



## Sea of Silver Light

*Tad Williams*

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**Sea of Silver Light** Tad Williams

This final volume of the resoundingly popular Otherland series is a high fantasy landmark.

## Sea of Silver Light Details

Date : Published April 10th 2001 by DAW Hardcover (first published 2001)

ISBN : 9780641645471

Author : Tad Williams

Format : Hardcover 688 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Science Fiction, Fiction, Cyberpunk

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# From Reader Review Sea of Silver Light for online ebook

## Evilynn says

The last 15 pages of this book ruined Otherland for me as a series. It was set up so well, and Williams could've done so much, and then he ends it by having a Big Brain in the Sky crashing down on Daddy? For the love of... I still haven't been able to read another Tad Williams book for it, and I'm sure I'm missing out, but I just don't feel like committing to 4000 more pages if the last 15 are going to be truly, abysmally bad.

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## Aleah says

In "Sea of Silver Light," book four in the "Otherland" tetralogy, Tad Williams wraps up his massive sci-fi saga.

### **Four big books in eight medium-sized sentences:**

In a not so distant future children across the globe are being lost to unexplainable comas. For South African college professor Renie Sulaweyo, whose baby brother Stephen is among those affected, the horror of this epidemic is all too real. Researching Stephen's condition leads Renie to the Otherland, a massively complex virtual reality network that is powered by a nearly sentient operating system known as the Other. Its architects? A secretive group of affluent and aged elites who refer to themselves as the Grail Brotherhood. In an attempt to save Stephen, Renie and her friend, !Xabbu, find a way into this exclusive network. Once in Otherland the pair discover others on similar quests... and one whose ambitions are the stuff of nightmares. Our adventurers soon learn that they are trapped in the Otherland and, although the environments are simulated, the dangers are all too real.

### **My take:**

I had a great time following the characters as they progressed through their adventures in this series. They were an interesting and diverse collection of protagonists and their various relationships (both romantic and not) tugged at my heartstrings. My favorite character was Orlando, a teenager suffering from the late stages of Progeria. Orlando uses the virtual reality environment of the Net to experience a freedom that he was denied in his dying body. I don't want to give too much away, but I feel that Orlando was the true hero of this series.

The virtual world where most of this story takes place allowed Williams to stretch the boundaries of science fiction. Purely fantastical worlds existed in an entirely science fiction based virtual reality environment, making for a fun mix of the genres. The best of both worlds in my humble opinion. The plot is delightfully intricate and the page count just goes on and on. Loved it.

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## Alexandra says

Ein guter Abschluss eines Epos, das insgesamt mehr als 4000 Seiten umfasst und mich nun über 4 Jahre beschäftigt hat.

Die Handlung und die Personen entwickelten sich grossartig weiter, aber ich war doch sehr enttäuscht, dass bei der Konzeption von neuen sehr innovativen VR-Environments die Inspiration im letzten Band massiv

verloren ging. Am Ende gibt es die Auflösung aller Handlungsstränge, ein Happy End und ein paar nette Ideen bezüglich der Figuren und ihrer Rollen.

Fazit: Ein sehr guter solider letzter Band aber mit wenigen Überraschungen

Anschlussfrage: Welches neue Epos soll ich mir jetzt vornehmen? :-)

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## **Rob says**

**Executive Summary:** This series is a monster, and thankfully after all those hours, it comes to an enjoyable conclusion.

**Audio book:** Yup, George Newbern is still excellent. I might have liked this series less in text due to the slow parts, but Mr. Newbern really brings the world and it's characters to life in a way that put him up there in the top tier of audiobook narrators for me.

### **Full Review**

This review will be a bit lighter than it probably would have been had I written it a month ago. Time sort of got away from me this month and I've fallen badly behind on my reviews.

Much like other books in this series, I found the plot a bit slow in places, but by the last third things were moving along at such a pace that I hate to stop. Thankfully I got to listen to the last 6 or so hours in one sitting.

The world building is once again the star for me. However several of the characters have become quite dear to me after so many hours spent with them, especially !Xabbu and Fredricks. Renie still annoyed me at times, but far less than in previous books. So obviously she's grown on me too.

I am sad I'll no longer be wandering through the vast expanse of Otherland with our little troupe of explorers, but I'm happy for the time I got to spend with them.

If you're a fan of cyberpunk and epic fantasy, this series to me was just about the perfect blend of those things. I felt that things were wrapped up nicely leaving you wanting more, but satisfied that there isn't.

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## **Bill says**

Fun fact! Did you know that the original title of this book was "Tad Williams Kicks You in the Teeth"? Okay, not really. But it felt like it when I read this book. I have so many issues with this book, but ultimately it all boils down to this:

Almost NOTHING in the previous books really matters. The amazing computer network is... okay, you did see the spoiler tag, right?...

A FREAKING PSYCHIC BABY BRAIN IN A SATELLITE.

Almost everything else -- the character they've been chasing, the weird powers they picked up inside the worlds, nanobot-wheelchair-man -- none of it really matters. Oh, and the coma kids will just get better on their own, more or less. You've just spent three thousand plus pages reading about red herrings. This book, along with the offensively dreadful "Xenocide", rank among the few books I wish I could un-read.

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### **KostasAt says**

10/10

With Sea of Silver Light the magic journey in the Otherland series comes to an end and with Tad Williams having made a wonderful finale in, perhaps, one of his best book to date but also one of my most favorite.

In this book Williams manages to close the series very beautiful as through his complex world-building and his, truly, countless characters has made a really strong story with lots of twist and revelations that will change radically the course of the protagonists, and also many, wonderful, moments of action and suspense. Williams' writing on the other hand, even though the astonishing size of the book and the series in general, flows really well and also manages to make you love, not only all the characters but his incredible ideas too.

Highly recommended!!!

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### **Sunsy says**

Eine der tollsten, fantastischsten und futuristischen Storys ist nun zu Ende gelesen. Ganze 1217 Seiten hatte der letzte Band und hat mich viele Stunden in Atem gehalten. Diese Reihe hat mich tief beeindruckt und mir eine ganze Menge gegeben.

10/10 Punkte

<http://sunsys-blog.blogspot.de/2017/0...>

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### **Hwango says**

So, why did I read all four of these if I hated the first one so much? Well, I got to the end of the first one and was infuriated by how little I knew about what was really going on. I already owned the second book when I started reading the first, and it seemed insane not to read it if I already owned it. I was hoping they would improve, and I wanted to know how the whole series ended.

Truly, I wish I had not bothered. A shocking waste of time.

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## Joe says

This book was a royal mindfuck and I wouldn't have hated it except that the ending was horrible and sucked a barrel of dicks.

That stupid religious lady babbling about the computer star children at the end was one of the fucking stupidest things I have ever read in my life, and I have read a few pages of the Left Behind series.

That having been said there are a couple of really cool explosions, so two stars you get, Mr. Williams. Bravo on at least giving us that much. I guess...

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## Christopher says

Sea of Silver Light is the next book in the series and has our characters finally getting to grips with their opposition and overcoming them! :D This was hinted at and heavily set up in the previous book with the gang encountering the 'Other' directly for the first as well being scattered to a mountain top! :D Understandably this gives and sets a number of big challenges for this book and sets you wondering as to what the characters are going to be put through as the book progresses as the size of the book hints at big things which certainly keep popping up! :D

It is very hard throughout to actually guess what is going to happen to the main characters but the broad gist of the plotline can be guessed but how and what characters will make it through the book are always questions that you find yourself asking throughout! :D Sea of Silver Light is totally unpredictable throughout but the way that the characters and their relationships end up is really great for most of them and Sea of Silver Light has some clever twists at the end both before they manage to leave the network and after which also gets to show us how the characters are up to in the world after their adventures and also adds a lot of light moments such as when they check their bank accounts and find who has survived not to mention the odd sentient life form discovered! :D

Sea of Silver Light makes for a awesome part in the series with you really routing for the characters and also wanting to see the comeuppance for certain characters which eventually does come with some great plot twists! :D

The whole scale of the Otherland reality though forms a great backdrop for many of the plot twists that take place with many of the events set up in the previous books coming to fruition and you will realise as you read how far back some of these things have been set up but there are most certainly plenty of 'Ahha' moments that will have you puzzling over where things will go as well as the books often as they do coming back to the subject of space exploration! :D One of the humorous things throughout the book though is how the 'good' team without realizing it co-opt the Grail Brotherhoods immortality machine essentially without realizing it which lends itself to a lot of humour and also the way certain worlds and other books are liberally used will have you laughing as well which to the characters and the reader comes as a very big relief as at some points the characters are never allowed a moment's break battling various sym worlds so this helps to give some of the characters their just rewards! :D

The addition throughout of chapter beginnings that show the state of general society at the time also puts things into context for many of the characters and you can see society heading that way if companies had their way! :o

Overall will keep you up page turning as you will really want to find out what happens! :D

Brilliant stuff and highly recommended! :D

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### **Jesse says**

No matter how many times I read this (or this, fifth time, listen to it on audiobook) I still fall so hard for this book, and this series, that it's an emotional pain when I get to the end. Not lying - I teared up when I knew I was on the last few paragraphs.

Endless adventure, every permutation of it, all in one story, and with four huge installments, there's a proper amount of time to get in some really deep, satisfying character development, which is exactly what happens. I feel like I'm one of their band, these strange and beloved characters who face Otherland together. I feel like I was there, living every crazy moment with them. And as hellishly dangerous as it was, I didn't want it to stop.

The best books leave you heartbroken that they're over. This is one of those. 3

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### **Ruthann says**

I thought this book was a great conclusion to the series. Usually I don't like it when things get "all tidied up" at the end, however the author did a great job of finishing what he started. This series was a lot of fun to read. There were a few slow points in the middle, but overall the character development, the vernacular and culture invented, and the plot all combined together for a worthwhile read.

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### **Molly Ison says**

Otherland is the first fantasy series that I've finished this year (I've read a few other book #1s with no intention of continuing, including Tad William's own slogfest MS&T). I started a topic that got pretty long many years back about fantasy series that ended somewhere between well and spectacular. It didn't turn out to be a very long list. Otherland isn't going on it. It wasn't terrible, it just wore out its welcome. The least interesting character ended up being the hinge point of the entire plot (which really went off the rails). The main character of the first book that pulled me into the story ended up not actually having much to do, plot-wise. As happens with long series, I kept reading out of curiosity for what happens with book 1 characters while not caring about characters introduced later and finding time spent with a few of the later characters to be an annoying distraction.

If you want to read Otherland, I recommend stopping when the settings and characters start losing their magic. The start of the story depended heavily on a "sense of wonder" advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic, with success, but became repetitive and brought in too many convenient or out of nowhere powers and coincidences too many times by the end.

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## Chris says

At last we have come to the end of our journey, when all will be explained and all will be resolved.

As the book opens, the Other - the operating system for the Grail Brotherhood's mysterious plan for immortality - has been defeated, overcome and overpowered by the truly evil assassin Dread. With his mutant ability to manipulate electronics, Dread has taught the Other how to feel true pain, and now has nearly complete control over the Otherland network. With a nearly limitless number of worlds to choose from, Dread allows his sadistic madness to run wild. But no matter how many worlds he rapes and plunders, there are still those he truly wants to destroy - the Otherland explorers sent by the mysterious half-human Sellars.

But those explorers themselves face greater dangers than Dread. Half of them have been thrust back into the twisted realms of Otherland, where the horrors and dangers that had been built into it have mutated into unrecognizable terrors. The other half... they ended up in the heart of the Other's secret dreams. There they must face the eventual death of the network and survive it, if they can.

Offline, Sellars has brought all of his players into position. Lawyers, children and old women are his army, and together they will uncover the horrible and heartbreaking truth about the nature of the Other and the evil that has been done to it.

I really love this series. As it moves towards its ending, which does involve a lot more explaining than most other books do, it's easy to get swept up in the sheer scale of the narrative. There's a lot to take in by the end of the series, a lot of loose ends to tie up, but it all wraps up rather nicely. More or less. There is a rather major revelation that comes near the end that just kind of... gets written off. I have a sneaking suspicion that Williams might have been able to stretch this series into a fifth book, but it probably would have suffered from Rowling Syndrome - a lot of unnecessary padding in between the important bits.

The important thing is that, by the end of the book you really do feel invested in the world that Williams has created. You care about the characters, and you want everything to turn out all right for them. For the good ones, at least. For the bad ones, you want them to get their just desserts, to see them suffer as they have made others suffer. You even find yourself feeling for the Other, which we - and the protagonists - have always believed to be the main villain of the story. It is not, as we find out, and the scope of the villainy that has been done to it is truly astonishing.

In his forward to the second book, Williams apologized to his readers about the cliffhanger ending to the first. This isn't really four books, he said - it's one giant book that had to, for various reason, be split into four. The main reason, of course, being that no one would print or buy a 3,500 page hardcover, even if the fine folks at DAW Books were willing to try it. He is right, though - it is one very long story, and thus you can extract a great many things from it, if you want to.

There's no one thing that I can say this book is about. In one sense, it is an exploration of the future of the digital world and what it might mean to people. The virtual net of this story would be as alien to us as the internet would be to our grandparents. It has become the sea in which our characters swim, and their main way of interacting with the world. It is only when their ability to go offline is taken away from them that they truly begin to value the world and the identity they've left behind. What's more, it explores how we connect with each other - looking at both the relationships we build in virtual space and the ones we build in the real world, and finding complete validity in them both.



There are issues of identity, best shown by Orlando, whose towering Thargor the Barbarian character hides a young teenager with a crippling illness that will kill him long before he's old enough to vote. His best friend has a slightly less unfortunate secret to share - that behind those big, muscular sim bodies, Sam Fredericks is actually a girl.

The story explores issues of family - how Renie deals with her father, Long Joseph Sulaweyo, or how little Christabel Sorenson's family react when they find out that their young daughter has been drawn deep into Sellars' conspiracy. And the bonds between mother and child that can never truly be broken.

And there are even issues of the very definition of the word "life." If your mind is perfectly copied into a computer, with all its memories and personality intact, is it still you? Are you still human? Are you even alive, in any real sense? The Grail Brotherhood certainly believed so, or they would never have started this project in the first place. But in a system as broad and complicated as the Otherland network, who knows what else might arise to test our definition?

The story is about heroism and history, about love and hate, about the unshakable bonds of friendship and the tenuous reliance on people you despise. It's about the lengths to which fear will drive you and the extremes you will encounter when you test that fear. It's about science and faith and looking at the world in ways you never imagined. It's about good, it's about evil.

It's about life, really, and what it is about life that makes us want more of it.

Now I'm just waxing philosophical. To sum up: this is probably one of my favorite stories in my library. I highly recommend you pick it up, set some time aside, and enjoy it.

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## **Phil says**

The four books of this series took me most of the last 6 months as I honestly found them somewhat of a slog at the beginning. I'm not really sure I would have stuck with it had the series not come highly recommended, but I'm extremely glad I fought my initial instinct. I became increasingly attached to the characters as they encountered the frustration, hope and challenges of an impossible quest in an environment beyond their control. Initially I thought the quest within the virtual world would have been predictable, mundane and full of old fashioned guesswork of future technology advances. What surprised me was not only the accuracy the world parallels the current direction of technology issues facing our society, but also the ability to reign in the technology to match the reality of a not too distant future. For instance there are no flying cars, teleportation, space travel, replicators and so on.

This final book in the series pulled everything together and as one would expect in a 1000 page novel, no stone was left unturned. I always enjoy a good epilogue after the main quest ends and there was certainly lots of explanation to fill in any gaps from the story readers might have had throughout the series. If I have any criticism it would probably be that this series could have been cut down by about 30% in length, however that extra bit of detail arguably gives you intimate insights into the characters and their backgrounds which are usually only touched on in most novels. Ironically, it is quite possible this extra detail was ultimately what ended up pulling me into the series.

I'm quite sure it will be a while before I read another Tad Williams book, but I definitely feel richer for having read and experienced this series.

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## Dev Null says

This is one of the worst books I have ever read.

Its particularly bad because the series started with such amazing promise; the first book is literally brilliant. The next two were pretty mediocre; well-written, but ultimately travelogue-fantasy without any plot. Characters just stumbled from interesting locale to interesting locale and ended up right back where they started from. But this last book is terrible. I was literally shouting out loud in the street when I read the climax, it was that bad. Deus Ex Machina meets the "skillful" plot-twistings of Independence Day bad. I wrote Tad Williams a letter just to tell him it was that bad - something I have never done to another author in my long life full of books. Less than 60 pages from the end of the multiple-thousand-page series, he introduces a new character (hinted at before of course, but never met) who ends up responsible for almost everything that has happened so far. A character whose grand plan is the electronic equivalent of avoiding door-to-door salesmen by throwing yourself in a blender - needlessly, since a skin sample would do - processing the resulting sludge to decode your DNA, writing your DNA sequence down on paper using ancient aramaic in invisible ink, putting that paper in a bottle, and throwing it in the ocean with the hope that someday someone will find it and reconstruct you. Except its less likely to work. Exponentially so.

Its so bad that years later, when I went to go write a review for Shadowmarch (which is really quite good,) just thinking about it made me angry enough to come back and write this.

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## Ricky Ganci says

And with the final volume, Williams loses me. 300 pages of overwritten, tripish, hyper-explained and muddled plot through bizarre fantasy worlds that just seem to be there for the author's enjoyment really pissed me off, and I'm throwing in the towel, feeling like I've wasted the last month of my life reading a story that I've not come to care about in any gorram way. I will not read anything else that he has written, and I cannot see how so many people find this volume of the series to be so uncritically good. This book was a joke—his writing style beat out of me every ounce and every iotus of care that I had for any of the characters, and since I can't find a concise summary of the ending on the Internet, I'm just going to not care at all. I feel let down, pissed off, and REALLY glad that I only bought two of the books at full price. These books did NOT need to be this long. Tad Williams, you're my least favorite fantasy author. Otherland sucks.

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## Mike says

This book, the fourth in a four-book fantasy series, is an amazing example of how a good idea can be stretched and diluted until it is no longer pleasurable to read. There is nothing particularly wrong with the Otherland series. The ideas are interesting, the execution is fairly creative, some of the characters are competently developed, etc. But it is clear that the objective of the author (and the editor/publisher) was to create a large series (measured by the heft of the books and the number of trees killed), rather than to tell a good story.

This could have been a fantastic effort if edited to about a 1000 pages or so. But the padding and

circumlocution required to turn it into four 1000-page books makes reading it annoying. Instead of more things happening, you have the same number of plot events stretched slowly out.

The style of the chapters, in which we return again and again for brief glimpses of the action, only makes the sense of non-action worse.

I will say this - if you were on some kind of long vacation, or holed up in a room for a while, or whatever, and you wanted something to read, this series would kill a lot of time. Otherwise, you have things to do with your life.

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## **terpkristin says**

Audiobook from Penguin Audio

Narrated by George Newbern

Length: 37.75 hours

The finale to the Otherland series, *Sea of Silver Light* wraps up the multitude of story lines that began in *City of Golden Shadow*. While the book dragged in places, and some may find that the book (and the series, especially in the middle books) wanders a bit too much, it is hard not to appreciate Tad Williams' amazingly prescient series, especially if you're a fan of a) the internet and b) classic literature. It's probably safe to say that the wandering will not be for everybody, but for those that enjoy the mystery and the references to other works, the series could be a lot of fun.

A series written in the mid-late 90's, the books cover amazing breadth of topics with a wide cast of characters in this world and in a parallel online world. What started as a cyberpunk story quickly unfolded into a much larger world with many players with significantly different motivations--on all sides of the story. With unlikely/atypical heroes (a South African woman, an African "bushman", a blind woman, two teenagers, a mom, and a guy who doesn't know his own past, not to mention a 5 or 6-year old girl, an ancient man...the cast is huge!) and a sprawling world, it's easy to see why some people are overwhelmed. The more intriguing part, though, is trying to piece together the entire story, trying to figure out who's involved in the world and for what purpose...and what the online world really is. I will admit that when the world was pieced together, it seemed pretty out there...but I was so engrossed that I didn't really mind. The only part I really *did* mind was the end; the book felt maybe a little too neat, and a little too drawn out at the end. That said, it does leave an opening for Williams to return to the world (and looking on Goodreads, it seems as if he may have done just that with a short story in *Legends II*).

It's hard to describe the book and what happened in the series without venturing into spoiler territory. Basically, Renie, a young South African woman who is a sort of professor or teacher of computer engineering-type classes at a local university, finds one day that her brother is in a coma of sorts, a result of playing an online game. Games in the future world that Williams created are played online in a virtual reality simulation type schema, where users have different levels of gear that immerse them (fully or to varying degrees) into a virtual world. Some users go so far as to get neural cannulas, so that they can "jack in" and have the VR system provide a direct link to their brain, become fully immersed. Renie, wanting to try to find out more about how her brother came to be in the coma, went online to try to learn what she could of what he got into. Unsurprisingly, she found herself sucked into and literally stuck in a virtual world, unable to disconnect (sort of like *Sword Art Online*). While there, she meets others who have family members with the same affliction as her brother, and still others who have been recruited by an unknown agent to help Renie

and those who are trying to help their children/family members. In parallel, there is the story of the Grail Brotherhood, a private group of the world's most powerful and wealthiest elite, who wish to achieve immortality, and invest heavily in a system to do so. In a third story line, there is additional intrigue about a psychopath who calls himself "Dread" and seems to seek out ways to torture and kill others, online and in reality. His story ends up weaving and in some ways connecting the Grail Brotherhood and those of the people trying to help the children. Throughout, there are a multitude of worlds created by various users of the online system, many with literary references (such as The Wonderful Wizard of Oz and The War of the Worlds) or other evolving schema (such as a virtual rainforest that actually begins to evolve in the simulation world, similar to how it might have on earth). Williams uses cyberpunk, the idea of virtual/simulation worlds, and some more fantastical elements (some characters have special abilities, particularly abnormal/special mental powers) to weave a tale that leaves the reader picking up puzzle pieces and slowly piecing things together, just as the heroes do in the story.

I'm most amazed at how prescient Williams was. The book was written in the mid-90's, yet there are references to things in the world today, innovations that were barest ideas of science fiction in the 90's. The first and most obvious observation is that the VR world, while more immersive than anything we really have today, is very much akin to the internet of today, with people spending entire lives and making entire livelihoods on the internet. People use tablet-like devices to connect to the networks, to make calls, to shop, to go into their simulation worlds--much like an iPad or other tablet of today. People watch movies on the internet, so-called "Net Flicks" (I really wonder if that's how Netflix's name came to be), and an automated robotic floor-sweeping robot (Roomba, anyone) makes an appearance or two. Kids have "storybook sunglasses" which sound a bit like more immersive (and frankly more fun) versions of Google Glass. Just today, I read an article on Slashdot about body hacking through the vagal nerve, a topic that's actually brought up in the book (as a therapy that is abused, oddly enough). There are other examples, which reading in 2015, are fun nuggets to pick up along the way. It's crazy how forward-thinking this book was, how much it got "right" even for 2015 (I think the book is supposed to take place closer to 2050).

I liked this book and really enjoyed the series. I think that listening was a fantastic way to experience the book, to be able to lay back and shut my eyes and become immersed in the book as the characters are immersed in their world. The narration was (as I've said in my other reviews) great, if a little slow. But that meant that I could speed the book up slightly in the playback, cutting down some of the listening time.

The book (and series) may not be for everyone. I think it's fair to criticize this book for going on a little "too long" or for being a little "too neat," and it's equally fair to think that Book 1 started slow or that books 2 and 3 wandered a bit (they absolutely were "middle books" in a series, which not everybody enjoys). But I still really liked the series. I look forward to reading it again in the future, maybe in a few years, to see how much I can pick up in advance, knowing as I do now, how the book ends.

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## **Susan says**

Compelling characters and a plotline that could be the envy of any writer. Best books I've read in a good while. The teenage netslang was a bit off sometimes, but that's not why I gave the last book of the Otherland series 4 stars - it's the ending. Everybody gets their reward, all the baddies are duly punished :yawn: a bit like Sunday school. It sort of killed the whole story for me.

## **SPOILER**

Did the author absolutely have to resurrect Orlando? He was one of my favorite characters and when Sam dreams about talking with Orlando and then thinks that it's just her talking to herself after all, is one of the saddest moments that I've lived through in literature and I've had my share of books. It breaks your heart without being melodramatic or cheesy. Now all of this moment's drama and depth is taken away and cheapened by a resurrected hologram Orlando at the end, dwelling eternally in his private LOTR heaven and I ask again; was this absolutely necessary? I feel disappointed and a bit cheated. I wouldn't have minded reading a version with the end chopped off.

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