



Hemlock and the Wizard Tower

B. Throwsnaill

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How is power gained, retained and exercised; and what happens to a power structure when a young girl with magical abilities hacks and slashes her way into the very core of its apparatus?

In a magical city that travels through multiple dimensions, a young girl named Hemlock has risen from being a lowly cutpurse to discovering that she is a powerful fighter. Under the guidance of an aging freedom fighter named Safreon, Hemlock battles to keep the peace in her run down district, while across the City the upper class Elites enjoy peace, prosperity and freedom.

The Wizard Tower looms in the center of the City, casting a long shadow over its affairs. The Wizards rule behind the scenes, dictating and controlling the use of magic. Hemlock instinctively feels that the Wizards are her enemies, but Safreon will not discuss openly opposing them, as he seeks to methodically mentor Hemlock, and advance his own cryptic plans for the City.

Hemlock makes a decision to make a bold attack on the Wizard Tower alone, convinced that she can destroy or undo whatever method the Wizards are using to control and ration magic. As the novel opens, we join Hemlock just after she has infiltrated the Wizard Tower, learning what happens through a narrative interspersed with flashbacks to events leading up to the attack.

Hemlock and the Wizard Tower Details

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From Reader Review Hemlock and the Wizard Tower for online ebook

Jeffrey Poole says

Hemlock and the Wizard Tower follows the exploits of a talented thief, Hemlock, living on a magic-laden world controlled by the all powerful Wizard Guild. Sneaking into the heart of their operation, the Wizard Tower, Hemlock attempts to learn why the magic that normally would help her sister has recently been failing. Blaming the wizards (wizards be damned!), she uses all her extraordinary skills to infiltrate the Tower, something no one has ever been successful in accomplishing. With the aid of her mentor, a renegade wizard, and even a mechanical golem, Hemlock is swept up in the battle to break the Wizard Guild's regulation of everyday magic.

I truly enjoyed this story. Character development was good. I liked how Hemlock went from rooftop vigilante to a very believable heroine whom people looked up to. I liked the author's use of italics to portray flashbacks. What I really enjoyed, though, was how everything flowed so smoothly. The inner circles of the Wizard Guild, the different sections of the city, the outlying lands, etc. One critique I had was about the main antagonist, Falignus. There were times when I wasn't sure if he was truly evil, or if he had underlying motives causing him to behave as he did. Fortunately, it didn't distract from the story in the slightest. I was hoping for more history about Merit, but maybe in a sequel?

Speaking of sequels, I thought I saw somewhere that the author was working on a second book. I sure hope so! To anyone out there that loves fantasy, this is a fantastic book! Be sure to check it out!

Éric Kasprak says

I usually avoid stories which focus on magic. I don't know why exactly... I prefer the sword in *Sword and Sorcery* I guess. After reading the sample from Amazon I decided to read the all things (the book was free, which help). I loved the book. The writing style is easy-to-read and detailed, the imagination of the author as to be commended; it's wild, complex, refreshing and completely interesting. But what I prefer was that it was always in the service of the story, nothing was just for show or to wow us with its weirdness. The characters are well-developed, the story is really worth telling and bring the readers to a fully realised fantasy world. I will gladly follow the continued adventures of Hemlock and seeing how the next two books of the series are more in my sweet spot for book length (around 200-250 pages) I can't wait. Highly recommended.

Riana Elizabeth says

This book draaaaaaaaaaged. Too long, which could have been avoided if the writer hadn't explained every single twitch and step of every character. Too much minutia. Characters could have been interesting, but everything was explained through narrative rather than action. Speaking of action, there could have been a lot more in this book. The only thing that broke up the monotony would be when the author threw in another random character. I would've given up reading if not for my innate stubbornness and the hope that the writing would eventually get better. It didn't.

Hayley Smith says

Gave up, the story and writing were just too terrible to finish.

Leonardo Dearie says

Exciting!

This anthology is a wickedly cool and thoroughly action packed with characters who are memorable and surprisingly, believably human and warm.

Tasha Turner says

Fairly well written. Kept me coming back to read more. Could have used some editing, I can see many of the same issues I'm struggling with as I write my first works of fiction with telling where the story would have been even better if she had shown. Given how good it was as is this is an author to watch as she polishes her craft.

The main characters were well written. the plot is great, lots of interesting and unusual twists and turns. In the end I loved how she used italics for flashbacks once I got used to it and would not be surprised to see more authors doing the same. Loved being dropped right into the action as the author did a great job of getting us up-to-date on what was going on and why quickly.

I liked the strong female character and how she kept coming into her powers as she needed them and her very strong moral code. Loved her mentor even if he kept making me want to hit him over the head for deciding not to tell her things which kept leading her to make bad decisions.

The villian is obviously evil but thinks what he is doing is for the good of the people. At times it almost seems like maybe he's not such a bad guy...

The book is full of adventure, magic, responsibility, fighting, and even a little love. All and all this book is well worth the read and I look forward to more books by this author.

Mia Darien says

(This book got a 2.5 rather than a 2 on my blog, but it translates to this rating here on GR.)

I must be, like, the hardest reader on the planet to please. I know that part of it is that I cannot separate the writer in me from the reader in me when I see problems with the writing. I try. I want to just lose myself. Sometimes I have, but sometimes things just bug me and I can't let them go. But I'm led to write a not-so-great review on a story many others seem to find awesome.

Let me start out by saying that there were a lot of elements of this story that I did like. That is to say, it had a lot of concepts I had high hopes for. I like high fantasy worlds with magic and cool creatures, good versus evil, kick ass female characters, epic stories, grey morality, etc., This story promised all of those things.

Unfortunately, I didn't really feel it in the execution.

I found it a bit over-written. I love the West Wing quote where the president says, "Anyone in my family who uses five words when they could have used ten just isn't trying hard enough." It's funny, and something I do when talking, but doesn't work for me in fiction.

Too much description weighs a story down for me. Telling every single detail of every movement, expression, thought, and so on makes the writing mechanical. It also -- and man, I feel so mean to say it -- but it always makes me think of a writer trying very hard to be epic, rather than letting the story be epic for itself.

There was an excess of character monologing that goes along with this. The reader does not really need to know everything. "Just the facts, ma'am, just the facts." Having struggled with this in my own writing, I really do understand the drive to do it, but you gotta weed that stuff out in editing. (Which this book needed more of, but that's minor to me.)

...which leads me to my second problem. This felt like a story trying to be epic and complex, when all of the motivations and actions of the characters seemed incredibly simplistic to me. Characters that were allegedly complicated with multiple layers of intentions and morality didn't seem complex at all to me. Every one was a straight line.

And that comes to my third "major" issues, which was that I didn't like Hemlock. Now, I will freely and happily confess that this is not entirely on the writer. I tend to dislike young (teenage, early 20s) female main characters. I don't know why, but they annoy me. I think I only have one author where that doesn't happen to me.

That being said... Hemlock just struck me as kind of... stupid. She didn't think anything through and it wasn't until the end that I felt I could believe that any of her actions were driven by a Higher Ideal. She felt very self-focused to me, which made it hard to connect with her. And the stuff with Falignus felt forced to me.

I felt like I was Told a lot. Like... that various characters were smart or powerful or cunning warriors, but their actions rarely showed it. They often came across as simple-minded or naive.

Merit was cute, however, and I did like Gwineval.

God knows, I hate to write any review I can't rave about a fellow indie author. I wish I could, but this book was kind of a struggle for me to get through. I did like the concepts, but the story and the characters really didn't grab me. That's not to say I thought it was terrible, just not great, and obviously plenty of folk feel otherwise.

This falls mid-range for me with a 2.5.

Scott says

Hemlock and the Wizard Tower follow Hemlock a former thief with a certain sensitivity to magic who has turned vigilante. The story takes place in a magical city that actually moves from realm to realm having only a few regions permanently attached to it. Hemlock lives in the Warrens, which is the run down part of town. She spent most of her life being a thief until she tried to steal from Safreon, the original vigilante. These two team up to help keep the Warrens safe for normal people to live.

Magic permeates the city all of it rigorously controlled by the Wizards Guild (headquartered in the Wizards Tower). Hemlock's sister is sick and will die without magical aid. However the magic of the Warrens is on the decline very quickly. Thinking that the wizards are somehow siphoning off the power from the Warrens for their own terrible plots Hemlock decides to break into their tower and do something about it. Using her special power she actually manages to succeed where no one has and penetrates the terrible defenses of the tower. Once inside she meets Merit (who for some reason is my favorite) a mechanical and magical blend clockwork gnome. Merit gives her some information and she uses it to get further into the tower. I will leave off saying that thing do not go as planned at all.

If you check out the sample of this book it almost seems like the story is finished when the sample ends. Nothing could be further from the truth. I was surprised and pleased with the way the book developed especially how italicized flashbacks were used to really explain where the characters came from. The only thing I did not really enjoy was Falignus head of the Wizards Guild. His personality jumped from compassionate and understanding to crazy power hungry derangement several times and I never really understood why. That being a minor issue in what is a very good story overall.

This book is well worth the .99 that it is selling for, and there is a second book planned for sometime in 2012. A great story with some fantastic characters well done all around.

Sally says

Hemlock and the Wizard Tower is the story of a talented thief's ability to infiltrate and overcome the Wizard Guild's regulation of everyday magic so that once again magic that was used for good and to help others can do so again.

Hemlock uses her special power to battle her way through the tower with the aid of some unusual characters to try and succeed and attempt to save her sister.

It took me a couple of chapters to get into this story but once I did I enjoyed the journey watching Hemlock change from a vigilante to a heroine. The flashbacks gave a further dimension to the imaginative world that has been created by the author which was a pleasant change to other magical worlds and gave the reader enough intrigue to follow the story to its end. This was a good beginning to a story that definitely has more to tell.

Connie Jasperson says

Indy author B. Throwsnail has written a tale that is full of great characters, fantastic adventures with a

riveting plot. This was the best .99 that I have spent in a long while!

When the tale begins, Hemlock's sister lies helplessly ill. The magic that might save her is fading. Hemlock fears that the wizards in the Tower have somehow siphoned off the magic that once infused the Warrens. Accordingly, she sets out to discover what has happened.

Using her special power to sense magic, she succeeds where no one else has and penetrates the terrible defenses of the tower. Once inside she sees many things both terrible and full of magic, and then meets Merit, a clockwork gnome who is both mechanical and magical. He answers her questions as well as he can.

She then meets a Bust (yes, a statue) that sings and enjoys rum. I have to say that is one of the more entertaining scenes I have read in a long while!

Hemlock's mentor, Safreon goes to great lengths to help her in her quest to restore the magic to the Warrens. He enlists the help of Gwineal, a renegade wizard, and Merit also helps her in her quest to free the magic which is controlled by the Wizard's Guild and their leader, the rather schizophrenic Falingus. One moment he is kind and compassionate and another he is consumed with the desire for power, making Falingus an interesting character. He has reasons of his own to want to keep Hemlock alive.

Hemlock's effort to stop what she believes to be the siphoning of mana (magic energy) in the city goes awry, and she is inadvertently the cause of a dramatic reduction in the amount of mana, endangering her sister's life.

This tale is very smoothly woven. The characters are well drawn, and the magic has both a purpose and a logical basis. The world they inhabit is clear and compelling. Hemlock's personal growth as she changes from a rash street urchin with a cause, to a heroine is both inventive and enjoyable.

Much of the story is told in flashbacks, which I found disconcerting at first, but the story was so gripping that I stuck with it and soon they didn't distract me. Indeed I soon began to enjoy the way the story unfolded through them.

I highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys epic-quest-fantasy as much as I do. Thrownsaill draws from the modern literature of J.R.R. Tolkien, Michael Moorcock, Terry Brooks, and the myths and mythologies of many of the world's religions, without mimicking them. I think this very original tale has the potential to become a classic!

Ruby Ridge says

Really enjoyed this book and will read the next in the series. The little relationship bit in the middle was weird but I have a feeling that this was a set up for something future (hopefully not romantic!!!)
Fighting Hemlock is a great character, thinking and feeling not so much.
Recommended.

Robert says

Well written and entertaining. There are a few grammar and punctuation errors which detract from the story, as well as an irritating overuse of the word 'that'. Should the author do an edit to fix these issues, the tale would flow much better instead of bogging down constantly. There is a bit too much telling rather than showing, but on the whole a good effort. I found myself having trouble liking the characters, but then again I have never been partial to female leads - that's just me.

I will keep an eye out for future installments, hoping the author works on his craft.

Jolie says

Hemlock was in a bind. Her sister, Mercuria, was in pain from a stomach ailment that could only be healed by magic. But the magic wasn't working because the wizards that rule the city were limiting the magic the citizens could have. With Mercuria getting worse by the day, Hemlock makes a decision that will have ramifications for everyone in The City and beyond.

This was a really good read. The first half of the book was great. Hemlock's breaking into the Tower was great. Very fast paced.

I did have a bit of trouble finishing the book but that was all me.

Will I read this book again? Yes

Will I recommend this book to family and friends? Yes

Bernard Schaffer says

B. Throwsnail has, aside from one of the coolest names in literature, a singular mind for the fantastical and complex.

Abigail says

Review pending... LOVED THE BOOK however so I need to write this review!

