



Blackflame

Will Wight

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Lindon has a year left.

When his time runs out, he'll have to fight an opponent that no one believes he can beat. Unless he learns sacred arts the right way, from scratch, he won't have a chance to win...and even then, the odds are against him.

In the course of their training, he and Yerin travel to the Blackflame Empire, where they fight to master an ancient power.

Success means a chance at life, but failure means death.

In the sacred arts, only those who risk the most can travel far.

Blackflame Details

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Author : Will Wight

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From Reader Review Blackflame for online ebook

Matt says

The amazing thing to me about the Cradle books is just how well the surreal tapestry of the world is visualized in the writing.

Steffan says

4.5/5 stars

This series just keeps getting better and better

James says

He's not magic, but he writes interesting characters in fascinating worlds. 8/10 will read anything he writes.

Tom says

This series only gets better as it goes on. I can't wait until the next one!

kartik narayanan says

Blackflame continues the evolution of Lindon and Yerin. This series has been great at world building and pacing. Blackflame is no exception.

The amount of detail in explaining the Way is stupendous. At times I felt that I was reading a manual on the Way. This amount of detail is by no means boring. The explanation adds to story and gives us an inside look into how Lindon and Yerin advance their arts. Most characters in most stories would simply *try* and things will fall in place for them (italics to emphasize what authors do to show how this *try* is different from try). Will Wight goes a step beyond and makes the process of learning more plausible.

The other thing in this book is that, at times, I feel that I am reading a RPG in book form. Consider this - Lindon is a novice in the sacred valley (level 1). Every book and place he is in, he gains levels. Again, this is not a criticism but this is something I like a lot since I grew up with bioware epics like Baldur's Gate and Planescape Torment. If there is a game made on this, I would be the first to buy it.
(and no, Jade Empire doesn't count)

The book's pacing is at 11. I found it hard to put it down even to take small breaks. I am eagerly looking forward to the next book, SkySworn

Trisha says

I've been working my way through the Cradle series by Will Wight for about a year, reading each of them as they've been published and I just finished reading Blackflame, the third and most recent book. Beginning with Unsouled and followed by Soulsmith, the Cradle series feels like a bit of an experiment. It follows Wei Shi Lindon from very humble beginnings in the Sacred Valley, a secluded town on a world in a multiverse that is guarded by the Abidan. The Sacred Valley is so isolated that they have no contact with the world outside of their valley. Lindon is the lowest of the low in the village as he has not passed the tests that show each member of the village the path their souls should take. In this world, each soul has an affinity for a type of power that can be cycled through the body and gathered from the natural world. Since Lindon's soul has not identified with an element he's essentially an outcast as everything in this world is based upon the power level of your soul.

The series follows a teenaged Lindon as he's faced with choosing a path for his life after he meets one of the Abidan and discovers that not only is there a world outside his home town, but that there are multitudes of worlds linked through space and time. I said earlier that this series reads a bit like an experiment because the world's magic system, while very consistent and well thought out, is extremely complicated and it almost feels like Wight is creating it throughout the first book. The narration moves back and forth between Lindon and the very abstract knowledge of one Abidan, who gives the reader snippets of information about the wider multiverse, but not any indication of how the pieces fit together.

The first book is really slow. So much of the world and magic system is complicated, and Lindon is SO clueless, that it takes a while to get going. I almost gave up on it a few times, but then the last quarter of the book really picks up. The second and third books move much more quickly and you soon become not only familiar with, but fond of, the characters. When I finished Blackflame and went to download the next book, I was very disappointed that it wasn't out yet. There are lots of twists in the plot, I still have no idea how much of it fits together, and I'm confused by many things. But to me, that makes the journey more interesting.

All in all, if you like puzzling plots, complicated magic systems and worlds, and you don't need non-stop action, this is worth a read. I'll be waiting for the next book(s) and will likely read them as soon as they're published. If that's not your cup of tea, don't give up on this author! Go and read House of Blades instead (I'll review that one soon).

Bill Wolf says

Still going strong

I love it when a series is still strong after the 3rd installment. Now I'm anxiously awaiting the next one!

angela says

Amazing book

These books are a new concept in a magical world that is ruthless and keeps you wanting more and more

Yifan Zhang says

Another amazing book by Will Wright. He somehow manages to cram information into your head, describe the magic system in the book, world build, and continue to develop all the characters at an insane pace with zero spots of boredom. I binge-read this book in 1 day, hating every second I spent not reading it. I am loving the development of Yerin and Lindon on their path to save the valley (although sometimes immediate problems makes us lose sight of what originally made him leave). Throughout the book, Lindon is again pitted against huge challenges to prepare him for the duel with Jai Long. Although he receives assistance along the way, at no point did I feel like he was not trying 100% to overcome his inadequacies, and we are slowly given insight into how much potential and how powerful he could grow to be. Will is able to give insight from 4 PoVs while maintaining Lindon as the main character. Part what makes me love this series is the mystery surrounding all the characters without it feeling like a blatant cliffhanger. This story continues to have so much potential for further development. At the end of the book we are given glimpse of the Eithans true background and introduced the a new group of characters that I cannot wait to read about. My only issue is that I waited 6 months for this book (I started this series late) and now that I've finished this in 1 day, I'm assuming I'll have to wait a year until the next. 10/10, would recommend.

Joel Krause says

Read the whole series up until now, the first was interesting. The second, grew. This most recent, was excellent. I mean it really was the most fun and intense. Think it took me two days. Loved it. Very happy to have found the series.

Jonathan Wilson says

4.75 Stars

Kevin says

This was the best book of the series so far and I was happy to learn that what I assumed was a trilogy is actually longer and that a fourth book is to be released. Which is great because I think there is a lot more story to tell in this universe. I'd highly recommend this entire series to anyone who would like an Asian influenced fantasy series, heroes that use their brains not hidden over powered skill sets.

Rob says

Executive Summary: This series started out pretty solid, but this book got really really good. I read the first half over several days, but I read the second half in one sitting. For that reason it was a pretty easy 5 star for me.

Full Review

A friend of mine was recommending I read Will Wight for a long time, but there are just so many books/authors out there that I never got around to it. It took getting a free copy of the first book of this series to get me to finally give him a shot.

I keep coming back to Naruto not because this series is a knock-off of that, but because some of the notes it hits keep reminding me of my favorite parts of that series. I'd be really shocked if Wight isn't a fan/wasn't inspired by that or other Shonen fighting series.

This book starts off right where the last one left off, and Lindon is once again training to take on a challenge far beyond his power. It's not until he starts this trial (that reminded me slightly of the Chunin exams) that this book really gets good.

I was only going to read another 2-3 chapters and instead I stayed up an hour later than I intended just so I could finish. I also rushed right out to buy the next book.

This series has some really great characters. Lindon is likeable enough but he's kind of the typical protagonist for this kind of a story. I really love both Eithan and Yerin as well. Eithan is both mysterious and hilarious. The book also introduces another fantastic new character whose name I can't recall but he's a giant insane Dragon-Turtle so really what does it matter what his name is?

There were some pretty interesting developments with Lindon in this book and some pretty intriguing revelations about Eithan as well. I'm really looking forward to seeing where this series goes next.

I'm not sure how many people are reading Will Wight, but I'll be joining my friend in recommending him, at least to my friends who enjoy Shonen fighting series.

Robert Thompson says

"Someone," Bai Rou said, "is making a monster." I've reread the final chapters at least four times already. Each time, that line gives me chills.

The world of Cradle is an engrossing, meticulously built fantasy smorgasbord of epic challenges. It's filled with murderous antagonists, literal soul crushing characters (normally that would be bad but these are the real highlights) and a hero desperately out of his depth. Boilerplate you may think but packaged so perfectly. It's amazing!

Having read the first two installments of the Cradle series, the first being spectacular. Each volume is progressively better than its predecessor. Blackflame delivers, yet again.

Will Wight is building a monster of a series and I can't wait for more.

TS Chan says

4.5 stars.

I think I am finally in love. Blackflame was a fantastic continuation of the Cradle series.

Integrating the fascinating Eastern-inspired worldbuilding and magic-martial arts system with better characterisation, Blackflame was easily the best book in the series so far. Even though I'm still not wild about the main protagonist, Wei Shi Lindon, I was growing more invested in what his future may bring. At the end of Soulmith, Lindon found himself being given one year to train and advance in his sacred arts in order to fight an opponent that is way more powerful. Lindon seemed to be the typical underdog character who kept defying the odds through a combination of sheer drive, ambition and a bit of providence. Notwithstanding, one can't help but be curious to see how his story will pan out.

"Sometimes the game is rigged against you, and your only option is to flip the board."

Yerin, a key supporting character in Lindon's journey, was one whom I have not mentioned in my earlier reviews. She first appeared towards the end of Unsouled, and started having her own POV in the sequel, Soulmith. As an apprentice to the Sword Sage, her fight scenes were amazing, but I wasn't feeling her character all that much until now. Yerin was just simply badass and her fortitude harder than steel. It would be interesting to learn more about her past, which I hoped will be revealed in future books.

"If you don't feel like you're going to die when you're training, then you're doing it wrong."

Jai Long's story, on the other hand, faltered a bit in my opinion. And they were all overshadowed by the mysterious, insufferable and irrepressible Eithan. While his methods may not bode well with most (except himself, to be exact), Lindon and Yerin would not have had the required growth - in character development and power advancement - without his intervention.

"There is an old saying about asking forgiveness rather than permission, but the essence of it is, 'I'm going to do what I want.'"

I absolutely delighted in reading every scene where Eithan made an appearance. Even though these scenes were rarely written in his perspective, they were always the most entertaining and fascinating to read. As Lindon and Yerin were undertaking a gruelling test that was only surmountable by a team of Highgolds, a backdrop of political manoeuvring within the Empire was taking place to topple the Aurelius clan. This culminated in an epic showdown scene. I've never thought that such a scene could make me laugh so much, but somehow Eithan managed to do it. He even reminded me of another favourite character of mine from one

of my favourite series, Bob Heartstriker. The revelations about Ethan towards the end of the book only served to make him even more intriguing.

I will now like to talk a bit about the magic-martial arts system. Cradle is a world where vital aura exists in everything. Sacred beasts and sacred artists are the wildlife and humans who can control and use the aura through what is called madra (in my mind this is like internal energy or power within the soul). The higher the capacity and strength of one's madra, the more powerful the sacred artist can be. The levelling up on strength in this system is highly reminiscent of RPGs. The deployment of such powers can be also categorised into different battle techniques - Enforcer, Striker, and Ruler. These techniques manifest in different ways for different Paths; a Path takes the form of an aspect of aura that the sacred artist is most proficient at controlling with his or her madra.

It took me three books to grasp and appreciate how all these components come together. Even then, there are times when I am still struggling to keep up with complexities of auras, madras, techniques, Paths, etc. There is a 4th technique, Forger, which harnessed aura in human-made constructs that operate in accordance to its aspect. In other words, it represented the technology of this world. I have mentioned how incredible the powers are in my earlier review. Well, it was even more breathtaking in this book, as we finally get to see what the Underlords were capable of. It was just amazeballs and so darn fun to read. And we haven't even fully touched upon the even more astounding galactic powers, which at this point only appeared in snippets.

As the series progressed, the worldbuilding also gradually expanded in scope. We first saw the Sacred Valley and its sheltered people in *Unsouled*. Then, in the sequel, there was the Desolate Wilds and its corrupted beasts. In this third instalment, we learnt more about the Blackflame Empire as the narrative moved its location to Serpent's Grave; a most appropriate name which was related to why the Empire was called Blackflame. The world of Cradle itself was named quite literally for its role and significance in the cosmos. We also get brief interludes which provided a glimpse of other planets, or what the galactic entities call Iterations. All in all, I get the feeling that the author has formed an ambitious foundation of worldbuilding from which multiple stories can be told.

Blackflame was only the third out of six known books in the series, with five self-published so far. Nonetheless, this third instalment was so good that I'm going ahead to recommend this series to lovers of fantasy; especially for those looking for Eastern-inspired ones. If you are a fan of anime and manga as well, I'm sure that it will work out even better for you.

You can purchase a copy of the book, or read it free via Kindle Unlimited on [Amazon US](#).

You can also find this and my other reviews at Novel Notions.
