



## The Harvest

*Chuck Wendig*

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## **The Harvest** Chuck Wendig

It's been a year since the Saranyu flotilla fell from the sky, and life in the Heartland has changed. Gone are the Obligations and the Harvest Home festivals. In their place is a spate of dead towns, the former inhabitants forced into mechanical bodies to serve the Empyrean—and crush the Heartland.

When Cael awakens from a Blightborn sleep, miles away from the world he remembers, he sets out across the Heartland to gather his friends for one last mission. As the mechanicals, a war flotilla, and a pack of feral Empyrean girls begin to close in on the Heartland, there isn't much time to make their next move. But if they can uncover a secret weapon in time, Cael and his friends might just find themselves with the power to save the world—or destroy it—resting in their hands.

## **The Harvest Details**

Date : Published July 14th 2015 by Skyscape

ISBN :

Author : Chuck Wendig

Format : Kindle Edition 448 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Young Adult, Fantasy, Dystopia

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## From Reader Review The Harvest for online ebook

### Online Eccentric Librarian says

*More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>*

Interestingly enough, I wasn't impressed with the first book in the series but stuck with it through the second, which was better. But this third book was excellent - nuanced characters with huge growth arcs since the beginning, surprises, an unpredictable ending, and a lot of action. No one is safe and characters die as the battle lines are drawn between the Heartlanders and the Empyrean in this final in the series.

Story: Cael had fallen from the sky after Boyland prevented Gwennie from saving him. But the Maize Witch has plans for him and she can't let him die. It is a hard time for everyone: Wanda (who gives herself up fully to the Maize Witch/blight in order to save Cael and heal his horrific injuries), Rico (who is wandering and lost now that he has lost a leg), Lane (battling an embittered boyfriend Killian and his drug addiction), Gwennie (who stays with Boyland, her obligated, after she believes Cael dead), Pop McAvoy (fighting to save a world that he believes already took his son), Ballistair (caught up in the rebellion), and Ballistair's mother - the Maize Witch (who has plans of her own). While Lane takes over the fallen City and Cael goes on a mission to find a secret weapon for the Maize Witch, the Heartlanders will meet up and begin the fight to destroy the corn and take the Heartland back.

What I found most interesting was the subtle and nuanced cast. Wanda's huge character change through the story as she submits more to the Blight is contrasted by Gwennie and Cael's fatalism after the huge turn of events in the last book. Lane loses more and more of himself with Killian's downfall. Each character changed and was affected by everything happening around them - they all grew in some way, some for the better and some for the worse.

There were several plot twists but this was non-stop action as the Empyreans unleash a secret weapon (in the form of a martial soldier and her highly trained elite soldier orphan girls) that ends up backfiring on them. Similarly, the Heartlanders' weapon (that the Blight Witch compels Cael to find) was quite original and tied neatly and poetically into the storyline. Both weapons, Empyrean and Heartlander, take a heavy toll on their group as well as the enemy. There was some smart writing here throughout.

The book has an epilogue - some fifteen years later - which I appreciated. There may not always be happy endings but it was a pleasure to have closure on the story. Especially one as wild and climactic as this one ended up being near the end.

In all, I was riveted and greatly enjoyed The Harvest. I'm really glad I stuck with the story after the first book. Reviewed from an advance reader copy provided by the publisher.

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### Simply Sam ? says

**Each book in the trilogy on sale thru 8/31/17 for \$0.99! If you haven't tried it yet, you should. The more I think about this series, the more I love it!**

Well folks, I did it. I actually finished a series. I know, I know, it's only a trilogy but baby steps people, baby steps.

I think the this series suffered a little because there was SO much back and forth, this group fighting this group, Empyreans vs Heartlanders vs The Blighted vs The Sleeping Dogs vs The Empyrean Rebels vs The Harpies. Whew! I'm sure there are some I'm leaving out. It just lacked a clear focus. It was muddled and messy and....well, maybe that's just life in the Heartland, eh?

With that being said, I loved the setting. I loved the Heartlanders. I loved all the colloquial swears and sayings, with all "The Lord and Lady"'s and "Jeezum Crow"'s. And even when not reading the books, I was still thinking about the Cael and Rigo and Lane and Gwennie (but mostly I thought about the Heartland.) It just got under my skin. And even though I still think most of the main characters were punks, Cael especially, I think they'll always hold a little place in my heart.

Anyhoo. I'm getting behind on reviews so a more thorough one will probably be in the cards for this bad boy. I just wanted to say that I think that while this last book may be lacking a little in clarity, it was a fitting conclusion to this series. I'm glad I read it to the end.

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### **Michael Hicks says**

[This review is based on an advanced copy received by the publisher through NetGalley.]

Chuck Wendig returns to the Heartland one last time to wrap up his cornpunk opus in grand fashion.

The previous novel, *Blightborn*, left our MC, Cael McAvoy in seriously dire straits, but Wendig wastes no time in resolving it and jumping right into the action one year later. Tasked with a mission by the Maize Witch to recover a decades-old weapon that could destroy the Empyrean empire for good, Cael and his Obligated, Wendy, are off to save the Heartland! Along the way, familiar faces from past novels return to reestablish the cast of friends and enemies as the tyrannical rule of the evil skylords grows ever more constrictive. As the Heartland inches closer to war, McAvoy and his old crew of Sky Scavengers are simultaneously reunited and torn apart by conflicting loyalties, emotional turbulence, and a devastating attack by the Harpies, a band of teenage female warriors with self-inflicted scarring across their faces.

Across three novels, Wendig has expertly plumbed the emotional depths of his cast of characters, thrusting them into uniquely dark situations that make their hard-scrabbles lives all the more difficult and turbulent. *The Harvest* is no exception as, come hell or highwater, these new adults are forced to make very mature choices as they find their way in a very old world, fighting against a system that seeks only to oppress and dominate. The stakes are higher than they've ever been, particularly for Cael who, previously, had no ambition to change the world but to simply make his small part in it better for him and his. With adulthood thrust upon him, Cael is learning that the world is larger than he imagined, and much bigger than merely himself.

The world-building and mythology that has been developed in this series is utterly top-notch, drawing its cues from real-world food politics, comic books (I couldn't help but sense shades of X-Men's Dark Phoenix Saga in one character's progression through the story), and epic works, like *Star Wars*, which Wendig's trilogy, and *The Harvest* in particular, have drawn multiple allusions to and several loving odes. Naturally enough, the Lord and Lady has seen fit to have Wendig author an upcoming *Star Wars* title, which is due out

soon and will most definitely be hitting the top of my TBR stack upon release.

While I would certainly love to see Wendig return to this world in some capacity in the future, I'm quite happy with the time I was able to spend among the Sky Scavengers. I suspect my appreciation and fondness for this body of work will only grow stronger in the coming years, and I've grown a certain affection for this series across the three books. *The Harvest* is not only a solid work in its own right, filled with plenty of action and flotilla's worth of heart and genuine emotion, but, equally important, it serves as a fitting finale to The Heartland Trilogy. There's a sense of darkness to the proceedings here, but also a promise of hope and brightness. Fair warning, though: not everyone gets a happy ending, and not everyone walks away unscathed. But, that's just life in the Heartland.

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### **Jennie says**

Oh joyful day! I finally finished this series!! **True Story Happening Right Now:** Monsanto just released a soybean seed that is pesticide resistant to 2 of the most effective herbicides on the planet. As of today, I learned that one of these pesticides is currently illegal, but farmers are using it anyway. This pesticide then drifts to other fields, killing all the crops around it.

Basically this entire trilogy is premised around a very similar thing. It really is a fascinating story about the inherent dangers of unregulated scientific progress. While it can be so good in so many ways, people who crave power will stop at nothing to keep building that power. As a result, the good is now very, very evil.

I have a hard time only giving it 3 stars, but I found the characterization to be really.... meh. Pretty much every character annoyed the crap out of me. The ending is very anti-climatic, though I suppose life can be that way most of the time. All in all, good series in regard to the story and science.

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### **Mrs. Kenyon says**

Cael has been in a Blightborn sleep for a year. During that time the Heartland has undergone many changes. There are no more Obligations, towns are dead or dying and the survivors are being involuntarily transformed into mechanical beings. The Empyrean has one priority ... to destroy the Heartland. The Heartlanders are not willing to be rolled over so easily. Cael and his friends set out to overcome the mechanicals, war machines and a group of girls who have embraced their wild nature. Can Cael overcome all these obstacles? What can they use to fight a group of people that have so many advantages?

*The Harvest* is the third and final book in The Heartland Trilogy. The book would have been much more enjoyable if Wendig did not continually include information about events from the first two novels. It wasn't until I reached the last half of the book that all of this reviewing finally stopped. Once the true story was in full swing, the story progressed quickly and the ending was very satisfying. I recommend this book as a supplemental reading option, but I definitely encourage readers of the first two books to wrap this series up with the finale.

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## **Hacen says**

DNF

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## **Dan Schwent says**

When Cael awakens, he finds that a year has passed and the world has plunged deeper into chaos. Can he reconnect with his friends and end the reign of the Empyreans once and for all?

### **I got this from Netgalley.**

Chuck Wendig brings his Heartland trilogy to a close. There's not a lot I can say without giving away plot points, although if you're reading reviews for the third book in a trilogy, you deserve what you get. I will say that Wendig's not afraid to kill off characters but does so with purposes other than shock value, unlike certain authors I will not name with the initials GRRM.

In my experience, third books in trilogies are usually the big confrontation and the cleanup afterwards. Wendig bucks the trend and crams quite a few surprise twists. I didn't see any of them coming and loved the secret weapon. I also like that Wendig didn't take the predictable route in the epilogue.

While I gave the book a three, it's no fault of the book. I enjoyed it but my enjoyment was hampered by my aging brain's inability to remember the nuts and bolts of the previous book. The Harvest was a lot of fun and head and shoulders above most YA fluff. 3.5 out of 5 stars.

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## **Steven says**

The Harvest by Chuck Wendig

Published 2015, Skyscape

Stars: ★★★★?

Review also posted at: Slapdash & Sundry

Thanks to Netgalley for providing me with a copy for an unbiased review.

What a trilogy! Lots of twists and turns, and quite a few things going the exact opposite of the way I was anticipating -- which I love! While it's fun to figure things out early sometimes, it can also be annoying to constantly be guessing and getting everything right. Where's the fun in never being shocked? Well, this series did that for me. While there were a few things that played out just as I expected, there were others that played out in entirely the opposite way I forecasted.

I'm a little sad it's over, to be honest. I actually cared about these characters and their fight to change their world.

Thanks Chuck. Your books always entertain me!

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## ? Sh3lly - Grumpy Name-Changing Wanderer ? says

DNF. No rating. I am abandoning this trilogy. I have no interest in finishing it or finding out how it ends. The writing is fine. I quite enjoyed the first book, Under the Empyrean Sky, and gave it 4 stars. You can read that review here if you want. But I kind of feel like the story was told in that first book and it could have been a stand-alone easily. Book two, Blightborn, was not as good, and even caused me to write a sort of ranty review (see that here if so inclined). I found the characters started to annoy me and I really didn't see where things were going, what the purpose was, or what the endgame was. I still don't see that here.

This world is a shitty one, where shitty things happen to everyone and it's hopeless. No one seems to really be in charge, so who is there to overthrow? What happens then? The GMO-like corn has ruined the planet, so there's no food. It's a wasteland.

Maybe it's just me and I don't "get it." Part of it I'm sure is that I never connected with any of the main characters. I found them annoying. The story by this point is just rambling in my view and I am simply not interested. I hate DNFing something I got for free, but I just can't.

*Thank you Netgalley and publisher for providing a digital copy for me to read and review.*

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## Connor says

[3.5 Stars] I'm having a hard time deciding what to rate this book. I really loved the first two, but this one was not as capturing. I think it has a lot of strengths, but I recognized some faults as well. So I'm going to do this similar to how I film my video reviews: Pros, Cons, Extras.

Pros: This novel continued what I loved most about the first two installments. I found it completely unpredictable. I was starting the epilogue and still had no idea what was going to be in store for me. This aspect alone makes this trilogy one that I would recommend any lover of dystopia or science fiction. The world continued to keep my attention always, and we got to learn a few things I was still curious about. The characters are all so unique that I found them all interesting to read about and to find out what would happen with them for good or for worse. There's little character security in this book, so I found myself rooting for the characters hard, hoping they wouldn't meet a nasty end. I'm satisfied with how everything wrapped up. It was the perfect amount of closing information and open ending to let the reader feel secure but also get to imagine a little for themselves. Overall, I love this trilogy, and I hope to collect physical forms of the books to read them over and over in the years to come. I'm also very excited to check out what else he has written!

Cons: For the first half of this novel or so, I felt like it was all over the place. There are so many more points of view and jumps between points of view that I found it quite jarring, and I actually put the book down for a while before picking it back up to continue. As I said for the first two books, while I find the characters interesting and hope they end up happy, I don't feel for them or get upset if something goes bad for them. I just didn't feel that connection that I love to have with the characters. These are my main two problems with this book, but they're obviously very important.

Extras: First off, I was provided an e-copy of this novel from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. In

no way did this alter my perceptions of the book. This trilogy also has an LGBTQ+ character that is one of the main ones followed throughout the story, so if that sways your interest one way or another, that's fine. Lastly, I think a fair number of people class this as young adult, but I would actually suggest if for a more mature readership because it does have some sexy times and some pretty violent scenes.

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## Daisy says

Quality Rating: Three Stars

Enjoyment Rating: Three Stars

◆ Thank you NetGalley for this eBook copy for review ◆

The Harvest wasn't nearly as enjoyable for me as the rest of the series and I don't feel was particularly effective in concluding the story. I'm all for things getting serious in the last book and stepping up to some of the harder realities or conflict, but The Heartland Trilogy is built on rapport and agendas - and there didn't seem to be any of either this time.

I've really enjoyed Wendig's ability to make entertain me in quite frankly some very bizarre situations (living corn; people made out of vines and leaves as tongues; genetically engineered pegasus' to name a few), but somehow it didn't quite work in this book. I have a feeling it's partly to do with the fact things got a bit more serious, but for a series that for me has honestly only really been about the sarcasm and ceaseless determination of the characters, it made the writing sort of bland.

There is also the issue that far too much was going on: the multiple storylines has worked brilliantly in past books, but this time there were too many new characters and plot lines introduced right at the beginning on top of everyone else that it was hard to keep up. I was already trying to muster some attention for a few of the current characters and having even more thrown on that didn't have that much relevance didn't help.

The main storyline for The Harvest was the relationships - and most of them romantic. It shouldn't have been. It should have been about the group finally having a victory against the Empyrean, or something other than the love triangle. This is the big problem with love triangles: they completely overwhelm everything else. And they turn the person at the center of it into a very unrealistic and unappealing character; it was okay for Cael to be conflicted at first. But it got to the point where he was playing them off of each other and just going for whoever he was more attracted to a certain point in time. It wasn't only out of character for him, but it was so unfair because he had other things going on in his plot line, but the girls didn't. Cael had other things to distract him and think about and decide, whereas Gwennie and Wanda weren't characterised to have any other priorities.

This leads me on to the female portrayals in The Harvest. Now I've always mentioned that I'm not happy with how women are presented in these books, but I was aware it wasn't exactly deliberate and there were efforts to make them more fair and realistic. I can see that happening again this time, and in theory they've come a ridiculously long way. But I feel like 'actions speak louder than words' is a very appropriate phrase for this writing: though the girls are, in the grand scheme of things, stronger and more independent and more powerful and sure of themselves and complex. But when you really look at it they're still mainly concerned about their possible romances, and they're still told what to do by the boys, and are usually saved by them too.

Towards the end, The Harvest became a little melodramatic and I didn't like the twists it took. It was heading in the wrong direction for me quite early on, but I think the choices made weren't particularly practical or realistic for the situation they were in. The conclusion itself felt cut short in some places and dragged out in

others (of course Cael and Wanda got three times the amount all the others got put together) - and not even with much result. Even the epilogue didn't make much sense, and there are more loose ends now than at the start of the book. [SPOILER FOR REST OF PARAGRAPH.] I mean they didn't even take the Empyrean down; there's still those genetically engineered ants that could destroy every food source available to them; Wanda's still crazy with the Blight; there still dangerous people after them that will almost certainly be determined to kill them now that they broke a whole flotilla. But then in the epilogue it's years later and all the other problems have magically disappeared and everyone lives happy ever after - oh but of course Gwennie's still jealous that she didn't get Cael. [END OF SPOILERS.]

I like the diversity of characters in The Heartland Trilogy, but without the rapport some of them feel kind of unnecessary.

Cael has been heading towards darker places since we started and he's finally got to the point where he's not so sure what right and wrong is. Now don't get me wrong, I love characters and stories that involve these moral decisions or whatever you want to call it, but Cael to me as been heading in more selfish directions. And I just don't really like it. And while I appreciate that where his characters has gone it made it much less enjoyable for me to read his parts.

Similarly, I really don't like Wanda. I've never really liked Wanda, and the ways she's gradually changed have in fact made me dislike her even more. So naturally reading her parts was also incredibly tedious. Now Gwennie I've been growing to like more and more; in the last book she was completely awesome. She took the situation into her own hands, she wouldn't let anyone push her around, but she still had that understandable indecision in what she had to do. She really came into her own person - and really into her own story. But then suddenly all the boys are back again and all she's really given the opportunity to do is deal with her relationships with them. That would be fine - if she had other things to do as well.

We then get to the collection of characters that all started off with promise but ended up getting left behind when it came to significance in favour of the horrific love triangle. A lot of the time I've been a lot more interested in Balastair or Lane over the the protagonists, but they're only there to give the odd important bit of information or a touching monologue. Then characters like Boyland are demonised to make us like one of the protagonists, but are then written like we're supposed to feel sympathetic for them later. They were plot devices rather than characters and I think it's a real shame.

There was a problem with the pacing for me because I never felt like anything was happening. The Harvest is definitely the most 'typical' of Young Adult storylines in the series, and so I expected the common 'we're going to overthrow the government' conclusion, but there's no point where they're actually heading for that. Admittedly I was to blame for assuming that's where the story was going, but looking back I can't actually see what it was progressing towards, or any point where they seemed to have something to work for. In a book like this, where there's so many characters all the time, there needs to be something driving forward to regulate some sort of pacing.

I was really disappointed by The Harvest and it didn't tie anything up particularly satisfactorily for me, though it does compliment the rest of the series because I wanted it to be good so badly. I just feel like too much was taken on in this last instalment and wasn't able to be maintained whilst still having that trademark wit and entertainment - and as soon as that enjoyment was taken out for me it crumbled a little bit. I would completely recommend the first book books in the series, and depending on the stretch of you own imagination you could skip this last book to be perfectly honest.

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**Rose says**

Goddammit...I waited almost a whole year for this and I wasn't blown away. It was good and it closed off all the story lines but I wanted to get lost in this world like I did with the prior two and that just didn't happen. This is one of those stories that stuck in my imagination. I would think of it every so often wondering what was going to happen. That was probably my downfall. I should have waited until all the books were written to start this series.

There isn't much sense in telling you what happens, vaguely of course, because we all know this is the one where the Heartlanders rise up and overthrow the Empyrian. They had already started that in the previous one so this is the logical course. I was really rooting for these people. I loved the characters but it felt like they changed in this one. They seemed a bit shallower and lost some of their humanity...and in certain cases that was literally true as they became blighted. Perhaps it was because they were a bit older and a little more war-torn, as they've all been through so much at this point.

I may sound like I'm a tiny bit down on this story but that isn't the case. It was still fun and exciting to read with lots of action and a few surprises. Cael's life changed in a way I never saw coming. New characters were introduced including one absolutely batshit crazy girl from the flotilla that had been destroyed at the end of Blightborn. If you've read the first two in the series, then it's a no-brainer, you have to read this. If you've not read any of this series, this would be a good time to start. It's a young-adult, science fiction and dystopian tale about what happens when you mix genetic manipulation with a population of 'haves' and 'have-nots'. It never turns out well for the 'have-nots'.

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## **Mark Gardner says**

The epic conclusion of the Heartland Trilogy floored me like a punch from Mike Tyson in his prime. Books one and two seemed to move along steadily. In book three, Wendig must've pressed the button and injected nitrous oxide leaving me with a surge of speed akin to the wheelie-popping scene from Fast and Furious.

When I saw The Harvest was available via NetGalley, I immediately downloaded it and moved it to the top of the to-be-read pile. I tore through his words in less than twenty-four hours and was satisfied with the ending.

All the familiar characters are there from the first two books, and they continue to be written in a compelling manner that makes them likeable, despicable and above all real.

The adrenaline rush from the opening prologue to the epic showdown between the Heartlanders and the Empyreans was only topped by a new villain that was both scary and sympathetic. Cael made this villain in such a way that reminded me of the Batman/Joker dynamic.

The ending of The Harvest wrapped up the series, but still left a thread of more stories to come if the author so chooses. I for one would like to continue reading the aftermath of The Harvest and its epilogue.

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**Robert Babiak says****store picked up in third book**

the second book went by fast enough, but felt like filler. this one had a good finish to the story, great characters.

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**Reader-ramble says**

I'm still sad I can't find hardly any YA dystopias this well done. They are few and far between.

Satisfying ending, if a bit sad. I totally recommend this series.

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