



Peril's Gate

Janny Wurts

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Where there is light, there must always be shadow... The fourth volume in Janny Wurts's spectacular epic fantasy, now re-released with a striking new cover design along with the rest of the series.

The curse that hangs over the Master of Shadow, Arithon, and Lord of Light, Lysaer, is drawing the two half-brothers ever closer towards direct conflict. For the Natural Balance to be maintained, the two must never fight. If they do, one is sure to perish and the Mistwraith will regain its evil power over their world.

Even now, Lysaer – convinced of his own godhead and aided by the treacherous Koriani Sisterhood – is tracking Arithon the Masterbard through the snows and wastes of the winter-locked mountains and the Barrens of Daon Ramon. Arithon is tortured by the knowledge that for the sake of future generations he must not be killed, no matter the cost of others' lives now. Fighting valiantly to prevent unnecessary suffering, he strikes out on his own; but he is injured and failing fast.

Meanwhile, the ancient Paravians are stirring, summoned by trespassers on their sacred domain; and the Fellowship of Seven are battling on many other fronts, as the Mistwraith's wards begin to break, and khadrim and free wraiths roam the land...

Peril's Gate Details

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From Reader Review Peril's Gate for online ebook

Bill says

Exhaustion... That is how I feel after finishing this book. I don't think anyone could remain unaffected by the final chapters of the novel.

From one point of view this part of the book, written in a new style, is a good summary of events concerning Arithon from all the prior books. From a more important POV it looks at these from another angle, that of Arithon facing himself and facing his character flaws and prior actions and choices. Being forced to do this by a spell or magic which rips away all self protections and delusions would leave any of us as raw and helpless as a newborn who could not survive without others help.

I was reminded of Luke's failure when he faced himself on Degoba in the Dark side cave. I was reminded of the 4th and 8th steps in 12 step programs when one has to face oneself and consider how he harmed others. I was reminded of the goals of classical psychoanalysis and "owning your own shadow".

It was very well done and provides many insights of what has gone on before, but as I said is an exhausting read which cannot possibly be comprehended in one reading, at least by me. It has also caused me to look at myself yet again. It's all scary and painful and full of Peril.

All that said, I am looking forward to finding out Arithon and Davien cook up together.

Canto ergo sum

Sandra says

A brilliant scintillating climax of a book as each battle Arithon must face, whether with his half brother, or with the Koriani, or with the myriad of characters and forces along the way stops my heart in fear that he will be killed or destroyed. His beloved Elaira is with him in spirit as he faces the most grueling trial ever - Kewar's Maze. Here he faces the most fearsome enemy ever -- himself -- and finally comes face to face with a mighty centaur. All others have died in this maze, unable to come to grips with the consequences of their own behavior.

I repeat - Mistwraith is an incredibly compelling, action filled, gut wrenching, heart stopping adventure with one of the loveliest love stories I've read in a long time.

ETA: As usual reread reveals more under layers of meaning. I'd forgotten Davien admits his incitement of the rebellion against the high kings was his Haven, with no more successful results.

David says

Good lord, water sheds of weeping in this one, it's a wonder anything got done for all of the crying. Then there's the series recap in the last 200 pages, including the stuff you just got done reading in the previous 600

pages, now with bonus weeping on top of the previous weeping.

Olivia says

4.5 Stars, but I might turn this into five stars upon a re-read.

Wurts isn't an easy author to read, especially not for a non native speaker. She demands attention to detail. It's not a 'bus book,' and not a 'just before you fall asleep book' either. Wurts' prose is dense, complex, and her plot and her characters' motivations reveal themselves slowly, and sometimes I feel like every single word in this series has a specific purpose.

The world building is spectacular, and there's centuries of history, dozens of races, and so much to discover...

This is epic fantasy at its best, and I highly recommend that any fan of the genre pick it up and stick with it. It's worth it and incredibly compelling.

Lucinda says

Another triumphant success...

Peril's gate book three of Alliance and light (a volume of the wars of light and shadow), exceeded and surpassed all expectations once again as this epic saga continues. I was blown away by the sheer originality and creativity that was on a par with JRR Tolkien in regards to its uniqueness and vastly detailed plot that was a delight to behold. This compelling book I was unable to put down as I lost myself within its pages that were full of outstanding individuality, on such an epic scale as to overwhelm one entirely. This striking volume stands out on any bookshelf with a cover illustrated by the author herself who brings her own creation to life in full, vivid color before your very eyes. If you enjoy bloodthirsty, atmospheric battle scenes mixed with sorcery and powerful magic then the wars of light and shadow will impress you, being a concoction of Kate Elliot and Robin Hobb; it really is sword and sorcery at its very best.

Lysaer and Arithon are half-brothers brought up by mages in a world that is harsh, bloody and quite cruel. One bears the power of the light whilst the other commands the darkness; hence together they defeated the Mistwraith but at a terrible price. Now Lysaer must bring down Arithon the master of shadow, who received a curse by the deadly mistwraith all that time ago. With intense, thrilling battles the dispute between both brothers deepens as one tries to save the delicate balance of the world and keep the fellowship of sorcerer's in tact. Elaira the enchantress holds Arithon's heart in her hands hence she has to make the ultimate sacrifice; to betray the one whom she loves to Koriani Prime for their own gain or to rebel against her own order.

Full of passion, energy and fast-paced thrilling action this tale gets better and better with each new volume, where the drama and narrative grows in intensity with every page. The truly unique, original storyline is so unpredictable as to make you want to read on, leaving you sat on the edge of your seat whilst it builds up to a striking and magnificent climax that astonishes. This is an exhilarating, thrilling read that is full of electric tension and suspense evoking the fantasy genre brilliantly with the added mixture of sorcery, magic and myth as to spark your imagination. I did not want this tale to end hence I went to then read book two of the

series and continue on the journey, delving back into Janny's world feeling as if I was back home with something so familiar and memorable. This really is a remarkable read that has left a very large hole in my heart, being something that I shall now treasure. Outstanding and original this series is so distinctive and unique, that is a truly timeless tale. Absorbing and beautifully written many fans of other recognizable works of fiction within this genre will love the wars of light and shadow, especially those readers like myself who enjoy Raymond E Feist's work some of which Janny Wurts is co-author of. I cannot enthuse enough about an author who shall remain one of my favorites, being full of creative vision and depth of feeling that is quite incredible. Here is a writer who puts herself into her work, which when reading it is like seeing into her very soul that is full of emotion and inventiveness that is truly inspiring.

Amelia says

Every time I finish one of these books, I am so amazed at the level of writing, the depth to the characters and the ideas that keep my mind reeling for days after finishing. This is one of the best books and series I have read in a very long time.

In this, the sixth installment of the Wars of Light and Shadow, the story picks up right where it ended in the previous book, Grand Conspiracy. Arithon is on the run with Fionn Areth and Dakar. He ends up separating from his two companions and must continue his desperate journey alone. Following Arithon on this journey was one of the most heart wrenching times I've experienced. He has to go through so many trials and hardships, each time losing a little bit of his lead and his heart.

Meanwhile we get to see Elaira truly shining, showing forth an amazing courage and strength. She is a very strong character and I have really come to love her. The Fellowship Sorcerers are also very busy trying to correct the imbalance created in the last book.

This is a riveting read. It kept me on the edge of my seat, tears in my eyes and absolutely enthralled in the story. There are some beautiful scenes in this story that make the read so very worth every second.

Can I say it again, an amazing book!

Mawgojzeta says

I have held off on reviewing any of the books in this series because I wanted to make sure it maintains quality (with Janny Wurts as the author, I was not all that worried). I have come across several longer series over the years that hit book 5, or 6, or whatever, and just fell flat. Sometimes I have even caught discrepancies because the author could not (or did not) keep track of something mentioned in, for example, book #1. Not the case here at all.

This series is top notch. All the comments that follow would apply to all of the previous books in the series, as well as this one.

1. The attention to detail is perfect, yet never overwhelms.
2. The writing style and choice of words are wonderful; so intelligent and rich. It makes my brain happy.
3. The world created is one you cannot help but become immersed in. This is a fully realized world.
4. Fast readers (like myself) will benefit greatly by slowing down. Janny Wurts does not use filler these books. There is a good chance that if you skim through a few paragraphs, you will miss something important and it that will take away from your experience at some point later on.
5. If this sounds scary, do not worry!!! This is not heavy writing; it will not seem like work. It is full writing and very fulfilling reading.

I highly suspect that this will become my favorite series, once finished.

Daniel says

First book in the series I rated five stars. This is the sixth book in the series, and each book has gotten better and better. Full disclosure, had I read Curse of the Mistwraith, the first book in the series, outside of a Goodread BR I might have never continued to the second book. That would have been a tragedy. I cannot wait to read the next book and even more importantly, cannot wait to reread the entire series!

This is full bore epic fantasy with a breadth and depth rarely seen. I had a certain amount of trouble in the beginning of the series with information overload. Until book three I pretty much didn't have any characters I really cared about, BUT the story just kept getting better and better. I will say that if you want a mindless read this series is not for you. However, if you want books that will challenge all your personal precepts and will make you think, then the War of Light and Shadow is truly great!

Alissa says

Whole series spoiler free

Awesome ending to an awesome book. I have finished Peril's Gate so I am slightly more than half-way through the series and seamlessly enjoying the journey so far. The latest developments of the story really prompted me for a look back at the series from where I am. I loved the series and I had high expectancies, but the emotional impact of this book, along with the revelations, the grim, the hope, the brutal pace and the unforeseen twists of the story, all served with a gorgeous writing style, had me totally, utterly and helplessly enraptured.

This is a series that sticks, within. And I don't think time will prove me false (to date, I'm reading Stormed Fortress, the end of the Alliance of Light Arc, I am basically devouring the pages, and decided to finish this review before adding too many layers of impressions). Peril's Gate, which is both deep and fast-paced, triggered all sorts of considerations.

I guess this is the “tipping point” in the Alliance of Light Arc where the story starts to run back over itself in bigger and bigger ripples, where the unveilings are moving all the markers (yet again, last time was Fugitive Prince where the conflict acquired a worldwide scope and the stage was set accordingly) and shift my perspective as reader, at the same time as things pick up speed, going forward. Also, all the books offer both action-packed scenes and more explanatory chapters that deepen the knowledge and the mystery. This style

adds to my enjoyment immensely. Immediately after this book I've read Traitor's Knot and the story is even intensifying into convergence with no letup in pace. Wurts has proven herself a master of suspense, the delivery is there, and with each title in the series, it builds tighter and faster.

Original, trope-upending and clever clever clever plot. The story is clearly not linear, it progresses in spirals and the reader's viewpoint of events continues to rise and deepen, and to re-form the prior awareness; Peril's Gate proves the point with stark clarity, this kind of folding back on the threads to open up more information the further one reads requires some focus, and this progressive shifting of the vantage narrative technique relies on the fact that all the previous books have been read. Being on lookout for nuances while going with the story flow is one of the many layers of entertainment I love in this series, all the more now, because I'm aware there are many subtleties at play, of different nature (this adds to the game immensely). The story spans many years and it's divided in logical Arcs, but the access point I would recommend in hindsight is, indeed, book 1, The Curse of the Mistwraith. Or, for a twist, this very same book, Peril's Gate, where the convergence hits most heavily. The long range nature of this tale is truly truly amazing, the longer I read, the more rewarding the experience gets.

Harmony and balance. The story can really verge on the grim, bleak and bloody, but it is always, if not outright, followed by transcendence and even the grittiest subjects, handled with the gloves off, integrate with artistry and purpose. This goes for the bright and humorous facets as well. Wurts does not want to shock graphically, but she successfully evokes the reader's emotions to experience the story for himself, and the series draws off the full spectrum in human outlook, there is beauty and horror, grace and downfall - the full balance is present.

The world of Athera is very deep, very high, and restricted by a precise compact from certain kinds of development. If I ever thought to miss multiple continents full of different flavors of strife (which I didn't in this case), it becomes clear there is a reason for the selective focus, particularly the avoidance of story loose ends (no sprawl!) and the complex, huge worldbuilding which lends solidity to Athera itself. Peril's Gate shows quite clearly why many aspects of the world were disclosed very gradually, even if the workings of, say, the Sorcerers or the Koriathain are described in detail in the first books, where the knowledge as the whys and hows is limited.

The prose, ah! Painting words. The rich style fits the story; it is an element in its own right, for both the serious and playful parts. It is meant to create an immersive reading experience and it reads extremely smoothly when the reader comes to expect to visualize and sense what is happening in the book. The final chapters of Peril's Gate are a fitting testimony to the many techniques applied and the role played by the reader emotions during the characters' ordeals. Janny Wurts writes with purpose and never neutrally. She marries the complexity of the English language with the complexity of the story and the characters. A rich use of adjectives often arranged in unexpected combinations enables her to express all the nuances of what is real and what is perception, and her whole narrative seeks out a kind of precision that goes beyond simple descriptions and dialogues. From the pages one can feel her background as painter and musician, and her experiences with sailing, horse raiding and mountaineering, so infused in the action.

Deep characters and deep motivations. All the characters are complex and layered. I interpreted them differently as the story progressed and shifted my perceptions, the focus is on depth anyway, and much care is put into characterization and study of the human spirit, in all its forms. Some are not predictable at first: Arithon, Lysaer and the Sorcerers can be hermetic in the first book, the reader is not spoon-fed the "truth" or the whole logic behind their behaviours, and one is sometimes lured into false perceptions coming from unreliable POVs, and deliberately shown just a little insight pertaining the active forces of Athera and the real plight of the land. More pieces of the puzzle click into place in the following books, but never all at once or in sequence, and the cohesive picture starts to reveal itself. I like to engage my brains, and part of the fun

of this series and its layered plot/character structure is, after all, the clobbering of my assumptions headlong.

Huge, insane amounts of research behind the descriptions, and of planning behind the scenes. No coincidence that hints or baffling facts or simple happenings in one book lay the groundwork for whole scenes, or a massive revelation one or even more books later. It means it is carefully designed, tended, built and delivered to maximum impact. After being at the receiving end of many such surprises, and particularly now that I am mid-series and see a fuller picture, I clearly realize that if part of the initial story is focused on details, context-shaping and the whole series never features an omniscient viewpoint, everything is necessary to let the tension grow and deliberate to converge to a point where there is no slowing in the pace at all and the reachable heights of fun are most rewarding. There are many intense climax moments in the series, but *Peril's Gate* goes further. I think the books challenge clear sightedness, and invite people who like thought-provoking, non-linear, unpredictable, solid plots and who like books that want to be courted, which don't let the reader get it all at once; there are lots of events and sweeping sequences and hard facts in the starting volumes, along with the introduction of the characters, but also questions, which get answers in time, doubt not. Payoff is the key. Hats off to the author, who never sacrifices coherency for narrative expediency and shows adherence to a brilliant, original design.

When I first "discovered" Janny Wurts through her impeccable fantasy standalone gem *To Ride Hell's Chasm* (totally recommended as entry point to Wurts work), I had not been reading epic fantasy for some time and I was surprised to be so powerfully affected by the *Wars of Light and Shadow* series, I didn't think I could resonate so much with the characters of a world so entrenched in magic. Yet the element that I though a liability worked marvellously well for me, because there are no omniscient characters or lack of rules here, not at all, there are humans with their merits, flaws, personal histories and inclinations living in a very complex and superbly designed world, with its governing principles and dynamics. The mixed opinions about the first book, *The Curse of the Mistwraith*, also puzzled me, but now I'm totally happy about the choice to read it and decide for myself, because it would have been a mistake to miss this glorious journey.

Stefan says

Peril's Gate picks up right where *Grand Conspiracy* left off: Arithon is once again on the run, pursued by an Alliance of Light army led by its Lord Commander, Sulfin Evend, and his half-brother Lysaer. The Koriani enchantresses are also still trying to capture Arithon, with Elaira forced to walk a precarious line between betraying her order and helping her beloved. In Arithon's desperate bid to stay ahead and stay alive, he receives help from Earl Jieret's war band, an elite force but one surely not strong enough to prevail against the vast forces of the Alliance of Light. The Fellowship of Seven is unable to lend much assistance, as they are scrambling to keep Athera from falling apart... but help may still reach Arithon from an unexpected — and maybe unwelcome — direction...

Parts of *Peril's Gate* have the same level of suspense as the second half of *To Ride Hell's Chasm*, which is one of my favorite standalone fantasies. In one sense, this book is one big chase scene similar to the end of *Hell's Chasm*, but because these characters and this world have by now, after five previous novels in the **WARS OF LIGHT AND SHADOW** series, acquired so much depth and so many layers, the wild chase in *Peril's Gate* has much more impact than you'd expect and may just be the most dramatic chase scene I've ever encountered in any medium.

Still, while the chase takes center stage, there are several sub-chapters offering glimpses of other events taking place on Athera, so the story continues to deepen even as you're pulled along in the whirlwind of

Arithon's desperation. Most significantly, Janny Wurts describes the Fellowship's desperate efforts to protect the planet after Morriel's misguided actions at the end of *Grand Conspiracy*, but you'll also read about the actions of Prince Kevor, Dakar and Fionn Areth, the machinations of the Koriani enchantresses, and several others.

The final quarter of the book contains one of the most grueling scenes in the series so far, as Arithon is forced to relive the most traumatizing events in his past, this time experiencing them from more than just his own perspective. Janny Wurts doesn't pull any punches describing this truly harrowing experience, which at times is so intense it may give readers a visceral reaction. At the same time, this unforgettable finale shows Arithon growing and transcending his suffering in an almost mystical way, giving *Peril's Gate* a spiritual dimension that's quite unlike anything I've encountered in fantasy before.

There are other chapters and scenes in this book that are simply unforgettable, making *Peril's Gate* one of the strongest installments in the series so far. You'll find true heroism and heartbreaking sacrifice in the chapters focusing on the Companions as they try to protect their liege Arithon. You'll also learn much more about Athera and its history. Finally, even though you won't find an "Ars Arcanum" section at the back of these books, there are several highly intricate magic systems displayed in these novels, and *Peril's Gate* begins to show their differences as well the real depth behind them for the first time.

While the first two novels in the Alliance of Light arc of this series contained a bit more set-up, all the pieces are now firmly in place in *Peril's Gate*, resulting in a more rewarding novel that doesn't let up in pace or intensity until you've turned the final page. Not only is this one of the strongest books in the series so far, it's also one of the most memorable fantasy novels I've ever read. Highly recommended.

(This review was also published on 9/23/2010 on the Fantasy Literature website - www.fantasyliterature.com)

Ruchel says

Wonderful book with intricate story lines, all which connect. Characters are deep and well developed and thus feel realistic. People's actions are actually explained!

Jon says

I'm speechless and breathless (and have been for several weeks) after finishing this penultimate tipping-point volume in Janny Wurts' Wars of Light and Shadow series. Even taking a break and reading a half dozen other books hasn't allowed me to express the emotions that wracked me or the wonders assuaging them. Not since reading Janny's *To Ride Hell's Chasm* has a book's pacing been so unrelenting and rewarding. And to think she wrote that novel after *Peril's Gate* to step back from writing this series!

I highly recommend this book, but also strongly suggest you not start with this novel. Begin at the beginning, with *Curse of the Mistwraith* and immerse yourself in all things Atheran.

Please see Stefan's outstanding review of *Peril's Gate* for a concise synopsis and insightful comments.

Cecilia Wacholder says

Guilty pleasure. This saga has long since stopped being anything but a succession of convoluted adjectives, but I just want to know how it ends!!!!

Laura says

Hands down one of the best books I've ever read! And my favourite of the series so far.

RTC

Wolf (Alpha) says

I am finally on the 6th book in this series. I love how the author keeps making the books more interesting as we continue along in the series. I kind of hope that they don't end up fighting but make peace and begin to get along. I am also kind of hoping that they end up fighting just to get it over with. I still hate Koriani and how evil she is. We still have 4 books to go, but I feel like we are about to hit the climax. 10/10 stars. Love this book.
