



Wizard of the Pigeons

Megan Lindholm

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The fifth book in the Megan Lindholm (Robin Hobb) backlist. Seattle: a place as magical as the Emerald City. Subtle magic seeps through the cracks in the paving stones of the sprawling metropolis. But only the inhabitants who possess special gifts are open to the city's consciousness; finding portents in the graffiti, reading messages in the rubbish or listening to warnings in the skipping-rope chants of children. Wizard is bound to Seattle and her magic. His gift is the Knowing -- a powerful enchantment allowing him to know the truth of things; to hear the life-stories of ancient mummies locked behind glass cabinets, to receive true fortunes from the carnival machines, to reveal to ordinary people the answers to their troubles and to safeguard the city's equilibrium. The magic has its price; Wizard must never have more than a dollar in his pocket, must remain celibate, and he must feed and protect the pigeons. But a threat to Seattle has begun to emerge in the portents. A malevolent force born of Wizard's forgotten past has returned to prey upon his power and taunt him with images of his obscure history; and he is the only wizard in Seattle who can face the evil and save the city, his friends and himself.

Wizard of the Pigeons Details

Date : Published January 1st 1986 by Ace

ISBN : 9780441894673

Author : Megan Lindholm

Format : Mass Market Paperback 214 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Fiction, Science Fiction Fantasy, Urban

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From Reader Review Wizard of the Pigeons for online ebook

Siobhán says

Excellent. Urban Fantasy, Arthurian Legend, Vietnam War, Seattle, mental illness. What is real, what is unreal? Not at all what I expected from the title / description on the back, but a surprising, fast-paced book and extremely ambiguous in its possible interpretations. Read it though it is odd and weird. Five Stars.

Snowtulip says

I'm a fan of Robin Hobb, so I thought it would be great to try some of her other work. Wizard of the Pigeons as whole is an interesting concept, but the execution didn't work for me. It was a dark, dreary read that left me unsure. It was a bit tedious at times, and I really had to work to move forward with reading.

Alex Ristea says

Stop it, Robin Hobb. (I'd say Megan Lindholm, but I'm sure that by now, the jig is most definitely up.)

A little background on this book first. I got it last year at WesterCon and had Robin sign it for me. She wrote "My tourist guide to Seattle!" on the flap. I was down in Portland this past weekend, so I thought I'd finally pick this up to read on the bus.

Wizard of the Pigeons is about a homeless wizard living in Seattle, and his wanderings through which we experience the city. Let me just say that I haven't been so connected to a character in a long, long time.

Robin Hobb—unlike any other—brings a scene to life. It's the perfect weave of physical and emotional description that makes your own five senses seem woefully inadequate. I've been to Seattle many times, but there are places that I will never look at the same again based on the images Hobb has now seared into my mind (in a good way). If you've never thought that a city could be *alive*, give this book a shot and see if it can't change your mind.

Overall, I wasn't too impressed with the overarching story, but the characters more than made up for it. Recommended for those that already love Hobb's other works and her style of writing, though I'll warn you that it is challenging. Think of it as a cult novel that only Hobb's fanboy/fangirls will appreciate. A point of personal pride to try and read everything she's ever published.

To Traci's point, agreed that this book doesn't have a point. Which is part of the reason I love this author. There isn't always a point. Sometimes it is just to enjoy a scene or a moment and live in the now.

Miriam says

I should reread this! I read this when I was 10 or 11 and first getting into fantasy, but I was used to the dragons-and-sorcery type stuff so I didn't really get it. Pretty much all I remember is the main character is a homeless guy who has some small magic powers but makes rules for why he can't use them.

Carol Close says

This book has an ending I cannot comprehend. Possibly the character loses the plot, too:) So why five stars?

This book does have a point. What things seem, and what they are, depend on how we approach them.

Everyone has motivations and rules, if we know them or not. Sometimes they are beyond our ken.

We enter the world of a character who is perhaps mentally ill, or perhaps magic, or perhaps both, and is very human. As a reader I was left with a great deal of insight.

It may be that there is magic, it may be there is not.

I read it first a long time ago and it pretty much changed my thinking. This book gave me a Damascan moment.

zjakkeliën says

I actually didn't finish this book. I was all excited about it after reading **Alien earth**. I really loved that one, and the blurb of **Wizard of the pigeons** sounded good. However, I didn't like the writing: way too long descriptions of street scenes in Seattle and of rooms and so on. I suppose it is meant as a way to create atmosphere, but it didn't work for me. On top of that, the story is vague. I don't mind if not everything is clear straight away, but I don't like it if I can't get a grip on the story. For instance, Guy Gavriel Kay usually doesn't reveal everything immediately, but at least you know what it is you don't know. In the case of **Wizard of the pigeons**, the whole thing is vague. Every now and then there was a nice page, for instance when Wizard helps someone, but then there were whole pages that I couldn't but read diagonally. Then the evil comes into view. And it is... a vague greyness. Great, more vagueness and an unexplained evil.

By this time, I was getting enough and was wondering whether to continue. So I came here and read a few reviews, and I came upon one with spoilers, explaining what the story was about. Apparently, (view spoiler) What a disappointment! I hate that type of storyline. So that was that. I'm definitely not finishing this book.

Quintin Zimmermann says

A dark, foreboding book rich with shadow and symbolism. However, the stylistic format and the murkiness of the plot just didn't grip me.

I just didn't identify with Wizard and it ended up being a rather tedious read.

I love the writer that Robin Hobb develops into, even here she is brimming with talent, but the overall story didn't work for me.

Rob says

...*Wizard of the Pigeons* is a novel with many layers. Do you choose to see Wizard as a Vietnam veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome or a figure not unlike Merlin? It is a story of unrequited love, a magical quest or facing a dark past? Is Seattle magical or mundane? Is the city sheltering him or is he protecting the city? Lindholm leaves the reader a lot of room to interpret the story but nonetheless manages to write a conclusion to the story that makes all the elements fall into place. The author packs a lot into this slim volume, most of it just under the surface of the main narrative. The author does not provide all the answers, you must go digging for your own. Every novel I read by Lindholm strengthens my opinion that these books are seriously under appreciated and this one was no exception. A definite candidate for this year's best of list.

Full Random Comments review

Lucille says

2,5/5

I would have given this only 2 if it wasn't for Megan Lindholm's **gorgeous writing style** and some pages that really struck me.

I wish there'd be more magic throughout the book, from the description I had been expecting something really different from what I got so obviously I was a bit **disappointed**.

Themes of mental illness (PTSD and depression maybe), of letting go, relationships and listening can be found in this story. I wouldn't call this urban fantasy even if the city itself is important to the story because most of the times, the magical stuff do not really feel like magic, I always found myself wondering if it all was real or just in the main character's head.

The chapters are often in the present and sometimes in the past, with no real indication of it so there were one or two times when I was a bit confused by this.

This felt more like **a love letter to Seattle** and the *Wizard of Oz* than a *proper* urban fantasy novel, in my opinion!

Overall this wasn't very bad but I did not love it.

+ Didn't like the use of "Gypsy" several times, which is a slur

"Wizard, there is only one rule about violence. Do whatever you must do to make it stop."

Round of applause for Cassie who had all the best lines.

Steven says

Wish more urban fantasy were like this instead of the headless-washboard-abs brigade you see at the local bookshops.....

Rosemary says

Absolutely one of the best books ever written about Seattle. This is the city that I grew up in, before the tech and the shiny condos and the Starbucks on every corner. First book that I ever read that made me u-turn into the bookstore and buy five more copies to mail to friends.

Warning: it's a heartbreak of read.

Charity says

For her books written as Megan Lindholm, I'd rate Alien Earth the best, this the second best, and Cloven Hooves third. The rest of her books are worth reading: she always employs intelligent prose and interesting concepts; however, these 3 really stood out, I thought, as approaching the level of her later works.

This book depressed me, however, which is the only reason I didn't give it five stars. It's been a while since I read it, but I remember loving the feel of Seattle. The "wizard" in the book is a homeless vet living on the streets.

Spoilers:

Around him, he sees a magic filled world and he is constantly working hard to get through the days overcoming small obstacles (like finding food) while maintaining his personal integrity and keeping balance in his magical realm. By the end, however, it seems that he is just a person driven crazy by war experiences living in a fantasy world constructed by his own mind. There is no reason to think the fantasy world exists, and we are left with a view of a very sad person living a very sad existence, who perhaps is not as sad because he's allowed his own mind to trick him into believing in better things. I searched in vain in the book for some evidence that his fantasy world was real, not just in his mind, but couldn't find it. It was a good book, but in the end, it wasn't fantasy. It was a sad portrait of a homeless vet living on the streets, and quite frankly, I avoid books like that because I don't like being depressed. So.

VERY much worth reading, especially if you are a fan of hers, but I must say that I'm glad the rest of her stuff (except perhaps the reindeer books?) stick with fantasy worlds that allow me to indulge.

Ben Cannon says

Wizard of the Pigeons begins as a tale of mundane wonder, written as an understated classic fantasy, but set in the streets of 80's Seattle. While the climactic moments may have lost a little of their weight due to the style, despite how brilliantly woven the threads were, for me it was the gentle magic of the more relaxed parts of the tale that charmed me.

Wealththeow says

On the one hand, I love low-profile wizards in love with their city: Hellblazer's Constantine or Kate Griffin's Matthew Swift are some of my very favorite characters. On the other hand, the first few pages available on Amazon feature clunky&unnatural dialog and a wizard who doesn't seem all that likable. So I dunno. If I find this book before Think Galactic meets and discusses it, I'll read it; if not, I'll drop this.

Dee says

A lovely magical book. I don't remember all the details as I read it a long time ago but I do remember that it was pretty fantastic. I loved the feel of the story, the way it made the city of seattle another character , and the strange and individual ways the magic was present in the main characters (cassie and her jump rope songs, the black wizard (forgot his name) and his music, and the main protagonist wizard (forgot his name also) and his power of persuasion.

I also remember that I always pictured the wizard to look a bit like kurt cobain (probably cos of the seattle connection), scruffy and small but with a tough core. The book also made me want to visit the places it mentions such as pike place market and the steps where Euripides told fortunes etc.

Blimey, I think I remembered more than I realised!
