



A Dirge for Sabis

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It is a grim time for the Empire of Sabis. The barbarian hordes are invading, yet no one in the capital city wants to believe the growing danger. No one, that is, except the philosopher-scientist, Sulun, and his followers. Advertising in Locus and Science Fiction Chronicle.

A Dirge for Sabis Details

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Author : C.J. Cherryh , Leslie Fish

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From Reader Review A Dirge for Sabis for online ebook

Leslie Fish says

Fantasy need include no more than *one* fantasy element -- in this case, "well/ill-wishing" -- in order to work.

o jh says

awkward exposition dump in first chapter. not feeling it.

Lynda says

A group of friends flee a war zone together and during their travels bond and become like a family. Now in their new home, they end up fighting a war of their own, one of wizardry and firepower.

Alina says

Not a bad book; it got more interesting towards the end. Overall meh.

Lian Tanner says

Very different in style from the other books of Cherryh's I've read, but just as gripping and entertaining, with a subversive humour and wonderful characterisation. It'll be interesting to read the next two books in the trilogy and see if the different co-authors affect the style.

Jen says

Interesting. Picked this up in slim pickings at a used book store because of it's connection to C.J. Cherryh (although it seems the idea was loosely connected to Cherryh, and the story itself is Leslie Fish's).

The characters are interesting, but the story itself is situation-driven, rather than character-driven. An exploration of might-have-beens in a world that looks vaguely like a Mediterranean alter-ego. Medieval inventions and barbarian hordes of which parallels can easily be found in our own Goths, Visigoths, and Asian Mongols.

Interesting, and I'm tempted to hunt down the other books in the series, except other reviews indicate they're written by different authors and don't quite meet the high standards of the first.

Karen Ireland-Phillips says

****SPOILER ALERT**** for these books, published in 1989.[return][return]In this shared world trilogy C.J. Cherryh fully exercises her history fetish by exploring the what-if inherent in the rise, fall and adaptation of cultures. [return]The main characters, over a timeline of nearly a thousand years, are the descendents original citizens of the Sabirn Empire, and the cultures and empires which conquer and oppose them. [return]In Book 1, A Dirge for Sabis, Ancaran hordes from the north (pushed by barbarians from even further north, of course – this is Cherryh) conquer the Sabirn Empire and overrun the capital, Sabis. This despite the efforts of a group of patriots including a “natural philosopher”, a smith, an army officer, and a resourceful magician to construct a weapon that could hold them off. The group of patriots are forced to flee, finding a new patron behind the Ancar lines and using their knowledge to scare off a cult fleecing the locals. [return]“If at first you don’t succeed, get the hell out of the way.”[return] Followed by Wizard Spawn[return]Book II of the Sword of Knowledge series[return]C.J. Cherryh and Nancy Asire[return][return]500 years later, (See A Dirge for Sabis) Book II concentrates on the remnants of the Sabirn people, and the scorn and persecution they suffer under the rule of the descendants of the Ancar in Sabis. This is our “one person makes a difference book”. Chemist (and alchemist) Duran rescues a Sabirn boy injured in an attack behind his shop, and is stunned to discover that his neighbors disapprove – strongly. Worse, the presence of the boy in Duran’s home leads to rumors of witchcraft and alchemical deeds that reach the ears of the court. Eventually, he flees with the boy, the boy’s grandfather, and other Sabirn who know secrets of which he could only have dreamed. [return][return][return]Reap the Whirlwind[return]Book III of the Sword of Knowledge series[return]C.J. Cherryh and Mercedes Lackey[return](See Also, A Dirge for Sabis and Wizard Spawn) Book III brings the descendents of the protagonists of Book I and II together to resist the depredations of the Wind Clan (fleeing, in a nice bit of symmetry, the pursuit of another clan and **their** overlords). Having joined forces as a scholarly quasi-magical organization, they’re able to use the secret magics of the Sabirn, the strengths of the Ancar, the tenets of Duran, and the tenacity of the scholar’s leader to bring the Clan into alliance. [return][return]Book one shows the Cherryh touch the most clearly – the multi-layered plotting, characters who turn out to be much different than first perceived. The early chapters were clearly her work, and Leslie Fish does a great job keeping up and fleshing out the characters and story.[return]The next two volumes are much simpler in plot and characterization, though not without the occasional surprise. If not up to Cherryh’s, Asire’s and Lackey’s best work, still worth a read.

Mark Lacy says

Not very good. I don't plan on reading sequels.

rainbow3 says

Finished reading on Thursday, April 16, 2009. . Yipes, the first couple of pages are turning my hair grey. Early experiments with gunpowder. Lets just fire a projectile out of a metal tube and watch its passage toward a distant target, then lets swiftly check whether or not we can re-fire out of the same tube? Most importantly have the seams held? Hey, lets just pour more gunpowder down into this hot metal tube, to see?

Hold on a minute, I’m thinking... Hot metal tube and gunpowder, and a query over whether the seams are

holding. Lets get back to that word - HOT!!!

There was an amusing start here, the 1st couple of pages of 'explosive' scene setting were entertaining then I got bogged down around page 14 because of the pages of military history I had to negotiate to get that far, I had started to zone out a little... I trotted on through that though and really was enjoying it till I put it down, somewhere in my flat... and it must have fallen into a wormhole!

ADDED – 21 March 2010 ~ Updating my reading records and have realised this review had not been added to my online records - till now!

I am such a Cherryh fan I did want to read this but it took me some persevering to complete, the creation of the epic tale, lots of back story political shenanigans and chunks of military history causing me to zone out more than somewhat. Also the nature of the tale told necessitated some periods where the activity drifted and during some of the lulls particularly near the end I felt I was on hold waiting for something to happen.

The book starts with a dramatic breathless race, determining friend from foe as a company of artisan inventors prepare a large group of people, in secret, to flee a city under siege; escape into enemy territory that once had belonged to some of the fleeing group, scary evasion of pitiless warriors; the search for historic artifacts of power or at least answers in a now ruined and abandoned, cursed ancient city; setting up credibility under assumed personas, and finally establishing a economic stronghold hidden deep behind enemy lines while, in essence, developing superior weaponry!

This ended up feeling like it had blended two or three stories together and in the process left many loose ends most of which I anticipate would not be picked up in the following sequel. That was another issue, I hadn't focused on the fact before reading this that the cover stated this was Book 1 of the Sword of Knowledge, and so had no idea as I read it that it was one of a series, and that was disappointing as I wanted a greater sense of the story rounding off. I finally realised a sequel was in the offing as the closer I got to the end, the feeling of another sequence of events just kicking off started to alert me.

In retrospect I recall that despite having some brilliant passages and intriguing plot trails it left me feeling flat though it certainly had many points of interest throughout.

Michael says

I found this to be a compelling start to the series by Leslie Fish but ultimately let down by weaker later instalments by the other authors.

Incidentally Cherryh (who I love) has little to do with this book. Apparently she originally wrote some introductions which were subsequently deleted by the publishers.

Lindsay (Santafefan) says

I love most of Cherryh's book and was delighted with this one written with another author.
