



Passage

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Fawn and necromancer-patroller husband Dag seek solutions to the perilous split between their peoples, joined by her brother Whit, two novice patrollers, a flatboat captain searching for her vanished father and fiancé, a shrewd backwoods hunter, and a farmer boy unintentionally beguiled by Dag's growing magery.

Passage Details

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Author : Lois McMaster Bujold

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From Reader Review Passage for online ebook

Katie says

Dagger Knife and Baby Deer and the Continued Adventures with THE GHOST HAND

I do love me these Grey Jedi stories

I love everyone on this boat

Grillables says

I generally love Bujold, but this series just isn't for me. In this third book of the series, the pacing is slow, the protagonist can do no wrong, and the lovey-dovey bits make me wince. On the other hand, the characterizations are generally very fine (as always with Bujold). One more in the series to go, and then hopefully she'll be on to things that I find more appealing.

Cody says

I really enjoyed this series! Great story and nice character development and interactions. A lot to be learned about prejudices and trying to overcome them for the good of the whole.

Lightreads says

Book three in this romance-fantasy quartet with the cross-cultural marriage. Okay, maybe . . . maybe there's a reason you don't see much midwestern-influenced fantasy out there?

Wait, no, I'm being cheap. See, here's the thing:

Dag said more slowly, "He was just an ordinary patroller, before his knife got broken. But if ordinary folks can't fix the world, it's not going to get fixed. There are no lords here. The gods are absent."

Putting aside that this is an incredibly disingenuous thing for Dag to say, considering he's spent the series developing his unexpected magic powers. She's written books about lords and books about gods, and in theory I'm all on board for a universe that changes up those power discourses. It just turns out, I don't particularly want it to be *this* universe, where the solution to the world's troubles appears to be a thought just a few notches above 'can't we all just get along.' And also a universe where Dag calls Fawn "child" when they're in bed, argh argh argh! Where was I? Oh, right. There's homespun wisdom, sure, but mostly these are truths so simplified, they've lost all their density for me.

I suspect someone raised in this dialect, in the region that inspired these landscapes and this river, would find

more here. I . . . didn't.

Scott Marlowe says

Rating

Review

*** This review originally appeared on Out of this World Reviews. ***

Passage is the third book in Bujold's Sharing Knife series. It is a continuation of the story begun in *Beguilement* and *Legacy*. In *Legacy*, Dag and Fawn come face-to-face with the bigotry of Dag's Lakewalker clan. Near driven out, Dag chooses to leave instead. But he does so with a mission in mind: to heal the rift between Lakewalker and farmer.

On one level this mission of Dag's is a personal one: acceptance of each of the peoples amongst the other would grant his marriage a greater acceptance. On another level it is a matter of long term survival for all. Because there is little communication between Lakewalker and farmer, the scourge of their land, called malices, could potentially run rampant someday because farmers remain ignorant of the early warning signs. It is with the intention of educating farmers of the malice danger that Dag sets out from his home with his wife, Fawn.

They hire themselves out to a flatboat boss, Berry, and Dag begins his journey of farmer healing and enlightenment. They are joined by two other Lakewalkers and a motley lot of farmers/riverboat-types who are drawn to Dag and Fawn's mission in their own individual ways. Much of the story focuses on this personal quest of Dag's and how, in the process, he also develops his 'ground' (magic) to a level not hereto seen in the world.

That bears some explanation: in Lakewalker society an individual is chosen early on for a specific vocation based upon the promise of their ground. Such vocations include patroller, medicine-maker, ground-setter. The principal responsibility of the Lakewalkers is patrolling the lands in search of malice; most Lakewalkers are selected as patrollers. But some others who demonstrate a greater degree of 'groundsense' may become medicine-makers or, even further, ground-setters, able to manipulate almost any material. Dag has already spent most of his life as a patroller by the time we meet him in *Beguilement*. In *Passage*, he begins to experiment with his groundsense and, aided by Fawn's knack for seeing things from her own unique perspective, finds that he has the ability to bridge the gap between patroller, medicine-maker, and ground-setter.

Passage is a good book. It's well-written, flows evenly, and possesses a myriad of interesting yet believable characters. But it also stumbles a bit in its singular purpose. Dag's quest is fun to follow, but it becomes too much of the story or, really, the entire story. Not until the end, when Dag must face a renegade Lakewalker and the mayhem he's caused, does the storyline break away into new territory. In short, I felt *Passage* would have benefited from a bit more going on. There is some mystery in the form of Boatboss Berry, whose family has disappeared somewhere downriver, but it's not enough.

In summary, Bujold doesn't disappoint in once again delivering a folksy tale with plenty of interesting and intriguing characters and magic. In the end, though, *Passage* could have used an injection of something more. Regardless, I'm looking forward to the conclusion of Dag and Fawn's journey in book four, *Horizon*.

Jeffrey says

This is the third book in Bujold's Dag and Fawn series and to my mind the best. Bujold is a fine writer and she has created a very interesting world. Dag is a Lakewalker exile and Fawn is his farmer wife. In earlier volumes in this series we learned that Lakewalkers, are hunters of evil Malices. The Malices are demons/aliens who kill and enslave people and grow and grow eating people's souls. The Malices cannot be killed by ordinary humans. The Lakewalkers discovered that if you stab a Malice with a knife that contains the soul of dead Lakewalker, it can kill the beast. The Lakewalkers use their ground sense to hunt Malices down and to heal their own folk, but they do not want to share their knowledge with others because it is a sacred trust. But their separation has allowed evil rumors to spread about them and they are profoundly misunderstood and mistrusted by the farmers and other non Lakewalkers. On the otherhand the Lakewalkers look down on the farmers and others with some contempt.

Dag who is married to Fawn has left his home camp and seeks a way to bridge the gap between the farmers and the Lakewalkers. Dag is also learning how to use his ground sense, which is very powerful and makes him a powerful healer. In this volume, he and Fawn and Fawn's brother Whit join together with Boss Berry, a captain of a river boat and her remaining family for a trip down a river for trade and adventure and so Dag can seek to help the farmers he encounters to better understand Lakewalkers. The trip is very eventful and Dag will have to use all of his resources to learn how his ground works. Moreover, various people from both Lakewalkers and non will join together on the boat.

As others have said, you cannot read this book without having read the prior books, but this is definitely the best.

Valerie says

This was better than the second one, I felt the characters and background were more interesting. The research that went into the river boats was fascinating, and I enjoyed the author's note on her sources.

Brownbetty says

I keep on reading Bujold's *Sharing Knife* books, because I keep on expecting Bujold to suddenly stop sucking and go back to being awesome.

This is not the book in which she does that, and yet...

To be honest, the problem with these books is not that they're bad, but rather that they're by Bujold, and they're not very good. I described them to Karen H. as a good book to take along on a long bus ride if you wanted to get your knitting done. However, I think if you took this book on a long bus ride, your knitting would not get done. This is not precisely *high* praise, and yet I did find this entry in the series more

compelling than the previous two.

It has all the problems of its predecessors, of course: Fawn remains too wise for her years, and the action in the book sort of drags. But, in this one, I think Bujold has finally gotten to the part of the story she was looking forward to, and it does actually become interesting in a purely "what happens next?" sort of way.

I'm not saying anyone should go out and read the first two to get to this one, it's certainly not worth it, but if you've read the first two and were wondering if you ought to inflict this one on yourselves, I would cautiously recommend it. It may make you feel that the effort in reading the first two was not entirely wasted.

Elar says

This book is good example that you can write a good adventure story with no particular goal in sight. This book is like startup. Main character is highly qualified professional in its field - patrolling and eradicating malices. He sees opportunity to disrupt market to bring new and more effective measures into being, freeing resources and cutting costs (mainly count of dead people). But of course market does not want to change. So he does some R&D to get workable MVP ready to deploy everywhere. He has some success and of course he also makes some mistakes, but as a good leader he tries to learn and innovate. With a ease he gathers team of capable people to help on his quest to make a world better place. Main character is not out for profit and in some cases helps on Pro Bono basis, but when needed more aggressive methods are deployed with a hostile takeover and dismantling of competing ventures.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

This is the third book in Bujold's SHARING KNIFE western frontier-flavored fantasy series. We're finally getting away from relationship drama here, as the plot takes our main characters, Dag and his wife Fawn, along with Fawn's sometimes callow brother Whit, down the ~~Mississippi~~ Grace River to the sea, experiencing life on a flatboat with a few adventures along the way. There are some interesting hints that this is an alternate version, or perhaps a post-apocalyptic version, of our world. Dag is still trying to figure out his magical powers and how to bridge the gap of suspicion and misunderstanding between his people, the Lakewalkers, and Fawn's, the non-magical farmers.

It's a rather leisurely trip down the river, with a few sandbars and shoals but not much in the way of rapids, both physically and metaphorically speaking. The pace doesn't really pick up until the last quarter of the book, about a hundred pages from the end(view spoiler). But Bujold writes well, and the river journey storyline and characters kept my interest.

I'm not big on May-December romances, and this is a major one, but I can forgive a lot where the issue isn't glossed over and the book actually deals with the difficulties that their relationship creates ... although here the biggest stumbling block isn't the age difference between Dag and Fawn (which is substantial -- she's about 19 and he's in his 40s, I believe) but the problems inherent in a mixed marriage between a farmer and a Lakewalker. Also, I think the overall story has been improved by not having their romance be the focus of the novel: their relationship is a very minor subplot here. The main focus is on their relationships with the people around them, the mistrust between the Lakewalker people and the farmers, and Dag's developing

magical skills.

I'll read the last book in the series, though unless the overall pace picks up I'm liable to do a little skimming. ETA: The last book was actually excellent, so if you've made it this far with the series, it's definitely worth finishing up.

Margaret says

Jo Walton had an interesting post on Tor.com a couple of weeks ago, about types of series, which helped crystallize some of my thoughts on why this series didn't quite work for me. It seems as though it's meant to be a series like *The Lord of the Rings*, which is essentially one book broken up into separate parts for publishing; in fact, if I recall correctly, the first two books of *The Sharing Knife* were presented as one book broken up. However, the overall feel of the series is more like what Walton calls "style two", in which there is an overarching story arc to the series, but each volume has its own story arc and closure. The problem I had is that each volume doesn't have quite enough story arc and closure; there's all too much journeying and too little action.

My other major problem were the characters, especially Dag and Fawn, the two main characters. They're from two different cultures, and essentially the books are about how they first fall in love and become a couple, and then how they start to reconcile their separate cultures. But I found both of them too perfect to be truly interesting after the initial romance part: Dag is too noble, Fawn is too cleverly intuitive, always coming up with exactly the right suggestion. I felt as though they needed some balancing imperfections to make them more real (as Miles Vorkosigan feels real: brilliant, but with serious challenges). There's insufficient cost for the resolution to feel satisfying; nobody really loses much, and I never felt as though anyone was in real danger (again unlike the Vorkosigan books).

What I did love was the worldbuilding, which is always one of Bujold's strengths. Here she gives us a frontier setting, like the American Wild West, where Dag's people are those who live with the land while Fawn's people are farmers. The magic is nature magic, the enemies (the malices) are like primeval, malevolent forces of nature. Interestingly, there are hints that the world itself developed from a more classically fantasy world, with kings and nobility.

I don't want to be too negative here, because I did enjoy the books, or I wouldn't have read all four of them, and I really loved the world. I just don't think they're Bujold's best work, though I'd love to see her return to the world and do something else there.

Carolyn F. says

Audiobook

I keep forgetting how young Fawn is. I like how the Lakewalkers aren't shown as completely good and the farmers mostly bad. Sad middle imagining what happened to the father and the rest of the crew. Enjoyable book/series. I'm planning on reading more of the series.

Krista says

This was the best book of the series so far.

Marijan says

In all of the three books I've managed to read so far, Louis has managed to add something new to the story, some new twist, new protagonists, new surroundings. The only downside I could find for this one was that the heroes had it a bit too easy. And that Fawn is a little too clever for her age. But it was still interesting and captivating reading

Rachel says

This book continues the story of Dag and Fawn; they're married and have essentially been kicked out of Dag's home, and are heading into the great wild world to see the sea, and maybe to find something to do with their lives. The focus of this book changes a bit... Dag and Fawn are still at the center of it, but rather than telling their story, this book starts to show how they can change the world around them. Over the course of the story, they start to build something new; a nomadic group of mixed Lakewalkers and Farmers, who understand each other and play to each other's strengths.

I really like this series. It's very slow and calm, and not very convoluted, so a big departure from Bujold's other books, which overflow with frenetic energy for the most part. The story is somewhat predictable, but not so much that it's annoying to read -- you know what they're going to do, but not exactly how, and the whole series is making the point that it's not the destination, but the journey, that's interesting. She's already written the fourth one, and I'm looking forward to reading that one too.

But I want another Miles book, darnit!
