



Emperor Mage

Tamora Pierce

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Sent to Carthak as part of the Tortallan peace delegation, Daine finds herself in the middle of a sticky political situation. She doesn't like the Carthaki practice of keeping slaves, but it's not her place to say anything -- she's just there to heal the emperor's birds. It's extremely frustrating! What's more, her power has grown in a mysterious way.

As the peace talks stall, Daine puzzles over Carthak's two-faced Emperor Ozorne. How can he be so caring with his birds and so cruel to his people? Daine is sure he's planning something. Daine must fight the powerful Emperor Mage, knowing that the safety and peace of the realm depend on stopping Ozorne's power-hungry schemes.

Emperor Mage Details

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From Reader Review Emperor Mage for online ebook

Claire says

Daine returns in the third book of the Immortals quartet. Here she is brought on a diplomatic mission to a kingdom south of Tortall (which is strangely like Egypt. . .hmmm) where the all-powerful Emperor is plotting a war. A war with Tortall.

In order to stave off the potentially devastating consequences of war on their small kingdom, a mission of all the knights you remember from previous books in order to wage peace, as well as heal the Emperor's birds, whom he cares about more than life itself.

Fun, fast, and while it isn't as good as some of the other Pierce series, it definitely left me ready to read the last book in the series.

Kogiopsis says

I've been doing some thinking and have come to a conclusion that, I suppose, should have been obvious a long time ago: I connect to Tamora Pierce's characters better than I connect to pretty much any other characters. They get under my skin, in my blood, into my heart; I see through their eyes so easily it astounds me. I've read this series more times than I can remember, but I still feel the same intensity that I recall from the first time - and the last few chapters of this book still have a horrible kick in the gut in store for me, even if I know it's coming. I almost cried, and I hardly ever cry at books.

That, I think, is Pierce's true mastery. It's not her fantastic plotting, or her pacing, or the way she uses magic and integrates it into the societies she builds. It's not the vividness of different cultures. It's not even the sharp, wry dialogue that I adore. What makes her one of my favorite authors is the way her characters are so very human, developed and flawed so that I can live through them and almost breathe with them and I don't have to think about it. When I am reading a Tamora Pierce book, Tortall is the real world and woe betide any interruptions.

This particular book can be described in two words: **Fucking Epic**. The Immortals Quartet grows vastly in scale here. As a veteran of the Lioness Quartet, I know that in Tortall the question is not whether or not the gods are real but how long it will take one of them to show up, and this is the book in which at least one of them becomes a driving force. In a big way. Okay, so sue me; I really like the Graveyard Hag. She's got spunk. Also, old goddesses for the win! There aren't nearly enough of them in mythology or fiction. (Off the top of my head all I can think of is Elli, the Norse goddess of old age who arm-wrestled Thor and won.) Even Pierce's deities are human, something that becomes abundantly clear in the fourth book.

But I digress. There's really not much to say about this book without spoiling the ending because all that is wonderful about it ties directly into the ending.

So I'm going to waste a little more of your time analyzing one scene, one of my favorites in the book: when Daine and Prince Kaddar go to the archery yard and Daine beats all the Carthaki nobles in archery.

First of all, we get this:

"Women aren't up to the discipline of military life."

"You must tell Lady Alanna that sometime. I'd do it from a distance."

Knowing the sexism that Alanna had to fight to win her shield, that little exchange always makes me grin. It might be easy to lose sight of the cultural revolution Tortall has undergone in a relatively short period of time, but Alanna is a distinct reminder of that. (And Kel, but she hasn't shown up yet.)

The best thing about this scene is that instead of using it to show how stupid and sexist these young men are, Pierce makes it rather more pleasant: Daine impresses them all with her archery skills, and they immediately accept her, almost as one of their own. They're not hopeless bigots, and they're not haughty and dismissive of her as an aberration. It's very clear that these are young men raised to believe certain things, but still not so old they think what they were taught is the one and only truth. It's not black and white.

So yeah. This book is awesome. And I'm going to go start *Realms of the Gods* now.

Beth says

Maybe I'm giving this four stars because this stands in stark contrast to the previous two books, but all the same: I really did enjoy this, and it definitely holds up as my favorite of the Daine books. POLITICS. I LOVE THE POLITICS.

That said, I have notes.

1. Who sends Alanna, she of the infamous temper, to a notoriously volatile empire as a diplomat? Doesn't that sound... stupid? I love Alanna, but I don't think Carthak is the right place for her. Which is seen, by the way, when the emperor decides to have things his own way and they're forced to leave Carthak under guard and Alanna can't do anything about it. Which is to say: if she was sent as a threat or a reminder of Tortall's military might, she's not a particularly effective threat? And she's not a diplomat. So again: what's she doing there?
2. However, Alanna knowing it was a trap and that Daine is really in trouble - and not being able to *do* something - is a really good character moment.
3. I'm a little confused about the logistics of the palace. The emperor asks for a robe for Daine and the slaves bring one in all of three seconds later - HOW? Do they have endless wardrobes near all the places the emperor eats? Is there a mage slave who summons things as needed? I need more details!
4. The ending feels very familiar. It's almost exactly like the ending of *Street Magic*, where Briar uses the always-underestimated plant magic to destroy Lady Zenadia's home; there's the same idea of less-widespread powers not being addressed by traditional magical barriers. But it's more successful when done with plant magic: there's something much more obviously tame about plants, as opposed to animals, and plants are also much more prevalent: the idea of literally using someone's garden to bring down their home is much more chilling than using a god-granted power to wake up dinosaur fossils and destroy a palace. That could've been done by anyone, not just a Wild mage, and so this feels less like Daine's victory than the Graveyard Hag's. (Which it's supposed to, it's the Graveyard Hag's country, blah blah. I'd like a better character arc for Daine anyway.)

5. One thing I like about the Daine-being-kidnapped plot is that it demonstrates the emperor's absolute power. He calls her and she can't refuse - he gives her food she can't refuse - and he just casually drugs her while they're sitting there. CRAZY. And I really liked the (hammered home strongly) mentions of the emperor caring about his birds but totally cavalier about his citizens, to the point that he was willing to make greater concessions after Daine healed his birds. (Well. "Greater concessions" just means he pretended to concede more stuff while plotting eeeeeeeevil plots and pretend!squashing Numair.)

(PS: How do you make a simulacrum that knows how to fake!die by hanging, not just fake!read behind a magical barrier? Inquiring minds want to know.)

Overall, I still think Daine doesn't have much of a character arc, which bothers me, but this was fun to read anyway. I'm actually excited about Kaddar becoming emperor. Jonathan gets his treaty, so mission successful, right? Though Gary and his papers probably would have liked less excitement. Just imagine his face at all those destroyed palace records. PRICELESS.

snowplum says

I loved book one. I really, really liked book two. I... enjoyed book 3. That's a disappointing downward trend for a series that was trying to be one of the greatest things ever in the history of YA fantasy -- even though it's still better than 99ish% of middle grade options. My issue here is largely an extension of the nit I picked with book 2 in comparison with book 1 -- it's just not as emotionally well-rounded. There are more new ideas in Emperor Mage, and there's also a more complicated political plot, as well as a fairly detailed relationship (non-romantic) built between Daine and a prince of another country, so this book *is* a step forward in terms of maturity and breadth; but it's just not as emotionally satisfying as either of its predecessors, either in terms of the main interpersonal relationships, or the main inter-species bonds.

[spoily bit. necessary to explain the above sentiment.] Daine's new ability in this book is one that is borrowed for the duration of this story arc -- already a bit of an odd choice for a series which otherwise does a great job of gradual and sustained growth for the main character. A Foreign God needs her to be more helpful to The Cause, so said FG temporarily gives her the ability to re-animate animal bones to serve said Cause. Dinosaur skullies get involved. Sure, it's a fun idea... but... compare that with Daine meaningfully running with a wolf pack or bonding with sea lions and dragons, and it leaves me cold. They're still basically just bones with a tiny bit of instinct - not living, sentient creatures - so the emotional possibilities are inherently pretty limited. There's also a glorious aviary, which is beautifully described; but Daine's interactions with the birds reach about 15% of the detail and depth of her relationships with other species in the first two books.

And then there's the relationship with the prince. Instead of building Daine/Numair (which is what we all want, come on now), this book sort of halfheartedly red herrings Daine/Kaddar. But she never really crushes on him, he doesn't cause her to grow or change or challenge her beliefs in a meaningful way, nothing Happens... and at the end of the book, they part ways as placidly as Daine and book 2's rather unthrilling Maura -- who (like Kaddar) is fine for what she is as a character who affects the world, but doesn't Matter to the series the second (s)he is off the page. It's disappointing.

I think this series remains incredibly strong for middle grade readers -- it's still smart, imaginative, rich in diversity, and totally appropriate for middle school age and up; but for someone whose favorite thing about the series is the animal telepathy and the sweetness of Daine's relationships with animals, Emperor Mage isn't going in the direction you're hopping for. And for someone who is wondering when the heck

Daine/Numair will Happen, already.... the answer is: not yet. Sigh.

Morgan (The Bookish Beagle) says

I LOVED THIS. I flew through it while the 2nd book took me some time. I was immediately into the story; I liked the change in setting and meeting all the new characters and creatures. Zek!! And Kaddar was so interesting, his relationship with Daine was great. I kept picturing the Graveyard Hag as a mix between Mulan's grandmother and the short Fate sister from Hercules. This book was so exciting and awesome, I think I'll start the next one right now. I really love Daine's powers and watching her learn more and more about her wild magic. Her communications with the variety of animals is my favorite! Also, every time Numair calls Daine "magelet" I die a little inside <3

Kirsty (Amethyst Bookwurm) says

This and my other reviews can be found at <http://amethystbookwurm.blogspot.co.uk/>

Daine, Numair and Alanna journey to Carthak, in the hope that if Daine can heal the Emperor Ozorne prized birds, it will help the peace process between Carthak and Tortall. However, Daine get mixed up in both political and religious situations as the Goddess, the Graveyard Hag, gives her a power which could ruin everything. This series has everything it has magic, action, romance and a story which draws you in and you end up reading, not knowing where the hours have gone. I would recommend this to anyone who likes Sabriel or Eragon.

Catie says

Aaaaand, we're back. Everything that I felt was lacking in the second book (eg, my interest) was revived completely in this book. Daine is back in the land of the two-leggers and is facing the oft named but never before seen Emperor Mage Ozorne. And it turns out that Ozorne really shouldn't have messed with our Daine. There's a whole chapter called "Daine loses her temper" which I'm still grinning about.

Daine may seem cute with her crunchy granola, tree-hugging, "save the whales" exterior but if you mess with her friends, she will **bring a world of pain**.

Daine, Numair, Alanna, and a whole crew of Tortallans are sent to Carthak in an attempt at diplomacy and peace, after the Carthaki Emperor has allegedly opened the walls between the immortal and mortal realms. Daine is there in a very minor capacity, to heal the Emperor's prized pet birds. Carthak is a very different place than Tortall: human slavery, censorship, and violence are a way of life there. The Emperor initially seems kind, even playful, but he has a hidden agenda. Along the way, we get to learn more about Numair's past and meet a few of his old "friends."

If there's one thing I'm sure about after reading this book, it's this: Tamora Pierce has spent a significant amount of time in the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. For anyone who's ever visited the dinosaur

exhibit, Daine's new power will have a vividly frightening dimension. It's just plain kismet that I happened to visit that very place only a weekend before starting this book. *shudders*

There is only very minor development on the romance front, which I am extremely happy about in one sense. Why does Daine need a love interest at all? She's wonderful all on her own. Yay for strong, independent ladies!!

...

On the other hand...Numair. Enough said. Daine actually has a bit of a "rival" in this book, when Numair runs into an old flame who's obviously still interested. And by "rival" I mean someone that Daine barely notices is there and then treats with kindness and respect later on. I'm pretty sure that *I* was about one hundred times more peeved about the whole thing than Daine was.

I fail.

And now I must cut this short, as I just happened to read this tantalizing passage this morning:

"Suddenly he [Numair] learned something that he'd never considered before. For a brief moment, that fresh knowledge erased even his sense of magical cataclysm."

And if I don't find out what that's all about, my head might explode.

Perfect Musical Pairing

The Cranberries – Liar

This kick-ass song is my little tribute to Emperor Ozorne. There's nothing quite like the stench of fear in the afternoon...

kris says

[Also read 19 December 2007]

Daine is 'invited' along with a ragtag group of Tortallian delegates to attempt to arrange peace between Tortall and Carthak. She's supposed to heal birds, discovers she can heal the dead, and ends up in Revenge!mode after a series of (hilarious) misunderstandings.

1. I will be blunt: I am increasingly disappointed in these books. I can just about taste the fascinating, intricate, *complex* story of a girl who is unwittingly growing into a conduit between the Divine Realm and the mortal realm, one who has powers that continue to grow, isolating her from those around her (except her not-that-much-older mage mentor) as she struggles to build a place for herself in the world.

Except this is not that story: Daine is not that isolated--everyone loves her. Her mage mentor *is* (unfortunately) that much older. She has yet to fully acknowledge her situation as a half-deity presence. Other than hints of a homeland in the first book, both books 2 & 3 have been intermediary books, throwing Daine out into various locales for her to explore and then leave.

As Andree mentioned: I, too, want the books between books. What changed between Numair and Daine between 2 & 3? What kind of home does Daine have in Tortall between 1 & 2 that makes her so loyal to their cause? Those stories are missing, leaving the rest of it unmoored.

Which is really unfortunate as I approach book 4. Which Daine am I going to get? What relationship will have shifted? What new powers will Daine have mastered? THESE AREN'T QUESTIONS I WANT TO BE ASKING MYSELF GOING INTO THE FINAL BOOK OF A QUARTET.

2. I still ship it, albeit in a mostly "REMEMBER WHEN I WAS YOUNG AND THEY WERE PERFECT?" kind of way. The age different is absolutely a mess, and Daine seems to have a complete lack of close relationships with anyone who isn't an animal or Numair, but I can't help myself. I know what I want and what I want is a beanpole of a mage?? Don't judge me too harshly, friends.

(That said: it bothers me more and more that Daine doesn't have any particularly close female friends. I'm ASSUMING because THIS ISN'T IN THE TEXT LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE that Daine doesn't need a "WHAT IS PERIOD" talk or a "BIRDS AND BEES ARE METAPHOR FOR PENIS-VAGINA" talk because of her ~commune with nature. Which: ugh. Give the intended audience of this series something to relate to, eh?)

3. I wanted more politics less animal bonding.

4. KADDAR. Talk about an uneven human character. He's hot and he's cold, he's yes and he's no, he's up and he's down, he's basically Katy Perry. I liked the glimmers of respect he showed for Daine at the end, but even that was too simple a response as she'd just brought down the palace, oversaw the destruction of the former emperor, and raised the extinct from the dead. Would the heir-apparent really be like "WISH YOU COULD STICK AROUND FOR A FEW DAYS MORE ILU!!!"? I feel like the real answer is no, ~~teenage hormones (IF NOT THE POLITICS) would complexify that situation IMMENSELY.

5. I did not like the basically lifted from natural history textbook insertions of the fossils? WE ARE IN A FANTASY REALM. CAN WE NOT. This also confuses the issue insofar development of their Earth: dinosaurs ruled the Earth with Immortals? Pre-Immortals? And then Immortals and humanity roamed the Earth. And then humanity locked away the Immortals. And now they're back, but OH YES FOSSILS???

6. Kitten is a simple solution to just about every problem.

7. COULD HAVE HAD IT ALLLLLLL.

Jackie says

UGGGGH YOU GUYSSSS /whine. This is actually both my favourite book in this series and the one that gives me the most "problematic!" vibes. I wish I could nut out this problem. Basically what I love about it is the evocation of Carthak, a city/country I wish Tamora Pierce would write more about, because it's a fascinating amalgam of Carthage and Rome and probably a whole bunch of other classical civs I don't know about. Wasn't Pierce meant to write that book about Numair's younger years at the university studying under Lindhall Reed and having weird conflicted relationships with Varice and Ozorne? Why hasn't that happened? I need it.

Anyway yeah, the whole introduce a POC culture to Tortall only to have a white woman come in and talk about all of its social ills is kind of grating. Even if the criticism *is* justified within the logic of the text (slavery *is* bad - obvs - and I kind of like that a YA fantasy novel addresses it since a lot of fantasy worlds are predicated on just accepting rigid pre-modern social hierarchies), and while we do get at least one sympathetic Cathakian in the form of Kaddar, it still kind of bugs that Pierce decides to set up this framework with this book and this culture. The thing about having Tortall as essentially some sort of idealised progressive medieval fantasyland (which is super fun, don't get me wrong) is that it tends to come out looking peachy keen raised up on the moral high-ground in comparison to any other society you introduce into that world, especially one based on a classical empire. I suppose Pierce does do well to put most of that on the doings of one crazed emperor rather than some intrinsic fault in the Carthaki people.

Also Pierce finally addresses her weird bias against women who, she deems, under-utilise their femininity by focusing on being decorative and eye-pleasing. She's written a lot of 'bad', ambitious, petty women who like to paint their face and wear beautiful gowns and contrasted with all the salt-of-the-earth practical women she usually champions in her stories, it's kind of a telling imbalance. At least in this one she finally has Varice speak up in defense of those pursuits, of liking pretty things and parties etc. That said, there's still a general vibe of the overly aestheticised=degenerative and decadent trope in the wealth on display in the Carthaki Empire which might not have bothered me if I hadn't felt those other concerns I detailed above.

spoiler alert

Finally, the archival-buff in me was like NO NOT THE IMPERIAL RECORDS THAT HAS VALUABLE HISTORICAL DATA. Like, go for the treasury sure, but come on. Also, did uh, all those dinosaur bones just disappear from the museum at the end? Whole apatosaurus skeletons might be pretty hard to come by in the future - I feel bad for the natural historians at the Imperial University.

Kayla Edwards says

There's nothing I can say that will adequately express how I feel about these books and I'm not even going to try. Besides, the fact that I read them all repeatedly (I quit counting after the 10th time) is the highest form of praise I can give anyway. Daine, Numair, and the others are friends as dear to me as any in this world.

Crystal Starr Light says

A trip down South and a brush with death

Daine, her master, Numair, the King's Champion, Alanna, and other Tortall diplomats head to Carthak to try to negotiate peace and keep the two countries from war. Daine's mission is specifically to heal the Emperor Mage's beloved birds. But Daine sees an old slave woman who shouldn't be there and gets warnings from the Beaver God to stay away.

Let me preface this review with the note that I listened to this on audiobook and thus may grossly misspell the names. I will try to Wiki the names as best as I can.

Let me also get this out of the way: the book feels a LOT like a cross between *Prince Caspian* and *Voyage of*

the Dawn Treader. Our protagonists head to the South, where it is warmer, the people act more Middle Eastern, the Emperor is mean and nasty, he has a kind, sweet nephew, they worship other gods, etc. However, I actually think that "Emperor Mage" does the "Prince Caspian" story *better* than "Prince Caspian". And while the stories are similar, there are differences.

So, I've been trucking along through this quartet. The first book, *Wild Magic*, really impressed me. The second, *Wolf Speaker*, bored me. This book, while it certainly had some problems, felt like a great improvement.

Our characters are back and in fine form. Daine has adjusted rather well to being a shapeshifter, though I think she draws closer and closer to the Mary Sue line in this book. Here, she learns yet ANOTHER magical ability--to wake up the dead. Seems like every book has her learning at least one new ability (though admittedly this ability is NOT related to her *Wild Magic*, but was a gift she was given). It's a good thing this series is only four books long, or she might have picked up super strength, super hair growth, and super bug repellant before the end. But one thing I cannot pick on Daine for is that she is an independent woman, not relying on a man to sweep her off her feet and save the day. Her fate is in her hands; she DOES get angry when someone dies and reacts instead of fluttering and waiting for her emo boyfriend to appear. In fact, even with all her Mary Sue qualities, Daine makes me wish fervently for the days when this character was the norm, instead of the whiny emosparklyteenaged brats we get now.

Numair and Alanna are back and are great. I really wished we could have Onua back though (she was my favorite!). I really liked Qadar, the Prince, and his relationship to Daine. I felt there was some potential chemistry there, but nothing so overtly sexual that it drove me nuts. Even the Emperor Mage himself was great--a villain that was clever without going into Cackling, Moustache Twirling territory.

Daine acquires another animal minion, Zeek, and I really have to wonder what the point of him was. I am not a monkey/marmoset fan, and, furthermore, he doesn't really seem to DO anything that couldn't be done by someone else--such as Kit. Speaking of Kit, here is another character that is venturing into Mary Sue territory (which I still applies to dragons??). Frak, the things this dragon can do: detect magic, open doors...she's the Swiss army knife of this realm!

The story was a lot more interesting than "*Wolf Speaker*". Although there were parts that were dull to me (I had to read the Wiki summary to jump start my memory of some of the events), the story felt more unique. Having the Tortollans travel to Carthak for diplomacy was a great idea; having Daine come along to heal the sick animals was great, very clever and makes her DOING something instead of just being a hanger-on. I wasn't fond of the main character that appears to die at one point in the book--it is SO obvious that the character WOULDN'T die. What made it even more ridiculous was how Daine had to spend SO MUCH TIME convincing herself said character wasn't dead; as I read this, I was reminded of how Bella Swan, in "*New Moon*", kept thinking Edward hated her guts even while she was canoodling him for a quarter of the book and had to be bludgeoned to believe that he didn't. I also liked how we FINALLY got some closure about Daine's father.

What REALLY improved my opinion of this book were two things: the climax and the religion/pantheon of gods/goddesses. The climax is positively heart-pounding. I love how Daine really takes control and chases down the Emperor Mage, never backing down once, never wussing out to let a man take over. What was also genius was how the story ends but leaves just enough space for the final book. The second, the gods and goddesses, was something I thought was really clever. It was like both the Tortall gods/goddesses and the Carthak gods/goddesses existed in an even BIGGER audience of gods and goddesses. I'm sure this has been done elsewhere, but this is the first time I remember seeing this, and I thought it was clever.

"Emperor Mage" is an improvement over "Wolf Speaker". The characters are great (as always), but the story really seems to be going somewhere, having a focus, an end in sight. For me, "Emperor Mage" is a solid 3.5 stars rounded to 4 (to differentiate from the disappointing "Wolf Speaker"). "Realm of the Gods", here I come!

Livia Winata says

IT WAS A YA FANTASY BUT WRITTEN LIKE A FABLE FOR CHILDREN, *in a good way*. THE ACTIONS WERE STUNNING!

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

Now, THAT'S more like it! Major major redemption for the yawnfest that was book 2. In Emperor Mage, Daine gets to pretend she's actually a girl sent from a royal envoy as diplomats into a foreign land instead of a girl who wants to be an animal and surrounded by animals all the time. Human interactions are awesome, and I'm so glad Daine isn't just talking and plotting with animals all the time now, and that she's actually solving a decent mystery and dealing with major international intrigue. It's everything I enjoy about this series all thrown together in one book. I can find nary a fault with Emperor Mage.

Daine, Numair (is it terrible of me to admit I want to burst into the Numa Numa song every time I read his name?), Alanna, and other emissaries from Tortall are sent to Carthak as a peace delegation. They hope to avoid war, and Daine in particular is looking forward to helping emperor Orzorne save his menagerie of sick birds. Daine gets mysterious messages from the badger gods, a hag witch god, and granted powers that can bring dead things to life, and man is she bad-ass with her new powers.

Daine meets the heir-apparent to Carthak, Kaddar, and despite getting off on the wrong foot and their different views (like Daine's inborn Northern hatred of slavery), the two become friends. I never really liked Kaddar, though, he's just one of these characters who made a bad initial impression that never really redeems himself no matter what he did for the rest of the book. Daine also gets conflicting messages from the Emperor Mage, Orzarne. He's supposed to be this evil, powerful despot king, yet he clearly loves animals...but still keeps his people enslaved and keeps a zoo of loved-yet-confined animals and immortals. The jury is out on him for much of the book, so I wasn't sure of where he stood on the side of good or evil, and I liked that characterization of him.

Daine...wow, she really saves the day in this one. My admiration for her grows. The only complaint I have with this book are the gods. My, they are annoying; I'm glad that at least in this world, I'm not religious, and the gods do not see fit to play around with mortals. The godly beings in this series are more among the lines of Anansi or the Native American fox trickster god than the likes of Buddha.

Clephiro says

I'm pretty sure at this point everyone has read this book, and if you haven't - you really should.

Daine is off to Cathark, along with a delegation from Tortall. Daine is to heal the emperor's birds while the delegation attempts to forge a peace treaty. As the talks press on, Daine discovers that there are plenty of things happening in Cathark that she doesn't agree with. There also appear to be some meddling gods unhappy with the situation.

I love the expanding of the universe. Getting out of Tortall and the interactions with other lands is so wonderful. In this book we also finally get some more development of the relationship between Daine and Numair. Plus a ton of not very subtle hints about Daine's origins.

This is probably my favourite quartet, and I am now off to read the fourth book.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

Last month I read *Tempests and Slaughter*, Tamora Pierce's prequel book about the mage Numair's younger days, studying magic at a Carthak university. I handed that one off to my 15 year old son, who read it and then promptly went to his school library and checked out the entire IMMORTALS series. When he brought *Emperor Mage* home the other day, I snagged it from him when he was finished so that I could remind myself of what happened with Prince Orzorne, the lovely Varice, and other Carthaki characters that I met in *Tempests and Slaughter* and had pretty much completely forgotten because I read this book so very long ago. The nice thing about it was that it was like reading this book for the very first time - I remembered absolutely nothing about the plot!

So here it is: Fifteen year old animal mage Daine and her mentor, now 29 year old Numair, travel with a delegation from Tortall to Carthak, to try to negotiate a peace treaty with the Emperor Mage, Orzorne (who's come a long way from the teenager he was in *Tempests and Slaughter*). Daine is along because Emperor Orzorne loves animals, and his menagerie of exotic birds is sickening and dying for some unknown reason. But even though the Tortall delegation doesn't trust Orzorne in the slightest, he still may have some surprises planned for them. Of course, he doesn't take Daine's wild magic into account, so there are likely to be some surprises all the way around.

This is a middle grade book and it struck me as a little simplistic at first, but by the end I was totally sucked in. 4+ stars. Full review to come.

Rachel (Kalanadi) says

I still absolutely adore this book. *Wild Magic* is dear to me because it was my first book by Pierce, but *Emperor Mage* makes my heart soar every time. Zek, Kitten, Bonedancer, the hyenas, the Graveyard Hag, *the reanimated dinosaur bones!*, and hints of Numair's back story... the sumptuous surroundings and rot underneath... and finally some answers about Daine's father!

Stephanie says

Reread this during a sick day. Ohhh boy it reads different as a 30-something than it did as a preteen. Pierce almost always handles her non-European counterpart cultures awkwardly, and it's no different here.

I do wish other books in the series were more like this one other aspects, though. This book has pretty much the best pacing of any book in the Tortall series, and has a perfect blend of mystery, court intrigue, comedy, adventure, etc.

Nidofito says

Ok, this was hugely entertaining BUT

A few things:

1) It is always easier to find fault in others than in oneself. Yes, slavery is bad in any form. But does the whole Tortall vs. Carthak culture need to be set up so preachy? Why is one superior to another? Is Tortall an ideal country with perfect citizens with perfect morals living perfect lives? No. So why is there a good Tortall and bad Carthak vibe going on?

2) There is this one sentence that seemed really strange to me and I'm wondering if it is just a typo or if it hints at something related to the author. It's when Diane meets Kaddar and this is what she said of him:

"He was a light-skinned black, with thin lips and long, thick eye lashes, dressed in a calf-length tunic of crimson-silk."

That "light-skinned black" term is so odd to me that that it hung around my mind until the end of the book. First of all, I think brown might've worked just as well but even if not, shouldn't it be something like, "he was a black man," or, "he was dark-skinned." Am I being too PC? I don't think so. It's just a very odd way of describing someone.

3) Will someone please think of the preservation of architecture and the imperial records?! Not to mention all those ancient, valuable fossils. :'-(

4) Speaking of which, after all that destruction, does Diane go back home without even a slap on her wrist? It irked me how it appeared as the entire country of Carthak was apologizing to Diane for the actions of one crazed, power hungry man.

Noelle says

[Happy sigh]

If nothing else a classic for the chapter title Daine Loses Her Temper.

Fantasy Literature says

The Emperor Mage is the third book in Tamora Pierce's The Immortals Quartet, and by this stage if you haven't read the previous installments (Wild Magic and Wolf Speaker) I heartily recommend that you don't start here — you'll be completely baffled. A peace delegation including Alanna the Lioness, the Gareths and other nobles from Tortall have been sent to the hot, swampy Charthak Empire in order to negotiate peace with the war-mongering Emperor Ozorne. With them is Numair, once the Emperor's best friend and now his sworn enemy, Daine, who has been chosen to come in order to heal the Emperor's beloved and sickly birds, and Kitten the baby-dragon, whom the Emperor is intensely curious about.

Although the negotiations intensely important to Tortall, considering that war with Charthak... Read More:
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