

Golden Fool

Robin Hobb

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The acclaimed *Farseer* and *Liveship Traders* trilogies established Robin Hobb as one of the most splendidly imaginative practitioners of world-class fantasy.

Now, in Book 2 of her most stunning trilogy yet, Hobb continues the soul-shattering tale of FitzChivalry Farseer. With rich characters, breathtaking magic, and sweeping action, **Golden Fool** brings the reluctant adventurer further into the fray in an epic of sacrifice, salvation, and untold treachery.

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Prince Dutiful has been rescued from his Piebald kidnappers and the court has resumed its normal rhythms. But for FitzChivalry Farseer, a return to isolation is impossible. Though gutted by the loss of his wolf bondmate, Nighteyes, Fitz must take up residence at Buckkeep and resume his tasks as Chade's apprentice assassin. Posing as Tom Badgerlock, bodyguard to Lord Golden, FitzChivalry becomes the eyes and ears behind the walls. And with his old mentor failing visibly, Fitz is forced to take on more burdens as he attempts to guide a kingdom straying closer to civil strife each day.

The problems are legion. Prince Dutiful's betrothal to the Narcheska Elliania of the Out Islands is fraught with tension, and the Narcheska herself appears to be hiding an array of secrets. Then, amid Piebald threats and the increasing persecution of the Witted, FitzChivalry must ensure that no one betrays the Prince's secret—a secret that could topple the Farseer throne: that he, like Fitz, possesses the dread “beast magic.”

Meanwhile, FitzChivalry must impart to the Prince his limited knowledge of the Skill: the hereditary and addictive magic of the Farseers. In the process, they discover within Buckkeep one who has a wild and powerful talent for it, and whose enmity for Fitz may have disastrous consequences for all.

Only Fitz's enduring friendship with the Fool brings him any solace. But even that is shattered when unexpected visitors from Bingtown reveal devastating secrets from the Fool's past. Now, bereft of support and adrift in intrigue, Fitz's biggest challenge may be simply to survive the inescapable and violent path that fate has laid out for him.

From the Hardcover edition.

Golden Fool Details

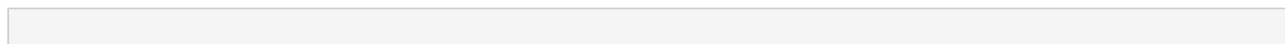
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From Reader Review Golden Fool for online ebook

Petrik says

This was almost another 5 stars read, this was almost as good as Fool's Errand, but it wasn't due to the second book syndrome that is quite evident here.

The Golden Fool is almost completely a preparation and transition book for the big conclusion in the next installment. It's all about laying foundations and moving the characters to have the right convictions and motivation to save the world. Though, knowing Fitz, he'll probably brood about it still. Because of this plot direction, there's close to nothing going on in the book plot-wise even though it's more than 600 pages long. Overall, I don't mind this. As far as a transitional book goes, The Golden Fool is still great.

The problems that I had with the book were actually on the first 200 pages. I struggled heavily with this part. It was boring at parts and it seemed completely directionless. Plus, the last three chapters were quite anti-climatic, and Starling seriously need to be cut off from this series already. These are really the only parts I disliked about this book.

The book picked up its pace for me once the story entered chapter 11, where a few characters from Liveship Traders trilogy appeared for a while. Starting from chapter 11, the book became wonderful to me up until the end. I was overjoyed by this crossover, it goes to show that Hobb has really created a fantastic cast of characters within all her books. Whether it's the characters from Farseer, Liveship or Tawny Man trilogy, all of them are extremely well-written. Although it took like 200 pages to get to, it was truly worth it.

Not only these crossovers were incredible because of the characters, it also shows just how great Hobb is at world-building her the entirety of her series. The world-building keeps on improving, filled with rich lore about the Skill and the Wit, also more revelations about the dragons, the Elderlings, and every information the readers accumulated from both Farseer and Liveship do play a part here. Hobb seamlessly connects the events in Liveship Traders into Fitz's storyline, which make Liveship a mandatory read in order to get more satisfaction out of this book and trilogy.

"We are the sum of all we have done added to the sum of all that has been done to us."

There aren't a lot of things left to say on this review about this book. The story continued immediately from where it left off in Fool's Errand and the entire setting of the book took place in Buckkeep. The majority of the book was spent on Buckkeep politics, the mastery of skills, and Fitz's interactions with all the other characters. Some of my absolute favorite parts from this book was the forming of the coterie, every characters' development, some revelations on The Fool's past, and the complexity of Fitz relationship with him.

"Love is more than bedding, boy. If love doesn't come first and linger after, if love can't wait and endure disappointment and separation, then it's not love. Love doesn't require bedding to make it true. It doesn't even demand day to day contact. I know this because I have known

love."

Overall, The Golden Fool is a transitional book and despite having some issues with it, I still love this. Tawny Man has been really solid so far and I hope Hobb can deliver the satisfying conclusion that this trilogy needs in Fool's Fate, the book that the majority of Hobb's fans are claiming to be her best work.

Picture: *The Golden Fool* by Yasushi Suzuki

*You can find **this** and the rest of my Adult Epic/High Fantasy & Sci-Fi reviews at **BookNest***

Layla ★ Praise the sun ★ says

My dear goodread friends Halima says I should totally read this book.

Let's find out if she is right about it ;)

Penny says

More of the same awesomeness on to the next one!

Lema says

If I want to approach this book in a subjective way, I would say it definitely is a filler and a set up for events to come. If I want to approach it realistically from a point of view of someone who had invested so much time and effort (AND FEELS) into this series, then I have to say that this book gave me life (AND FEELS) and I enjoyed every single second of it.

I'm lazy as eff and I immediately started Fool's Fate because IM WEAK AND NEED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WITH MA BABIES, so this is will be brief.

I could never imagine someone writing day-to-day life and make it not boring as masterfully as Robin Hobb did in this book. My favorite setting so far in the Realm of the Elderlings -despite all of the exotic places that we visited- has got to be Buckkeep and Bucktown. I don't know call me nostalgic but just reading the description of that place give me all the fuzzies and warm feelings. So when I saw that Golden Fool was mostly set there, I didn't even care that nothing else was happening except following the daily lives of our characters, why do you ask? Because of this lovely thing called Character Development.

“You seek a false comfort when you demand that I define myself for you with words. Words do not contain or define any person. A heart can, if it is willing.”

Oh and Hobb's prose, did I mention how glorious it's becoming?

The combination of the massive character growth along with Hobb's magical writing made this book a fantastical experience for me, it's thought provoking, emotional, touching, mysterious and overall unforgettable. Not to mention that I have never read about a character with Down Syndrome before in fantasy, I'm still not sure how I feel about the character itself, but I thought it was an admirable and intriguing inclusion to a wide cast of wonderful and diverse characters.

I'm at this point currently where I'm just thankful that I have this series in my life :')

Fool's Fate here I come! pleasebegoodpleasebegoodpleasebegoodpleasebegood..

1. Fool's Errand: 5 Stars (here's my review)

Halima says

"If you think I've never known love, then you don't know anything about me."

This is a five star novel, Heaven knows it to be true.

This novel second in the Tawny man trilogy continues the story of our older FitzChivalry, or as we've come to know him: Tom Badgerlock. Hobb delivers yet another remarkable read; the plot, the characters, the Wit, the Skill, the dialogue- oh gosh the dialogue, it was insane!

I loved every moment, yes, it may have taken me longer than usual to finish, but I'm glad I took my time with it.

In this instalment we come to learn more of Dutiful and his responsibilities as Prince, we come to learn about the Fool (view spoiler), we come to learn of Hap and his blossoming manhood (**no innuendoes intended, let's keep this PG ladies and gentlemen**) and my most favourite; we come to learn more in regards to Fitz! (view spoiler)

Valid reasons as to why you should read the Hobb series and be able to then read this novel:

1) Fitz is every woman's ideal man. He knows what love is, *true* love. He's a poet warrior:

"Love is more than bedding, boy. If love doesn't come first and linger after, if love can't wait and endure disappointment and separation, then it's not love. Love doesn't require bedding to make it true. It doesn't even demand day to day contact. I know this because I have known love..."

Oh gosh, Fitz *standing ovation, and yes, still sobbing hysterically*

2) Hobb mentions turnips, aren't they adorable? They're all purple and small, they look so cute.

3) Burrich *sobs a little* Burrich has an appearance (view spoiler)

4) Hobb is a master storyteller, she makes something as simple as a footstool sound enthralling.

5) The novel itself is tangible magic, magic, magic. Just holding it makes your fingers tingle a little. Tingle, tingle, tingle...tingle.

Here's my review to the final novel in the trilogy, Tawny Man, Book 3!

Kaitlin says

What is this book...? Well, it's the continuation of Fitz's storyline. It's also the continuation of the Fool's storyline and Bukkeep's storyline. I would also go so far as to say that this is the continuation of the Elderlings world. This book, although focused on Fitz most of the time, is actually a story which traverses the boundaries of the two series we've previously read in this world. Whilst before now we have had small easter egg references to events or people within one of the other series books, we've not had a big crossover of many characters or events which directly affect the story quite as much. We get to see the return of some of those we met in Liveships, and we also see or hear about how many of the lives of those we enjoyed from the Farseer books are going. We meet new people along the way too, of course, but mainly this book felt to me like the beginning of a solidified narrative between all 8 of the books so far in the Realm of the Elderlings.

This story follows Fitz after his return to the mysteries and struggles at Bukkeep court. We can see the many challenges his return has forced him to face, and we see many old and new faces who are, inevitably, mixed up in his storyline too. We get to follow Fitz through yet more ups and down, some of which were shocking, others seemingly destined, and we see how he copes against those who wish him harm and the secrets he must keep.

One element of this book I particularly enjoyed were the italicised passages at the beginning of each chapter. Whilst I have thought that these were always interesting I think some of those shown within this book in particular have been most insightful and enlightening.

I also really liked getting to see more of the characters of Dutiful, Thick, Hap and the Narcheska (alongside, of course, Fitz and the Fool) because each one was uniquely interesting and full of life and vibrance in their own way.

We see Dutiful trying to become the man he strives to be and fill his position at Bukkeep well.

We get to see Thick, a new character who is a halfwit, as he struggles against much of the same adversity and cruelty that Fitz had been subjected to in the past.

We see Hap as he comes up against some of the fancies and ideals that young men around town are prone to and falls into some pitfalls which lead him to make his own mistakes.

And finally we learn a little more about the Narcheska herself and her, rather odd and foreign, country which is maybe not so different to Buck.

Each of these characters either amused me, intrigued me or made me worry for them at some point in the story meaning that I was constantly invested in their stories and what would happen next. I felt that the changing story threads for each of the characters was handled expertly and each one was given proper time to develop and unfold as Hobb intended.

On the whole the story of this one was great and featured some excellent and central moments which will no doubt change the path of the next book and the history of Buck forever more. I cannot wait to finish up the Tawny Man series and see what is happening, and I also thought that this was one of the first times that I think the third book might be the best because of how much stuff Hobb has set in motion which will have to be resolved in book 3.

I cannot wait for the final one, this one was a wonderful 5*s with some excellent writing and fab story-telling!

Abbie | ab_reads says

4.5 stars - cannot believe I read this in 3 days, thank you 8inTwo readathon!!

Jennifer says

Close to 5 stars. This trilogy is murdering me right in the feelings. I'm almost afraid to read the third book - I need an emotional breather for a bit before I dive in. I'll be doing a video review on Hobb's first three fantasy trilogies (no spoilers) after I finish Tawny Man, so stay tuned for more thoughts.

David Sven says

I'm enjoying this Trilogy so far even more than the previous two in the series. Robin Hobb's writing is either getting better or I am just increasingly more invested in the characters of her world - probably both. Either way, Hobb's characterization is second to none. She can make you feel the joy of friendship rekindled or the rift of a lover's quarrel or the grief that come's with a close companion's death. *Let us now pause a moment to remember NightEyes...*

The other thing that made this book very enjoyable was the audio narration by Nick Taylor. Somehow he just nailed exactly how I imagine certain character's voices in my head. Namely Fitz, the Fool, and Chade. On the other hand the French accents for Kettricken and Dutiful were a stroke of genius and now I can't imagine them sounding any other way.

Our story picks up right after the events of book one. On the surface of things the plot takes a step back, slowing right down as Fitz reconnects with his old life at Buck Keep. Some relationships are renewed while others are deliberately avoided. Fitz' foster son, Hap, is settled into a trade apprenticeship in Buck Town. Fitz explores his relationship with the hedgewitch Jinna. Fitz establishes his cover as Tom Badgelock, Lord Golden's serving man come bodyguard. Nothing much appears to be happening plot wise. Yet Robin Hobb has that ability to make the simple pleasures of walking through Buck Town or raiding the kitchens of the Keep such delightful experiences, recalling fond memories of Fitz' childhood and coming of age in the Farseer Trilogy.

I'm making it sound boring but it's not really. Part of the reason why those moments are to be treasured is because they are snippets of light that stand out in stark contrast to the darker undertones and more sinister intrigues permeating the story. And though the pace may seem to have slowed down in some regards it

actually hurtles forward in other ways. There was no point where I was bored or felt the story was getting bogged down and needed to move along. There is actually a lot going on. Fitz has so much to deal with he doesn't have time to scratch himself.

In the Farseer Trilogy Fitz role was well defined as the Assassins Apprentice. This time he is no longer Chade's apprentice and his role is a lot more fluid as he is thrown back into the intrigues of the Six Duchies and court of Buck Keep. This time he returns as The Skillmaster, assigned to assemble and train a coterie of skill users for Prince Dutiful - even though his own Skill training was limited and twisted and he has nearly as much to learn as his students.

When he's not doing that he is a royal Spymaster - assigned to dig out secrets while keeping his own and the crown's well covered. And yes, if the need should arise, he will again assume the role of Royal Assassin. Whenever problems arise, killing is always on the table as an option, whether the problem be a simpleton who knows too much or Piebalds lurking somewhere in town.

And Fitz has all his old Assassin's tools honed and ready to use - whether it be foresight to be able to avoid violence altogether - or ruthless pragmatism combined with herbal lore to inflict death by food poisoning - or whether it be cold steel when gutting one's enemy is all that's left to do.

5 stars

Warning

Fitz will be subjected to extreme harm during the course of this story. Fitz lovers are advised to consider using the dead tree edition of this book in preference to electronic devices that are vulnerable to shock damage. Be also advised that no characters in the book are able to hear you no matter how hard you yell at the pages. If you must yell and are using an electronic device take care to cover any exposed ports as device manufacturers generally don't provide warranty for moisture damage.

Samantha says

Loved this to bits! Especially the last few pages. Cannot wait for book 3 to arrive so I can dive right back in!

Manju says

“You seek a false comfort when you demand that I define myself for you with words. Words do not contain or define any person. A heart can, if it is willing.”

Robin Hobb certainly knows how to spin a tale. I was rapt with her words, even though Fitz was drowning himself in pity and remorse. I was still turning pages when Fitz was planning (only planning) to kill all and get over with this ordeal. I finished the book and said wow, this was fantastic. That's how magical her tales are.

I know I didn't like Assassin's Quest much. I was as frustrated as Fitz was throughout the book by the time

finished reading it. This book too doesn't offer in terms of action, adventure, or drama, and yet it was beautiful to read Fitz's struggle with loss and betrayal. I think Ms Hobb has grown on me and that's why I am loving this tale now instead of whining and cursing.

This being the middle book paved path for the journey that we will read about in next book. Hobb threw in some mystery/mythical elements to make it more attractive and I am more than ready to start that journey to slay some dragons.

But this book has its moments. I loved the Court politics and how Kettricken was trying to win the alliances. While Dutiful was certainly not a favourite character in the last book, here he definitely holds his own. He was humble, eager to learn, possessive of Fitz, and a very brave young lad, who didn't like being thought of as a stupid prince.

Book's highlight for me was relationship of Fitz and Fool. It's the first time I have seen such strife between the two. I certainly missed few things as I have not read LivShip Traders, but Hobb wrote their conflict with so much emotion that it was painful for me to read those pages.

It was a great story but also tests the patience of readers. As for me, I will be going on adventure with Fool and Fitz next month to see what future holds for these two.

Kaora says

I can't say this is my favorite Robin Hobb book, but that is like saying it is not my favorite type of chocolate. It's still fucking delicious.

I just felt that this one dragged a bit more and while a lot happened there was really no resolution. It is the second book in a trilogy, but in the first book I felt like things were accomplished even though it was nowhere near the end.

Then I started this and so many plots were set into motion that I'm not sure how she can wrap them all up in one more book. But that is all that this book did was set things into motion. I am excited to see where those things lead for sure, I just wish this book either resolved SOMETHING, or was a tad bit shorter. (Blasphemy I know!)

Hanne says

After reviewing 7 previous Robin Hobb books, I feel like a broken record. So instead of making a new review, I decided to dig up all the previous ones and mash them together:

Some of the biggest sized words read: I just really love.

And I do!

I love her writing.

I love her characters (well, most of them. the others, i just love despising them)
I love how she makes me *care*.
I love how she keeps me guessing.

And most of all, I love how I have five more books to go set in this world. Four more days and we start the last book in this trilogy.

But please Robin Hobb, stop breaking my heart.

Helene Jeppesen says

This book was good, but for the most part I felt like it was just filling in the story between the first and the third book in this Tawny Man trilogy. Not a lot happens, and everything is a build-up to the big adventure we will encounter in book three.

I wasn't at any point eager to get back to this book and read it, but when I did read I liked it because it is entertaining and in many ways thought-provoking. Fitz is a likeable man, and that goes for almost all of the other characters as well.

So while it wasn't my favourite of Robin Hobb's, it was still an enjoyable read that however left me somewhat bored through parts of it.

Bookdragon Sean says

Fitz is in a bad way, and it's not surprising considering what happened at the end of the last novel. We all knew it was coming eventually, but I honestly didn't expect it so soon. I guess age finally catches up with us all. But for Fitz, he has lost half his soul; he will never be quite the same again.

Is this an excuse to finally return?

What his loss has granted him is loneliness. And this forces him back into an old life. He picks up the old tools of the trade, his axe and his poisons: he returns to Buckkeep castle once more, the place he grew up in. He takes solace in the companionship of old friends, but that's not why he returned, he returned because he needed distraction: he needed an excuse to move on with his life. And the mysterious politics of the Farseer reign is the perfect thing to immerse himself in once more.

As ever, the Six Duchies are plagued with strife and tension. This time the cause is a tenuous marriage contract, one that will only be fulfilled if King Dutiful brings back his betrothed the head of a dragon. Yes, a dragon's head. This is not an easy task. Dragons are powerful creatures, but they're also vertically extinct, so, needless to say, more problems arise. Fitz's oldest friend, the Fool, wishes to revive the dragons not slay them. Fitz is stuck in the middle. His duty to his King demands he helps in the perilous quest, and his loyalty to his friend demands he helps to preserve dragonkind. He has some rather tricky decisions to make.

Slow, slow, character development

Like all of Robin Hobb books this is incredibly drawn out, wonderfully so. Hundreds of pages fly by, in which little progress is made, but in this resides the beauty of Robin Hobb's style. She doesn't rush. She takes her time. She allows the tension to build up until it eventually erupts in a most dramatic manner. The slowness of her books to many is a flaw but to me it's wonderful. If a writer can pull you along in a story, in which the characters spend large amounts of time lamenting over the past, and yet you don't get bored with the words, you know she is doing something right. I could read about Fitz and the Fool all day.

Fitz has grown very gradually over this series, and he still has, no doubt, much further to go. I think the loss he has sustained has made him much stronger. He has come to rely on his other form of magic, and even has gained his own group of telepathically linked individuals. The student has become the master. I loved his relationship with Thick, the mentally deficient, yet extremely powerful, skill user. The Fitz in the first series wouldn't have had the wisdom to deal with him in such a kindly efficient manner.

A great book!
