



Clarion Review

Fantasy

The Taking of the Dawn: Book Three of the Souls of Aredyrah Series

Tracy A. Akers

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Four Stars (out of Five)

The Taking of the Dawn, the third installment in this exciting series, follows the two main characters, Dayn and Reiv, through parallel journeys as they face evils more powerful than ever before.

In this engaging tale, the comrades have attempted to return to a peaceful life after saving the Jecta population of Reiv's homeland from complete destruction. However, sinister dangers await them. Whyn, the King of Tearia and Reiv's brother, has returned from his fallen state even more corrupt, and Dayn and his clan are once again under persecution from those blinded by fear and bigotry. Dayn and Reiv's courage and faith are tested as they fulfill an ancient prophecy that may be the only way to ensure the survival of their people.

Akers builds on the strengths of her previous novels, creating the strongest and most enjoyable book of the series thus far. Her ability to develop secondary characters that are fully integrated into the novel allow the reader to get to know Falyn and Sheireadan, Dayn's love interest and her brother, and Eyan, Dayn's cousin. Akers also deepens the character of Reiv, allowing him to grow into his role as leader while tempering his earlier selfishness and impulsive nature with more thoughtful behavior. Dayn's character is not yet fully developed, but he exudes more courage and control than in the previous books.

Akers' typical fast pace creates an even higher level of intensity in this novel, and the easy transitions from Dayn's story to Reiv's make for a quick read. Although events spill out one after another, the author allows for subplots outside of the main story arc. By not dwelling on any one plot element in particular, Akers keeps the reader from getting too bogged down in backstory or narrative.

Akers also expands on some of the themes from the first two books as she explores religious and cultural ideology, sexuality, and identity. Through Lorcan, Falyn's terrible father

and the leader of Dayn's persecution, the author makes a strong statement about the wickedness and bigotry that can come from entrenched, unquestioned beliefs. Because this commentary is shown through concrete examples of Lorcan's horrible behavior, readers will most certainly be affected.

Similar to her previous novels, *The Taking of the Dawn* is a great introduction to the fantasy genre. Akers has written another entertaining and exciting story that will captivate teens and adults and leave them anticipating her next book.

Alicia Sondhi