



Icefalcon's Quest

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Chaos reigned in the Eastern Lands: as the fearsome Alketch army mounted siege, the young Prince Tir was snatched from the heart of Dare's Keep. Behind the terror was the depraved, hook-handed general Vair na-Chandros. He had learned that the royal child possessed forbidden wisdom; a secret the bloodthirsty Vair intended to use to conquer the world.

One man posed a threat to Vair's vaunting ambition: the legendary warrior known as the Icefalcon. Banished by his own people and scorned as a barbarian by others, only he could hope to free the boy from Vair's clutches. With his sister Cold Death--a sorcerer whose magic was as sharp as her tongue--the Icefalcon embarked on a dangerous mission of rescue and redemption that would force him to wage his greatest battle . . . for his prince, for his honor, and for all eternity.

Icefalcon's Quest Details

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From Reader Review Icefalcon's Quest for online ebook

Taryn says

Interesting at moments. But awful, can't even finish it.

Douglas Cook says

One of the Darwath series. Icefalcon is a guard at the Keep. He needs to rescue the young Lord of the Keep of Dare, who has been kidnapped. Great adventure. Excellent fantasy genre. The Talking Stars People have some 'early Native American' overtones. [Andre Norton used to do that a lot.] Well worth a read.

First paragraphs

CHAPTER ONE

Had the Icefalcon still been living among the Talking Stars People, the penalty for not recognizing the old man he encountered in the clearing by the four elm trees would have been the removal of his eyes, tongue, liver, heart, and brain, in that order. His head would have been cut off, and, the Talking Stars People being a thrifty folk, his hair taken for bowstrings, his skin for ritual leather, and his bones for tools and arrowheads. If it was a bad winter, they would have eaten his flesh, too, so it was just as well that his misdeed occurred in the middle of spring. The Icefalcon considered all this logical and justified: the laws of his ancestors were not the reason that he no longer lived among the Talking Stars People. All the horror that followed could have been avoided had he minded his own business, as was his wont.

Hambly, Barbara (2011-07-06). Icefalcon's Quest (Darwath) (Kindle Locations 56-63). Random House Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

Joel Flank says

Set two years after the events of Mother of Winter, Icefalcon's Quest begins when the outcast barbarian Icefalcon rescues some travelers from bandits. After returning them to the safety of Dare Keep, his adopted home since the defeat of the Dark 7 years ago, it sets of a series of events in motion which forces Icefalcon to return to the icy tundra of his home. On the trail of a kidnapper, and cut off from his allies, Icefalcon has to deal with an old enemy while avoiding the death sentence which exiled him in the first place.

This sequel minimizes the focus of other characters from the Darwath series. They're present, but in supporting roles at best. This book is all about Icefalcon, finally giving readers information about his background, and putting him to the extreme limits of his endurance, and facing off against some truly dark magics, with only his wits and skills to save him. A great addition to the series, expanding the details of the world, filling in more of the ancient history, as well as geography by detailing the frozen northlands which Icefalcon is from. Everything fits well into the established tone of the world, and the new characters introduces are a good mix of engaging and grounded.

astaliegurec says

The Icefalcon is an interesting enigma of a character throughout Barbara Hambly's "Darwath" series. This book, "Icefalcon's Quest," is designed to flesh out and give the background of the Icefalcon. It's definitely a book that needed writing and actually does a pretty good job of giving us that information. But, unfortunately, the story could have been (and should have been) better. I've got three main problems with it. First, for all that it dumps us right into Hambly's signature despair, it takes fully two-thirds of the book before we even get an inkling of what's happening. Instead, those first two hundred pages are filled with the Icefalcon following Tir. Yes, we're getting all the Icefalcon stuff. But, we're sitting there for all those pages scratching our heads and wondering when the story is going to go someplace. Second, there are just too many gaping holes in what's happening. For instance:

- The wet-work in this book is personally handled by our old pal Bektis, the somewhat incompetent, pompous, and cowardly court mage. He'd never do that.
- We never get an explanation of why Bektis is doing this (especially since he's got a nifty new gadget that should keep him out from under someone's thumb).
- We get almost no explanation of Bektis' nifty tool nor why he would continue using it more than once.
- The rationale we get in the last few pages of the book for the main bad guy doing this is horribly weak.
- It makes no sense that all the resources (and their ability to be used) that the bad guys have were found where they were.

And, finally, it's just silly to think that all those guys with swords and the wizard with the nifty tool would put up with the abuse that the lead bad guy heaps on them. These guys have passed straight through henchman status and are plummeting through minionhood. So, all together, I can only rate the book at an OK 3 stars out of 5. It's good for an Icefalcon fix, but as a story, it's just too weak and drawn out. If Hambly had condensed the first couple of hundred pages down to 50 or so, and then worked some more with the last 150 pages, it would have been better.

The novels in the Darwath series are:

- 1, 2, and 3. The Darwath Series: The Time of the Dark, The Walls of Air, and The Armies of Daylight
4. Mother of Winter (Darwath)
5. Icefalcon's Quest

Libby says

Readers and serious fans of the Darwath world should remember and be tolerant of this fact. Time has passed, both in the real world of the author's life, and in the world of Darwath. Things won't be the same, people won't be the same, and inevitably, the author's style might have evolved and progressed slightly differently. So might her view of how to approach this beloved world and the people in it.

This is the most recent (possibly last) book set in the world of Darwath, which starts with Barbara Hambly's book The Time of the Dark. It is set 7 years after that first book, and distanced by many more years in publication.

Whenever an author re-visits an older series or set of characters, there's this fear of the George Lucas Effect. We're afraid that fans of the older works (such as the original Star Wars trilogy) are going to freak out at us because our newer works (such as the new Star Wars trilogy) will not be carbon copy clones of the first work. They want the same fuzzy bunny feelings they got from the first set! But the fact is, you can never go back. You can't go back.

That is the point of this book, and the style that it's written in is a subtle counter-point. Unlike the other Darwath books, this story does not follow the activities of the two main characters, Rudy and Gil. Instead, time has passed, the little bundle of infant joyful-desire-to-brain-himself-on-concrete prince has grown up. This is his story. This is the story of how a boy became a king.

Altir is 7 or 8 now, and involved in his own terrifying and sometimes creepy sick-making adventure. We get to see a darker side of Barbara Hambly in this book, we get to see the side of her authorship which can coldly and in detail describe gory imagery and scary ideas. She brings a bit of her horror-writing into Darwath. I can see how some people might freak about that, but it's nice to see all facets of a world, just as it's ok with me for Barbara to explore her other authoring skills in the world of Darwath.

Icefalcon's Quest is also the story of how a teenager grew up to become a man. I can't forget, after all, this is Icefalcon's story. Icefalcon was one of those side characters in the original series that has so much potential and strength of personality, that it was inevitable Barbara Hambly would want to write about him! And right now our friend had probably been happy that we were busy talking about Tir and hadn't noticed him creeping soundlessly in the wash over there while he observed us talking. And yea, as he most likely told me with an arrogant sniff: we're not friends.

This book is chock full of the personality of the Icefalcon. I'm thrilled at a peek into his world of the past versus the world as it is now, which intersperses in the main storyline of Tir's adventure. I notice one major difference in this book though. It's a good story, but it doesn't have the depth of philosophical inquiry I'd expect. There's a bit, there is a slight villain-who-is-just-a-victim, but there is no actual villain-who-isn't-a-villain like the other books. It's very black and white, with good guys that should die and bad guys that should not. And helpless nice people trapped in between. The imagination and ideas behind the story are still sharp as one of Icefalcon's daggers, and the depth of characterization, along with meeting new people, more than make up for my complaint about the lack in the last novel, Mother of Winter.

But remember, this book will be different. Rudy and Gil and Alde are left behind. In fact, they keep it with all its petty issues and citizenry are ignored in the background of this story. People who get caught up and play victims of the George Lucas Effect forget that we can never go back in time and become the people we were when we first read the Darwath stories. Likewise, Barbara Hambly should not be forced to live her life in a stasis field, denied the right to evolve and adapt her created world to suit new techniques, styles, and ideas as she herself has been changed by life. And as the book makes clear, even Tir can never go back unchanged to his home, his mother, his step-father, and half-sister. Life will be different. Life changes us. The only true death is a stagnation and lack of purpose. Even impregnable and seemingly solid things like a keep can be destroyed. That is the point, of the story, and also the book itself.

Horus says

Again, another well written novel in the Darwath series, focussing almost entirely on what was previously a secondary character. I could see the interest in him from the previous books, so I didn't mind the change of perspective. I was minorly perturbed by what seemed to be, to me, some contradictions in his behaviour that smacked of not quite having his personality thoroughly meshed out before writing, but it didn't, overall, detract from the enjoyment of the story.

rivka says

While I generally enjoy Barbara Hambly's books, trying to read this one was like slogging through half-frozen treacle. Sticky, annoying, and impossible to move forward.

Tess says

The Icefalcon was one of the more interesting characters from the Darwath books, so it was nice to be able to spend more time with that character and see some things from his perspective.

In this book we meet the Icefalcon's big sister, who is pretty bad-ass, and I wish there had been more of her in the book.

The flow of the pacing was a little weird in some parts of the book, but overall I really enjoyed it.

Eleanor says

I liked this quite a bit. It was interesting to see more about Icefalcon's people. The way their culture and language reflect back on each other was neat.

The descriptions of people in the duplication box is utterly horrific. It was well done though and I think necessary. It would be too easy to side step the awfulness since the victim 'survives'. It was still terribly vivid.

I read this when a song with lyrics about "In the real world" was on a lot. It was a little surreal :)

Heather says

This is at least the 2nd time I've read this book, possibly the 3rd. I enjoyed the whole Darwath series, but Icefalcon's Quest is my favorite by far.

The Icefalcon is such a romantic character - a young man, a loner, exiled by choice from his people as a teenager but still following their ways, aloof and alone but developing a few close friendships and carrying the torch of unrequited love for another Guard. He joins the Guards because he wants to learn to fight like them, and stays because he enjoys the work and the company. He has extraordinarily high standards for

himself, to the point where he intimidates most people. But he can be unfailingly kind to others, even understanding.

Despite being a loner he's wise in his own way, telling a lost and frightened child that "Everyone has to go back... Sometimes when we have been hurt, betrayed, sometimes when we think we have brought our ill down upon our own heads... It is difficult then. Sometimes it takes a long while to turn around and face what we fled. We don't even need to defeat it. But we must be willing to look at it once again." He spends 10 long years as a Guard, thinking all the while that he wants to go home again, fight his rival, and take his rightful place as a leader for his people. But when faced with the actual choice, he decides against it. His sister tells him that he's not the leader his people need, and he listens to her. He chooses happiness - his own and his people's - over pride.

My favorite bit might be when the hero of this adventure tale wins the big battle by... telling a story. Icefalcon was raised in an oral history culture where made-up stories are laughed at if not considered dangerous. All the important information is about where herds graze, what the stars looked like the year of the big rains, bloodlines for their horses, etc. Instead of telling stories around the campfire, his people recite those facts and knowledge. So when Icefalcon finally spins a tale, it's much more than a simple story, it's a major break from the traditions and teachings of his people. That's when he truly makes the leap from the culture he was raised in to the culture he's chosen for himself.

Mary says

Final book in the Darwath series...not as well written and structured as the others in the series but worth reading... Fills in the story of the Icefalcon and how he came to leave his people to live in Dare Keep.....basic story has young Tir kidnapped w only Icefalcon able to follow... Parts of story are a bit contrived.....almost as if the author didn't quite finish fleshing it out but wanted to finish it so used the artifice of spirit walking to reach the conclusion...

Seth Gille says

I found the world and side plot quite well done. The detail and plot are effectively done, but the main plot, Ice Falcon's, is too distracting and oddly presented for any proper, fluid read. I found myself unable to keep any flow going trying to follow the storyline. I'd be at the Keep of Dare following what was happening on their end, and all was good; then, I'd be back with Ice Falcon trying to take his world seriously. It never worked. I couldn't get behind someone who speaks with Smells Like Toast and Black Water. I know those aren't the actual names they use, and I realize he's essentially a First Nation's character. It was neat to view the world through his mind where time is charted by the time the river froze and back when the trees burned, but I couldn't take his storyline presented in such a fashion seriously. I just lost all flow gained while reading the Keep progress. It made for a very disjointed and unsatisfied reading experience. The description was nice, and the attempt and motivation to present this unique view of the Darwath world is worthy of two stars, but that's all it gets. This novel just doesn't get close to the skill I found in the Time of the Dark series up to to this point.

Derek says

I could really be a fan of Barbara Hambly, if only she would write more in her own worlds instead of writing for the Star Wars franchise.

Still, this rather loses its way. Having started with a war between humanity and some subterranean alien presence in *The Time of the Dark*, and ended the war in *The Armies of Daylight*, Hambly seems to have rather lost her way — or perhaps to just be writing in the vein of her Star Wars contributions. All her fans no doubt did want to know more about Icefalcon, but this didn't really draw me in.

Kate says

There were some good ideas in this book, but both this and *Mother of Winter* don't have the energy and cohesiveness that the original *Darwath Trilogy* does.

This story is seen from the Icefalcon's perspective, and whilst it starts off being interesting, I really miss Ingold, Rudy, Alde and Gil. This milieu is just not the same without their banter and interchanges. Icefalcon is far too humourless.

Also, what is it with Hambly's fascination with demons? There were no demons in the first three books and all of a sudden, the *Wath* acquires the same sort of demons as the *Dragonsbane* and *Sun Wolf* worlds. This is actually a shame, because the thing that made the *Darwath* books so special was their individuality.

M.A. Kropp says

One of the stand alone novels set in the same world as Hambly's *Darwath* trilogy, *Icefalcon's Quest* centers on the Icefalcon, who has been cast out of his barbarian nomad tribe and now lives at the Keep of Dare. He is one of the elite Guard and a trained warrior who still keeps his native code of honor, often at odds with the more civilized society he has chosen to live in.

In this story, a rogue mage infiltrates the Keep and kidnaps young Prince Tir. Tir, as heir to the royal line, has the race memories of his people, although the flashes he gets are not always clear or easily interpreted. His kidnappers plan to use those memories to unlock the secrets of a lost, ice-buried Keep and use the knowledge to conquer the land. Icefalcon, blaming himself for not recognizing the disguised mage, sets out to rescue Tir. His journey brings him back to his native land, where he must face his past, as well as try to safeguard the future.

As with any of Hambly's works, this is an enjoyable read. The story flows well, with conflict, tension, and both inner and outer struggle. The turmoil that eight year old Tir faces is intense and frightening. Vair na-Chandros is chillingly evil, if a little one-dimensional. He doesn't appear to have any redeeming qualities, although that characterization fits him well, and makes him a frightening adversary. The mage Bektis is both

daunting and vulnerable as he tries to hide his few weaknesses from na-Chandros. Other characters are given enough personality to make them real and interesting.

By far, the most fascinating character in the Icefalcon. Introduced in the original Dawarth trilogy, he is a bit of an enigma. His outlook and apparent lack of emotion can be off-putting at first, but if you pay attention to his background as it is slowly revealed, it becomes clear that the Icefalcon is a far more complex and intriguing character than he might seem. His journey is not only one of adventure and the rescue of Prince Tir, but also an internal struggle with who he is. He comes face to face with himself and the choices he's made, conscious or not. Icefalcon was one of my favorite characters in the Darwath sagas, and is even more so after reading this book.

The story takes place in the same basic geographical area as the earlier trilogy, although here the rescue mission takes Icefalcon and company farther into the approaching glaciers. It is not necessary to have read the earlier books to read this. There are some references to the earlier stories, but the pieces given are enough to fit the background in without needing to know every detail. The main characters in the early stories, Rudy, Gil, and Ingold are not a main part of the tale, although they do appear. Icefalcon's Quest is a tale that stands on its own quite well.

I very much enjoyed Icefalcon's Quest. It is another well written, fluid story, and a solid choice for fantasy fans.
