



The Wizard Lord

Lawrence Watt-Evans

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The Wizard Lord's duty is to keep the world in its delicate balance. He must govern lightly to protect his domain from power-hungry interlopers, such as certain wizards who previously fought to rule the world...But if the Wizard Lord himself strays from the way of the just, then it is up to the Chosen to intercede.

The Chosen ones are the Leader, the Seer, the Swordsman, the Beauty, the Thief, the Scholar, the Archer, and the Speaker. Each are magically-infused mortal individuals who, for the term of their service, have only one function--to be available to remove an errant Wizard Lord, whether by persuasion or by stronger means.

Breaker, a young man of ambition, has taken the mantle of Swordsman from its former bearer who wished to retire. Never did he realize that he would be called to duty so quickly, or that the balance of power in his world would be so precarious.

He had a duty to perform. A world to save.

So why does he still have doubts...not just about himself, but about the entire balance of power?

The Wizard Lord Details

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From Reader Review The Wizard Lord for online ebook

Reuben says

Another slow moving but good fantasy read from LWE

Kay says

I got *The Wizard Lord* as a gift after buying the third book in the series, *The Summer Palace*, at a small, used book store. It seemed interesting, so I bought it, knowing it was the third installment because things just don't stick around in used book stores, you know? I had pretty high expectations for the first book since it appeared to be hinging on a very big premise and an epic adventure. Alas, after turning the final page...well, I wasn't impressed.

It saddened me how little the story offered in the larger scheme of things, and I think it's partly because Watt-Evans had a lot of interesting ideas littered throughout the book that were left unexplored. I liked the idea of a magocracy ruling over the land, kept in balance by a single Wizard Lord who goes rogue at the last minute. I liked the idea of the spirits (or whatever they were called; it's been a while since I read it) reigning over the natural world and people having to appease them in order to settle in an area. I liked the idea of a league of heroes (called the Chosen) who were specially picked to stop and destroy a rogue Wizard Lord if they had to. I liked the characters and the situations they were thrown into. I liked seeing the different peoples in different villages throughout the land and seeing how their cultures contrasted with Breaker/Sword's hometown. I liked all of these things about the book, and yet there just wasn't enough of it. I wanted to see more about the world, I wanted to travel right next to Breaker/Sword and the Chosen as they ventured to the Wizard Lord's tower. I wanted to see more of the characters, and most importantly, I wanted to see an epic battle at the end. I didn't get any of this.

Unfortunately, the way this was written, I just never became truly immersed in the world. Weeks and weeks of travel and strange encounters were skipped over, and I never got to see what all went on during that time. What little of the world I did get to see felt glossed over, as if it were thrown in there at the last minute as an after-thought. It felt rushed and incomplete as it was.

I really wanted to love *The Wizard Lord*. Even now, I still love the concepts that were presented throughout the book. However, glimpses of good ideas aren't enough for me to commit myself to a series, especially when so little is offered in return. In the end, I wound up donating both books of the series back to the exact same store where I bought the third book. In my personal opinion, *The Wizard Lord* was just not good enough to warrant me or anyone else spending money on the second installment, let alone reading the third. If you're truly curious about the series, I would probably recommend getting it from a library or borrowing it. Do not spend money on it. It's not worth it.

David(LA,CA) says

The story of an epic adventure... without much in the way of adventure. The main character himself points out on a few occasions that the journey our heroes are on isn't like the tales told of the grand adventures of

the previous time when the worlds chosen heroes were gathered to fight a mad wizard lord.

In fact, let me see if I can sum up the cycle of the story's plot:

The Chosen: We're walking. We're walking. Stay together people.

Evil magic is encountered

The Chosen: This shouldn't be. This must be the Wizard Lords fault. We must end stop him.

The Wizard Lord: I've possessed this small woodland creature to talk to you Chosen and convince you that you don't need to come and try to kill me.

The Chosen: But... look... Evil.

The Wizard Lord: I wouldn't be doing evil if you weren't trying to come kill me.

The Chosen: But we wouldn't be trying to come kill you if you would just resign your position.

The Wizard Lord: But I don't want to retire. So you give up.

The Chosen: No, you give up.

The Wizard Lord: No, you give up.

The Chosen: No you.

The Wizard Lord: You.

The Chosen: We won't give up until our assignment is completed.

The Wizard Lord: Fine. See you tomorrow.

The Chosen: Alright, lets get back to walking while we discuss how the Wizard Lord's magic works and how we can counter it.

Repeat.

By the time the main character thinks of how repetitive and annoying this pattern is, this reader had been at that conclusion for a little while.

I liked the world. I liked the magic system. I liked the characters. It's just the plot is repetitive and dull.

Abraham Isgur says

This series is a VERY DEPRESSING deconstruction of the "chosen one(s)" trope common in fantasy literature. It's well-written, inventive, and very different from most fantasy out there.

Peter says

In a fractional rating system I'd give this a strong 3.5.

I liked it - quite a bit - and was sorry to see it end. On the other hand, I'm glad that it ended relatively decisively. Cliffhanger endings annoy me, unless the next installment is immediately available.

I'm not going to do an extensive review, but there are a few things that I want to talk about. There may be (*will be*) some spoilers here. You Have Been Warned.

First, a general note: am I the only one who perceives a point at which LWE books changed? It seems to me that about the time that the Ethshar series was dropped (and yes, it's back now, and I'm **very** glad), there was

a major change. I don't know what the cause is, but the new books (*The Obsidian Chronicles* and *The Annals of the Chosen* series, and I'd put *Touched By the Gods* into this category as well) are considerably *longer* than the earlier novels - not just the Ethshar ones, but *all* of them - as well as darker. There's less humor as well, which I frankly miss.

Okay, on to *TWL* in particular:

I have a problem. The thing that I've always liked best about LWE's books - and it's a quality shared by *very* few other writers, Roger Zelazny being the only one I can think of at the moment - is that his protagonists are both sensible and intelligent. Far too many writers, (particularly modern ones) fall into the "stupid hero" cliche.

How can I put this? It's like...well, slasher movies come to mind, as well as a lot of older horror movies. Time after time, the characters (usually teenagers about to have sex) decide to do things that are totally ^@%#ing stupid. As soon as they decide to go to the old haunted house for a party, or the old abandoned summer camp where a maniac killed everyone twenty years ago, or *whatever*, all you can do is smack yourself on the head and scream "IDIOTS!".

But most LWE protagonists take intelligent precautions, and the precautions *work* - at least somewhat. Unlike 99% of genre heroes, they're believably smart (although not obnoxious about it), and do what I'd bet most readers would do in the same situation. That's incredibly refreshing.

Maybe you could call it realism.

LWE protagonists are also sensible and have a basic sense of common decency. They're not perfect - in fact, they are more *human* than most genre characters - but they're not liable to fits of lunacy and stupidity.

SPOILER (one more time, just to be safe)

Now, Breaker in *TWL* is a fairly sensible and extremely decent person. No question about it. But I found myself hitting myself on the forehead relatively early on, when he was told that the Leader had said that the people killed by the Wizard Lord had been rogue wizards. The idea of corrupting the Leader seemed incredibly obvious to me, a completely predictable flaw in the Wizard Lord/Chosen system. And when Breaker and the others found out that the victims hadn't been rogue wizards after all, but innocent people, it was simply stunning to me that they didn't even consider the *possibility* that the Leader had betrayed them.

Now, if the Leader had been with them at the time, and had done some tricky things to throw them off the scent, perhaps that would have been believable - although just barely. But he wasn't with them yet. And in any case, the other Chosen are resistant to his power of persuasion.

For the rest of the book I kept expecting (and hoping) that in fact the Leader would turn out NOT to be a traitor, not because he was a likable character (he wasn't), but because otherwise the book would be simply too predictable.

I'm not asking for an O. Henry sort of surprise, of course. In the old days, at least one editor used to call that a "tomato surprise". But I WAS expecting that there would be plot developments that I couldn't see coming; that there would be something new.

Please note that I'm not claiming any particular intelligence. My point is that almost all other LWE books

HAVE surprised me, in the sense that I found things in them that I didn't anticipate. Not so in TWL.

I'll take a moment to repeat that it was well written and enjoyable, because I'm afraid that I'm sounding very negative.

There were a number of issues that I hoped might turn into unexpected plot points, but they didn't. True names, for example; I thought they might turn out to be more important to the plot than they were, given the degree to which they were featured. I hoped that there might be something unexpected in the interaction between the abilities of the Chosen, maybe. The *ler* were another possibility for unexpected plot twist. Unfortunately that didn't happen.

[Side-note: I wonder if the idea of the *ler* was at all inspired by Shinto?]

[Another side-note: am I the only one who thought of Piers Anthony's *Incarnations of Immortality* series while reading TWL? Not that the writing is comparable (I don't care for much of Anthony's works, particularly his later stuff - it's kind of icky, unlike all LWE books except the *Worlds of Shadow* series), but the idea of a replaceable group of relatively ordinary people taking on archetypal roles which are reinforced with magic is similar. Come to think of it, in the first IoI book (*On A Pale Horse*) the hero was tricked into taking on the role of Death - and, of course, Breaker was tricked into becoming the Swordsman.]

Another point which bothered me was Breaker's decision to give the Leader a year to resign his role, and to remain silent about his treachery in the meantime. This wasn't totally unbelievable, not in the way that his failure to consider the possibility of the Leader being a traitor was, but it did seem surprisingly stupid. By not telling the other wizards that the Leader was a traitor, Breaker A) didn't let them know that their Wizard Lord/Chosen safeguard system had broken down in an obvious way (which is particularly odd since he was arguing that the system was broken and should be ended), and B) gave the Leader a year to kill him, which once again seems an obvious choice for the Leader to make (I'm guessing that it will be the subject of the next book in the series).

Breaker KNOWS that the Leader is both willing and able to have others kill on his behalf, and is completely evil; he also knows that the Leader has a magical ability to persuade others. What's more, he knows that he'll be taking away the things that the Leader values the most: his magical abilities, his palace, and his slave girls. What does he THINK the Leader is going to do? This is...not believable.

I really don't want to call it "stupid"...

Breaker was obviously in shock from his first experience of killing a human being, so maybe that excuses him. But it's not something I would have expected from an LWE character. So in that sense, I suppose, it IS a surprise to me. But not a good one.

A few random notes: the character of Speaker in particular was quite interesting and well-done. So was the Beauty. The Archer was a bit flat, the Scholar a little less so (the concept of his being unable to remember untruths is a very interesting one; I have a sneaking suspicion that there's a logical flaw in it somewhere, though). Seer wasn't bad, although her chickening out at the last minute didn't quite make sense; the horror of the Dark Lord's fastness needed to be emphasized more, in order for her withdrawal to be believable. In fact, the whole endgame of the book seemed a bit rushed. It was also unusually dark and cynical.

Which I suppose is true of this review. I'm sorry about that; I really DID like the book. It's just that my standards for an LWE book are a bit higher than for books by most other modern writers. He's one of my

three favorite modern genre writers.

Update: I just re-read the book, and I have to say, sadly, that it **really** doesn't wear well. Lawrence Watt-Evans' best quality has always been the intelligence and common sense of his protagonists, and the treachery of a certain character is just so *incredibly* obvious that I simply can't swallow it; it was bad enough the first time I read it, and it just gets worse every time I read it.

And that's not because I now know the "surprise". That was painfully obvious the first time. It's just that the protagonists keep ignoring the obvious, and that's irritating. Nor does LWE do anything to make their stupidity understandable; if magic is clouding their minds (although it shouldn't be, according to the internal logic of the book itself), that should have been foreshadowed at the very *least*. But it isn't.

Lawrence Watt-Evans is, as I've said, one of my favorite modern writers. He still is. And maybe that's why my initial take on this review was to go easy on him; I want him to have a lot of success and write a lot more books. But *The Wizard Lord* is NOT the kind of book I want to see from him. This, *Touched By The Gods*, and his *Reign of the Brown Magician* are his weakest books. I want to see more in his Ethshar series, and his Lords of Dus, and the War Surplus series. Fortunately he's been doing more Ethshar, and I'll continue to read it eagerly. It's as good as ever. But I really hope not to see more books like *The Wizard Lord*.

A writer should never abandon his strongest suit, particularly when it is so special and rare as Watt-Evans'. His publishers may be pushing him to write "dumb" (or not, I don't know), but the revival of his Ethshar series shows that there IS a market for books about intelligent, practical people who are able to use that intelligence effectively and have it **work**.

In a fractional rating system, my current rating of the book would now be 2.9...and falling.

K. Axel says

First of...

This book is about a young man named Breaker, who finds himself training to become one of the Chosen, the Swordsman, in fact. He wants to take on this important role, but finds it a difficult task, that he is constantly doubting. The Chosen, by the way, are those who keep the realm of Barokan safe from mad wizards gone rogue. Their's is a very important task, and the Council of Immortals give them magical powers to fulfill it, making them the absolute best in their field of expertise.

This is an excellent book. Very original, and although, the plot seem to be a classic one... fear not... there are twists that will leave you amazed and excited. Lawrence Watt-Evans is amazing at creating imaginative characters that... seem very real. You are right there beside them, feeling their every thought.

This book comes highly recommended!

Robert Rapplean says

This book is probably the most realistic example of how people would behave in a magical realm. Unfortunately, that makes for very unrewarding escapist reading. Although it is overall a well written and

interesting piece, it is also studiously uninspiring. This world is full of characters who are completely absorbed by self-interest. The main character trudges along doing the thankless job of being a hero with a band of "Chosen" who accepted a ceremonial job because it supposedly provided some form of status or skill. They're all caught by surprise when they are actually called upon to do what the job requires, and most of the story involves them dealing with their reluctance to do what they agreed to do when they received their abilities.

The world itself is blissfully free of conflict because the Wizard Lord prevents things like war, punishes any thieves that run, and even prevents harsh weather. In the story, this seems to have resulted in a people that have no concept of helping each other out.

I would like to say that, in general, I like Lawrence Watt-Evens's fiction, but this one seems to be a bad apple.

Alger says

A lightweight, but satisfying book. It is nowhere near as well rounded or thought out as the Etshar novels, but it is a complete world, and the governance system is an exaggerated version of the checks and balances written into the US Constitution. The dialogue can be repetitious and the final showdown was chaotic and fell oddly flat (partly by design I understand, but even so....), but the premise and development are worth a little bit of pain.

Niki Hawkes - The Obsessive Bookseller says

Via The Obsessive Bookseller at www.nikihawkes.com

As the writer of my all time favorite Dragon series, The Obsidian Chronicles, Lawrence Watt-Evens had never failed to entertain me in the half a dozen books I've read from him so far. In fact, I liked him so much that I immediately went out and purchased every book he had on the market at the time – an impulse I have not yet regretted...Until now.

I have to say, for such a fantastic idea for a book, this one took a lot of time to get going. A hundred pages in, the main conflict of the story was finally hinted at... Although I don't know that I would've been able to pick it out had I not read the back of the book. There was a lot of speculation and back-and-forth questioning by the main protagonist, which built great character right up front, but I think it could have been edited down a little bit without losing any of its impact. That said, it was still interesting and engaging even though not much was happening other than personal growth and discovery. I always appreciate authors who can take ordinary, everyday events and make them interesting to read about.

Then after that first hundred pages, when he finally got on the road I thought "great – now the story really begins!" The trouble is, it kind of didn't. Sure, he was visiting new places for the first time, but it seemed like in every place he just rehashed everything that had been pounded into us before he even left on the journey. Not to mention that most of the scenes didn't seem to add anything to the overall arc of the story. I'm a little sad to admit that I got a little bored reading it – and that saying something considering I just finished Prophecy by Elizabeth Haydon (One of the most long-winded books I've ever read... But still

strangely amazing).

I have been working really hard to live by the motto that “life is too short to read boring books” and finally decided to put it down. This was a difficult decision considering how dazzled I’ve been with his works in the past, but I’m to a point where I have so many great books just begging to be read that I will not force myself to finish anything I’m not enjoying.

Recommended Reading: although I found this great conceptually, it came across uneventful and repetitive. I really can’t see myself recommending it, and have figured out why it went out of print so quickly. I will, however, stand behind my recommendations of The Obsidian Chronicles as my all-time favorite Dragon series – which happens to be coming back in print January 2014!

Alexis says

Why is it that whenever I buy a series all at once, it always disappoints me?

The cardinal sin of The Wizard Lord, all other gripes aside, was that it was *boring*. There was no urgency to the Chosen’s quest; they wandered leisurely about a vague, ill-defined world until they rather listlessly decided that perhaps they should attempt to save the world, you know, now that it was convenient for them. Further, the villainous Wizard Lord was disappointingly one-note in his madness, and his attempts to thwart our heroes were hilariously ineffectual. Apparently, the most that the greatest wizard in all the land can do to the Chosen is send a few storms and possess a few animals. Riveting.

Also, the entire premise behind the Beauty is one of the most ill-conceived, terrible things I’ve ever had the displeasure of reading.

That is all.

Rebecca says

This is probably one of my favorite books in terms of deconstructing the fantasy trope of prophecies and chosen ones and those RPG-esque teams of adventurers with very specialized roles.

Here, this magical world is so strangled by the red tape put in place by the wizards and their magically picked Wizard Lords that the heroes are basically “chosen” by committee and have magical *ler* that give them their specialized abilities, and we watch the journey of a newly appointed Chosen as he learns just what it means to be a Chosen One and just how much it really kind of sucks.

Prophecies and their rhyming couplets, man. They’re tricky sometimes.

We follow Breaker, who is just your average kid in this average town of Mad Oak, a town where it’s all harvests and drinking beer and tending to the crops until you grow old and die, until he takes the mantle of The Swordsman from the retiring Chosen who had traveled throughout the land in order to give up his role. Breaker is one of those heroes who really wants to be somebody and he gladly learns the ropes on taking the role, but we soon learn that he became The Swordsman just in time because there are hints that the current

Wizard Lord has gone mad and needs elimination. Now it's up to Breaker to travel the lands of Barokan and gather up the remaining Chosen to do his and their sacred prophetic job of taking down the Wizard Lord.

But, as Breaker soon learns, there's more to this business than just a Wizard Lord gone bad.

As you can probably tell, on the surface this is your typical cheesy fantasy novel with swords, wizards, and prophecies. It does do a good job at explaining these things. I had first read this book in high school but could still remember the style of magic vividly before picking up this book once more. And, as we meet up with the other Chosen, we find out both the perks and the downsides of their abilities and what they need to do in order to keep the *ler* giving them their magic happy.

Speaking of the Chosen, I absolutely loved all of the other Chosen and how some of them were enjoying their role and some were driven mad by their powers. Each Chosen *ler* reacts differently and requires different exercises to keep them satisfied. My favorite was The Thief, a beleaguered housewife who wants nothing to do with being a Chosen, has lived with a life of being judged for what she is, and practically slams the door on the heroes' faces when they show up at her door. It's the little touches like that that make this world more believable.

The *ler* themselves are very fleshed-out too, and you learn that each town in Barokan had its own society built around keeping this magical force happy. Some towns needed human sacrifices, some towns had mad *ler* bound in carnivorous trees, and it made for a very rich world.

However, one would say this book does *too* good of a job at making sure you know what's going on. Notice how I've been complimenting the world-building and NOT the plot or the writing? As the other reviews say, this is a very slow, plodding, talk-filled book where 75% of the book is world-building, characters talking to each other, and traveling through the various lands. Reading this is akin to listening to a friend go on and on about the technology in Star Trek because describing all of the ins and outs of this magic takes a good chunk out of the book.

On top of that, one of the main plot points is that the Wizard Lord commands the very power of the elements and makes things very nice and pleasant in regards to the flora, the fauna, and the weather (rain only falls at night, bears can be controlled to carry off rapists and murderers, etc.) and, combined with the very extensive world-building, results in our heroes just traveling through nice scenic lands and talking about disposing of the Wizard Lord for most of the trip and reiterating what we know about the magic while learning about new *ler* along the way. This is mostly a road trip book.

And boy, do they make sure you know the rules of the Chosen and the Wizard Lord throughout this journey. You will hear the rules over and over and over again. They could've shaved 50% of the dialogue from this book and I would've lost nothing.

However, I personally felt that every time I was starting to get bored with the characters re-iterating that, *once again*, The Wizard Lord had all sorts of magical powers that can destroy them but he will be weakened if one or more of the Chosen die, there was something new that popped up in the world that brought me back into liking it. The resolution at the end, while predictable, was satisfying.

It's a very slow book and I feel a lot of the dialogue could've been trimmed without anything being lost, but I enjoyed the ride that it took me. I came into this book expecting pure fantasy cheese and I got pure fantasy cheese.

Riteandritual says

Got this from the dollar store - and was very pleasantly surprised. Not only that, but I picked it mostly for the cover.

Struck me as an interesting world with an unusual theme (read the book-liner, I was like "huh?"), and a refreshingly sober, no-nonsense protagonist; clearly, simply envisioned. Although it was kinda slowish starting, it keeps you hooked enough to keep turning pages till the end. Disappointed that it isn't a 9 book series, like you'd figure from the intro, I still want to read the rest (3) and the authors other work, like the Misenchanted Sword (has a cool name and cover).

Megan Reber says

A really good premise that was sadly bogged down with a lot of repetitive dialogue, much in the way of walking, and nothing really happening. Gathering the 8 chosen happens and talk of taking out the "mad" wizard lord, but nothing really in the way of action. If you enjoy lots of walking and talking about doing things, but not actually doing them (in book one. I realize there are two other books in the series), then this book is right up your alley. I recommend it for Lord of the Ring fans. You all are used to reading about walking, eating and sleeping. But this wasn't for me.

Whitney St-Marseille says

Watt-Evans' "The Wizard Lord" is a book I happen to pick up at random at my local library. Again, it was mistakenly shelved in the adult section, but it is actually a young adult book. With that said, I thought it was great. The funny part is, I can't exactly describe why. Something made it hard for me to put down.

I liked the concept of the eight talismans of The Chosen: The Beauty, Swordsman, Scholar, Leader, Speaker, Archer, Seer, and Thief. The idea is that these eight exceptional people keep the Wizard Lord - the most powerful being in their world - in check. Each of their talismans is bound to his which gives him his strength. His job is regulate the weather and keep the lesser wizards (on the Council of Immortals) in check. Should one of The Chosen die, the Wizard Lord will lose 1/8 of his power. The Chosen's job is to make sure that the Wizard Lord uses his powers for good purpose. Should he do anything evil or neglectful (and become a Dark Lord), it becomes their job to remove him.

The Council of Immortals keeps The Chosen in check and make sure that they are fulfilling their duties in an appropriate way. It is also their job to appoint a new Wizard Lord when the old one dies or chooses to retire. Therefore completing the triangle of power as I call it. The Council of Immortals (comprised of wizards) monitors The Chosen, The Chosen monitor the Wizard Lord, and the Wizard Lords monitors the Council of Immortals.

Anyway, the main character Erron who goes by the name Breaker (or sometimes Sword later on in the story) is an ordinary young man living in a small barley farming village called Mad Oak. There is nothing that makes him exceptional; he was not born with any special talents or privileges in comparison to anyone else. I think that is part of the reason he is such a likeable character. The whole premise of the story is that he chooses to be special and exceptional. I think that is one of the most important messages in the story. It's your actions that make you extraordrdinary, not because of how you were born.

In any case, the book is straight forward. The plot line is predictable, but the characters each have their little oddities that makes them unique and unexpected. I really enjoyed the world of the "ler" Watt-Evans created, though I wonder where he got the word "ler" from. Regardless, I look forward to continuing on with the rest of the series.

Robert Aldrich says

I HATE THIS BOOK.

Honestly, I have never before stated a thing like that, but it is true. There is NOTHING good that I have to day about this

If I could give a negative rating, I would, but one is the lowest I can give.

I could spout venom about this books for quite a while, but I have better things to do...like try and get back the hours I spent reading it--all of it--only to get the end and feel cheated and hateful.

So that's all I have to say...aside from the fact that if I had a copy of this book, I would burn it and bleach the shelf space it once occupied!
