obsidian Trilogy, Book 1



Synopsis

The Outstretched Shadow, the first book in The Obsidian Trilogy from Mercedes Lackey and James Mallory Kellen Tavadon, son of the Arch-Mage Lycaelon, thought he knew the way the world worked. His father, leading the wise and benevolent Council of Mages, protected and guided the citizens of the Golden City of the Bells. Young Mages in training--all men, for women were unfit to practice magic--memorized the intricate details of High Magic and aspired to seats on the council. Then he found the forbidden Books of Wild Magic--or did they find him? Their Magic felt like a living thing, guided by the hearts and minds of those who practiced it and benefited from it. Questioning everything he has known, Kellen discovers too many of the City's dark secrets. Banished, with the Outlaw Hunt on his heels, Kellen invokes Wild Magic--and finds himself running for his life with a unicorn at his side. Rescued by a unicorn, healed by a female Wild Mage who knows more about Kellen than anyone outside the City should, meeting Elven royalty and Elven warriors, and plunged into a world full of magical beings--Kellen both revels in and fears his new freedom. The one thing all the Mages of the City agreed on was that practicing Wild Magic corrupted a Mage. Turned him into a Demon. Would that be Kellen's fate? Deep in Obsidian Mountain, the Demons are waiting. Since their defeat in the last great War, they've been biding their time, sowing the seeds of distrust and discontent between their human and Elven enemies. Very soon now, when the Demons rise to make war, there will be no alliance between High and Wild Magic to stand against them. And then all the world will belong to the Endarkened. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 30 hours and 42 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Tantor Audio

Audible.com Release Date: February 18, 2010

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B0038ZUJ82

Best Sellers Rank: #175 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fantasy > Epic #656 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Epic #1396 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction &

Customer Reviews

I've always enjoyed reading books by Mercedes Lackey, but I never classified her as one of my most favorite authors. She may be converting me though if this series stays as strong as the opening book. The book begins typically enough with the protagonist, Kellan, dissatisfied with his life. He is the son of the Arch-mage who presides over the counsel of mages who control almost every aspect of life in the city. Kellan is gifted in magic although there is very little evidence of it at the beginning of the story. All of the mages in the city are only permitted to practice High Magic which Kellan finds very boring. The story really begins to pick up when Kellan finds three books about a different kind of magic called Wild Magic. Once he begins to dabble in this very different magic the story really gets going. I loved the system of magic that the authors developed. There is a certain coherence and structure to it. Obviously, it's magic so it is still unexplainable, but I've always felt that even when you're writing about magic there should be some system to how it functions. I also thought that the various races that Kellan encounters throughout the story were very well done. The authors did a reasonably good job of giving them different characteristics and natures (i.e. elves are not simply very pretty people who love nature, but actually have characteristics that reflect their nature). The last thing I liked about this book was that you get to see some of the development and training of Kellan. He has some gifts, but he has to work at learning to use them. If you've never read Mercedes Lackey, I encourage you to give this new trilogy a try.

This novel is very long. It hasn't been well edited. These two comments seem to sum up the majority of other reviews of this work. I will concede that this book is long, but it was not poorly edited. Any time that you have two authors collaborating on a given work, that book will be longer than one written by either of them individually. Yes, there are aspects of the story that seem to plod along, but I feel that the overall story is well worth the slower sections. As far as the suggestion that this work was badly edited goes, let me say that I can close my eyes and recall the images that the authors created with their words, even though I read this book 8 months ago! That's not bad editing, people, it's called attention to detail! I have been reading sci-fi and fantasy novels (and playing related role playing games) for almost 25 years, and the concept of "magic" as presented in this novel is the most original one that I have encountered in probably the last 20 years. The overall concept rivals the originality of the trilogy, "His Dark Materials," by Philip Pullman. Personally, I am more than willing to read a few (slightly) long-winded descriptions in return for that. I am anxiously

awaiting the second book in this series....in fact, I think it's about time for me to re-read this book, just to make sure I'm ready.

I really liked this book. However I feel a need to warn everyone that it is slow at first. I like getting a lot of background on a new world and the main characters, But I usually prefer that you grab my attention first. The book spends a great deal of time at the beginning going over history from one viewpoint, and giving us a great deal of information on the homeland of the main character. But it is not until much later in the book that anything actual begins to happen. I would have preferred the book to start out with some action or decision then started giving us the background information which I think could have been done easily. All of that aside The Story is great and I can't wait for the second book.

While I thought that this book had an interesting story, and agree in part with many of the other reviews, there is one overall reason that I gave such a low rating. Kellen, one of the main characters of this book is an endearing young man, with many questions and outlooks upon his life in general. Throughout the novel, Kellen comes upon his realizations and revelations on the blink of an eye, going back and forth from one view to another, doubting just about everything there is to doubt. This is a book of adventure and far off lands, but this feeling of excitement at untold journeys is somewhat put off by the fact that you know the main character will always find the answer when he needs it, at the snap of your fingers. If it wasn't for this, the book would have been, in my opinion, far more enjoyable.

I have found Ms. Lackey's novels somewhat hit or miss in the past (for my taste at least). Some I've loved, others I had a hard time finishing. This one I really enjoyed though. Perhaps it does not bring anything new to the epic fantasy genre, but the authors have woven the old stereotypes together well and combined them into an exciting story. The only two minor criticisms I might offer are that the conflicts are rather black and white, and the protagonist's worrying and refusal to ask questions does get a little tedious at times. Still a good book overall and I will definitely be reading the other two novels in this trilogy.

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