



Wizard's Holiday

Diane Duane

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Rest and relaxation--that's what Nita thinks she's going to get when she and her partner-wizard Kit go on a wizardly "cultural exchange" program. But nothing about wizardry--not even vacation--is ever quite *that* simple!

Wizard's Holiday Details

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Luann says

This series just gets better and better. Diane Duane has some pretty deep things to say about entropy and choice which I found very interesting and will continue to ponder. Most fantasy series don't go this deep while still staying this entertaining and enjoyable to read. I also enjoyed going back and forth between Nita & Kit's story with Quelt on Alaalu and Dairine's story at home with Sker'ret, Filif, and Roshaun. I don't always enjoy books that go back and forth between two different stories, but this one was very well done. I've already been to the library and checked out the next book: Wizards at War.

Amber says

I do have a rather love/hate relationship with this series and this is one of the books that I loved. Although I have a few minor annoyances (chapter length and Carmela) I overall really liked this book, especially as it's aimed towards a much younger audience than me and yet gets so much into it and gives a generally good message to it's readers.

So, in this edition to the series Nita and Kit get to go on holiday, but being wizards there's no such thing as a break from wizardry, everywhere they go at all times there's something that the Powers That Be require of them, only in this instance it's purely choice about whether or not they help out.

Meanwhile back at home Dairine has to take care of some visitors to the planet. Dairine isn't necessarily a character that I like, she's quite egotistical in a way and sees wizardry as a way to have fun, but now she's dealing with her powers declining and so I'm sensing a huge amount of character development from her as well as maturing in her attitude towards wizardry and the others around her.

I really enjoyed the two plotlines happening together and how Nita's and Dairine's plots managed to foreshadow what was happening in each other's plot points while both dealing with something entirely different.

The alien characters were quite delightful, although there's parts of the main characters in the series personalities that I find to be irritating in some ways I find that as they interact with other people and species they grow and expand as characters which is fun to watch happen, they've all changed so much from the start of the series as they're really finding out what it is to be a wizard and the dangers they're putting themselves in.

As always the Lone One appears again in a different form and for once we're given a bit of insight into It. With the help of Nita in a previous book the Lone One is being able to become something different, but how different is It willing to become? I hope to get answers and see the Lone One really start to progress.

Overall this book was a fantastic read with a strong ending to Nita's plotline which was full of emotion, sadly for Dairine's part it wasn't so but I think it's a set up towards something better for her in future books. However, watching Dairine trying to teach alien species about life on Earth really makes up for how her part in this book ended.

Duane's writing of this series gets stronger with each book and I'm totally excited to read the next book in the series.

Nancy says

Dear Diane Duane,

Who told you you could do that? Because you shouldn't be able to do that. Just sayin'.

Much love (and fist-shaking),
Nancy

TerryC says

It was an exception book just like the rest of the series. I definitely would recommend it.

Dixie Conley says

Another good book in this series. In this one, Nita and Kit go on holiday to a paradise planet where people live long, simple lives and die in peace, remaining afterwards as whispers that comfort those left behind. Only problem? They've permanently locked themselves in this state. They can't evolve any further and they need to.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, three alien wizards are visiting. Yes, it's all a big student exchange program. One's a tree, one's a gigantic bug and the other's a stuck up alien prince. Well, you can't have everything. Nita's little sister hates him and is about to send him packing when he points out a tiny little problem -- the sun's about to flare up and melt off one side of Earth. Oopsie!

Of course, both problems get solved and there's derring do and adventures and even lots and lots of walking that made me tired just reading about it. There's also cultural differences, which are probably the best part of this story. What a living tree makes out of a florist like Nita's dad. Or how the bug has to be carefully informed not to eat the plates. Or the tablecloth. Or the table.

It's a fun read.

Linda ~ chock full of hoot, just a little bit of nanny ~ says

The first 70% of this wizard-exchange holiday was everything you'd expect of alien wizards visiting and getting to know other worlds and cultures: good, wacky fun; some clashing of worlds; and nice, relaxing kickback time at the beach. The last 30% proves that there's no such thing as a holiday for our poor wizards.

The pacing did feel a little off on this one, and with Nita and Kit's half of the story in particular, the resolution almost feels like it comes out of nowhere. I'm sure there are hints there that I didn't pick up on, but it felt random.

I did love all the exchange wizards, especially Filif, and even Roshaun grew on me (though he's still a douche). It was great to see Dairine's growth since the start of this series, and in this book particularly as she deals with the massive drop in her power levels and having to do wizardry the "regular" way. Seeing her and Harry get some bonding time after the events of the last couple of books was nice too.

There were a few dangling threads at the end of this, no doubt set up for the next book, and while the main conflicts are resolved, the ending felt abrupt.

This isn't my favorite Young Wizards book, but it's still a lot of fun.

Erin says

My favorite out of the series by a honking mile--not that the others are bad, this one is just that good. It's not often when the A and B plots are almost equally as enjoyable, and the balance here is phenomenal (though I confess to liking Dari's story a bit more than Nita's, simply because I prefer--and relate to--Dari better than Nita). And the Sun Prince? Hoo-yeah.

****Wizard's Holiday, rated 14+, rated 5/5 stars.**

Cheyenne says

While I enjoyed reading this book, I had some very mixed feelings about one of the two main plots in it. I also got a bit confused by some of the details.

The main idea of the story is that Nita and Kit end up partaking in what was explained to be a sort of wizard exchange program; wizards visit other cultures, and in return, their home is used to house exchange wizards from other planets. However, the math of it didn't make any sense to me. I figured Nita and Kit would go to a home where one or two wizards had left, while an exchange wizard would be housed in each of their homes. What actually happened was that three exchange wizards stayed at Nita's house (none at Kit's), and no one on the entire planet Nita and Kit visited left to be an exchange wizard. The math of the whole process felt sloppy and illogical to me, though admittedly, I've never done a cultural exchange program in real life, so I don't know if it's as neat and logical as I expected it to be or not.

Now, the at-home story about the three exchange wizards that stay at Nita's house with Dairine made sense to me and was enjoyable. I liked reading about the different aliens' physiologies and perceptions of Earth; in fact, I would have enjoyed seeing even more of this, as reading about Earth from an alien perspective is a favored trope of mine. However, I didn't much like Nita and Kit's plot line, at all. They are assigned to this tropical paradise of a planet; unlike humans and most other species, the people of this planet actually rejected the Lone Power during their Choice, leading to complete peace, long life, and a lingering presence of spirits after death. The whole planet felt ideal to me, exactly as I wish Earth could be, but Nita kept feeling this nagging sense that something wasn't right, and that idea that some nameless thing was wrong with what

could be considered perfection was really the only thing that pushed the plot forward in the first place (and pretty late into the book, I might add). In the end, they run into the Lone Power (shocked, aren't you?) and It tells them that the Choice these people made stunted their ability to evolve, which It makes out to be much more important than the eternal happiness that they are effectively lounging in. Now, for some reason, Nita and Kit actually agree and immediately begin trying to convince the wizard they're staying with that her people need to give up world peace and long life so that they can stop stagnating (what evolution actually needs to occur when you've already accomplished world peace and long life is beyond me). In the end, it turned out that the evolution that needed to occur was dying and leaving the planet permanently (like we do IRL), and the second that the wizard responsible for this planet accepted this and renounced their Choice, everyone on the entire planet died instantly. What's worse, this was considered a good thing, and Nita and Kit went home feeling accomplished. How messed up is that?

Now, maybe Diane Duane has more religious leanings than I was aware of (with the heavy science influence of her books, I wouldn't have expected that), but as an agnostic who believes there's no way of knowing what will happen after death, it sickens me to think that anyone would believe so strongly in a happy afterlife that they would willingly let themselves die to reach it. These people were capable of living thousands of years in a beautiful and violence-free world and effectively living on a different version of their planet permanently after they "died," as well. They even had proof that their spirits would exist after they died because the dead could still speak to the living to some extent. Yet every single person on the entire planet agreed within what I read to be the span of a few minutes that they would rather give up all that to die and see what's out there. Never in a million years would I have agreed with that decision, but there was next to no dissent whatsoever. And what's worse, this completely undermined everything the series seemed to be saying in the earlier books. The Lone Power is known to be so horrible because it created death and its broader manifestation, entropy, and because it corrupted most civilizations in existence with this poisonous touch. So how can Nita and Kit possibly encourage this death and corruption, especially when not a single soul seemed unhappy with the way things were in this perfect society? If Duane intended to paint the world as a happy-on-the-surface-but-secretly-torture situation, she failed miserably. And Nita also lost her mother a few books back; how she could encourage the death of a whole species without once questioning anything about her decision, I'll never understand.

Anyway, here's hoping the next book is more consistent with the values of the originals.

Rob says

[The really interesting part of this book, to me, anyway, is that it implies that the Lone Power is actually necessary to spur races/civilizations on towards growth. Previous to this, at least in the books I've read of this series, It's invention, death, has been play

Wench says

it's just dusty in here no big i'll get the pledge it's fine

Joan says

This was different in some ways. It was nice to see Dairinne being smacked down by the planetary wizards. And by her coworkers. However, while her ego may have been cut down some, I don't think it affected her basic self confidence. Nita and Kit are sent off on a "holiday" that of course, turned out to be anything but an actual holiday. Dairinne's wizardly guests turned out to be just different enough to drive her nuts....she had to stop one in all innocence from eating part of their house and lets not even think about what happened in the mall. It was a healthy corrective to have a sentient being in the shape of a tree and realize that eating vegetables might be extremely frightening to that person. It made meals quite a challenge when you had to avoid salad like items in order not to horrify a guest! It is also nice to see Dairinne be bested in many ways by a boy....one she can't stand. Or maybe she can stand him, a great deal. She isn't a little girl any more, definitely.

Instead of Duanne's general preoccupation with death, she did the same theme from the opposite direction: is it healthy to have a life on a planet where nothing ever changes and everyone seems happy? Is this truly a good thing? I'm not sure she completely answered her question but then, it is a pretty big question to answer. Perhaps death is better than everlasting sameness with no growth. I see her point but I'm also still missing my Dad and can't emotionally be convinced that unending sameness is necessarily a bad thing. Intellectually I see her point. Emotionally, I'm not sure I am ready for this or will ever be ready.

This may get revised after I let the book sink into my consciousness some more.

Rachel (Kalanadi) says

Dairine's dealing with no longer being the kid wizard prodigy, Kit and Nita feel like real grown ups now, and the wizard cultural exchange program is a brilliant premise. Plus every scene between Roshaun and Carmela is PURE GOLD.

Victoria says

This has to be my favorite of the Young Wizards series, although others come close. The premise, the story, the characters, the places; everything Duane did fantastically in her other books gets stepped up a notch.

While Kit and Nita's journey was strange and eye-opening (and seeing the depths of the Lone One's ambiguous deviousness was fun--especially as a girl this time!) But it has to be admitted; it was the events with the foreign exchange wizards back on Earth that stole the show.

I like watching Dairine's character grow, especially as I thought she was being neglected ever since "A Wizard Abroad". This book gave her a huge chance to do that. But really, we can talk character development all we want. But taking a Christmas tree, a giant purple centipede, and a holier-than-thou alien prince to the mall? It does not get better than this. Filif and Sker'et were a lot of fun, but I think Roshaun was the best newcomer-character. I loved the dynamic between him and Dairine...it was built at just the right pace.

And the climax was breathtaking. Be prepared for cliffhangers galore.

MB (What she read) says

A re-read to prep me for new book coming out soon. I tend to forget just how good Diane Duane's "Young Wizards" series is! Highly recommended for all children and young adults who like to read fantasy.

(I personally think this series is better than Harry Potter and almost on par with Dianne Wynne Jones. Be sure to start with the first one So You Want to Be a Wizard and to read them in order.)

Zach says

One of my favorites in the series so far. It's funny to see something as ordinary as a student exchange program be entirely different with wizardry. Who would expect a giant centipede, a talking Christmas tree, and a prince to be lounging in their living room?

This book probably was the funniest so far. Some of it was in the dialogue, and some in the situation. Picture the aforementioned Christmas tree wearing a baseball cap.

On thing that I thought was cool was how the author developed Roshaun's character. At first he seemed snobbish, but as you got to know him and his past, it all made sense.

Anyway, I enjoyed this book., even though my wife said I read it slowly. (She has read over 5 times the books I have read so far this year.)

Great series.
