



Lightning in the Blood

Marie Brennan

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At the beginning—no—at the end—she appears, full of fury and bound by chains of prophecy.

Once, there was a call--a binding--and so, a woman appeared, present in body but absent in knowledge of her past self. Making the ultimate journey of rediscovery was not without its own pitfalls--or rewards--and now Ree, a roaming Archeron, spirit of legend and time and physically now bound to her current form, has yet to fully uncover her true identity.

Ree has spent her last innumerable seasons on the move--orbiting, in some sense, the lands of her only friend in this world, Aadet, who has become intricately involved in the new post-revolution politics of his people. Swinging back from the forests surrounding Solaiké, Ree falls in with another wandering band, some Korenat refugees searching for their own protection on a trade route besieged with the fallout of the recent uprising. The Korenat's plight might not have striken Ree so deeply, but they are accompanied by their own Archeron, who seems to know much more about Ree's own origins than she ever dared to hope.

Lightning in the Blood Details

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From Reader Review Lightning in the Blood for online ebook

Travis says

Just as good as the first book, possibly better since the characters are more established and we learn more of the setting and the nature of the main character. I hope this series continues.

One problem is that while I certainly don't object to stealing ideas from folklore, the day-counting divination is obviously lifted wholesale from ancient Mesoamerican beliefs. And it raises questions about the alternate reality of this setting, since the 260-day cycle is generally associated with the appearance of Venus; does the alternate world have a similar cycle? Why not take the idea as inspiration but change the details more?

Lesley says

An enjoyable read but frustrating as a novella. The characters had just been developed to the point that I as the reader wanted to know more about them when the book comes to an end. The same might be said of the story line. It felt more like reading a couple of early chapters of a good complex novel and then being left in limbo.

Nikki says

I feel like I might have appreciated this more if I'd refreshed my memory on the first book, Cold-Forged Flame, first. I remembered the basics, of course, but some of the subtleties apparently escaped my brain even in the short time since I read the first book. Still, I do find the world really interesting and Ree's role in the world compelling. The end of this book came as no real surprise as I'd already pegged Ree as a wanderer type.

I felt like maybe I didn't connect enough with this one, though. I wasn't hooked on it, at least. It's still well-written, but I do recommend having the first book fresher in your mind when you start it. And maybe I'm also suffering a little from missing Brennan's Lady Trent, now that series is finished. I'll be interested to revisit this (and the first book) when another book is on the horizon...

Reviewed for The Bibliophilian.

Darren Fuller says

I've been looking forward to this a lot since reading Cold-Forged Flame and this really didn't disappoint even though the reading experience was different. With the first book I was left dazed and amazed by everything which happened in a short period of time, new ideas and concepts being rapidly cast in. With this there were an equal number of new ideas which were added (the two sides of an Archon, Ree not being able to sleep in one place for more than 3 nights etc...) but they had a little more time to settle in, I hope in future we get to find out why for some of them though.

I've certainly not been disappointed and I can't wait for the next instalment.

Wendy says

“Lightning in the Blood” which I won through Goodreads Giveaways continues Ree’s adventures as she wanders the land searching for her identity and past. Returning to Solaise to see her friend Aadet Temini two years after a rebellion which overthrew the tyrannical government of Valtaja’s son, Ree stumbles on a band of Nevati Korenat refugees who were ambushed after they crossed the border. Accompanied by their Archon, Mevreš who seems to know more about her past, the plight of the Korenat strikes Ree deeply and she pledges to guide them.

Tension mounts as the plot heats up when Ree gets swept up in the post-revolution politics of her friend Aadet Temini’s country, as a connection is quickly made between the ambush and a new uprising that’s determined to disrupt the new administration. As the wife of the ruler (a political not familial term) Aadet has been engaged to wipe out the rebels in the mountains and quickly decides to take Ree, and Mevreš with his power of divination along with him. A short but well-developed story the adventure not only solidifies her friendship with Aadet but opens Ree to further discoveries about her past and who she was.

Among the new characters introduced in this plot is the powerful Archon (a spirit of legend) Mevreš, who “radiates intense familiarity” and Enkettsivanne the new ruler of Solaise who fears Ree even though he owes her a huge debit of gratitude. Along with curious, conscientious but nonpolitical Aadet and the determined, kind-hearted, warrior-spirited Ree Varekai they bring this exciting fantasy adventure to life.

I admire Marie Brennan’s ability of infusing action, power and depth into a thrilling story that seems longer than it is and I look forward to reading about Ree and Aadet’s next adventure.

MAB LongBeach says

The second Ree Varekai novella finds Ree returning to Solaise a year or so after the successful end of the rebellion there. She falls in with a band of Korenat refugees, including another archon, who claims that Ree is herself Korenat. Still without much of her memory, Ree resists the identification, as she feels no kinship with the perpetual travelers.

There is trouble in Solaise, a large group of outlaws attacking travelers, hoping to stir up enough trouble to overthrow the new king. Ree joins the army seeking to find and root them out of the wilderness where they lurk.

Well-written and enjoyable but nothing special.

Milliebot says

I was super excited for the second novella in the Varekai series and I have to say, in comparison with the first book, this one left me a tiny bit disappointed. It's by no means a bad book, but the level of excitement I felt when thinking about reading this wasn't met when I was actually reading it.

My biggest issue with this book is that there's a significant time gap between this and the first book (or I'm an ass and have forgotten more than I think I did). I felt like I was missing some key details, especially every time the whole "can't sleep in the same bed for more than 3 nights" issue our main character had. Am I forgetting this?! Has anyone read the first book (yes it's only 100 pages, but I'm not ready to re-read it yet) and can you tell me if this means something?

The ending left me hopeful though and I can't wait for the third installment, but shit, I wish these were full length novels! It's akin to reading a graphic novel. I feel like I need more bang for my buck, but more importantly I hate waiting a year or so to read another 100-something pages! UGH. It's just good and I want more now!

Megan says

This is a continuation of Ree who is trying to find out where she came from and finds herself helping a band of people who were attacked and whose origins may be the key to finding what she seeks.

She guides the band of people who also have a free archon that claims she is a part of their story but she's not quite ready to accept such a thing for her gut says it isn't quite the truth.

Ree reaches out to a friend of hers to help these people who may have a way of giving them safe passage and learning of who is attacking people.

Things are rarely so easy to find out and Ree will find that what she's looking for could be closer than she realizes.

I really enjoyed getting to read about Ree's adventures as a free archon and I can't wait to see if she'll learn where she came from and whether the truth will bring her happiness.

If you enjoy a short fantasy adventure involving tales, adventure and a dose of magic, you'll enjoy this book.

Sherry says

This novella explores another episode in the life of the archon Ree, an avatar formed by magic from mythic origins.

In *Cold-Forged Flame*, Ree was forced to give up her connection to her past incarnations, and she desperately wants to discover the source of the stories that form the basis of her existence. In this volume, she meets a group of gypsy-like wanderers traveling with their own archon, who is able to provide the answers to some of her questions.

That's the plot in a nutshell, along with a bit of armed conflict between Ree and her friends and a group of rebel soldiers. Aadet, Ree's companion from the first book, joins her in the battle, and it looks as if they will continue their adventures together in future novellas.

It's a very slight story, but it does give a bit of insight into the mystery of Ree's past (as well as the meaning of the series title). If you read and enjoyed the first in the Varekai series, you'll probably want to read this one, too.

An eARC of the novella was provided by the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Angie says

My Review: I have to say this was a very bazaar story to read, the first book while meandering made a little sense, and this one does too at times but there is just so much open. I enjoyed the characters again, both Ree and Aadet, they were both how I came to know them in the first book but also more. I also appreciated that there was a nice time gap between the first book and the second book, a time when the revolution took place and while that might have made for an interesting story, I appreciated the focus remaining on the characters. This was also obviously left open for a possible third book but I don't think it would be necessary, there is an open ending and you can fill it in as you see fit.

Rebecca says

I really enjoyed this, I basically only knew of Brennan from her Memoir of Lady Trent series and grabbed this off the new release shelf at the library without even reading the synopsis, well it is very different.

This clearly a middle eastern inspired setting, we follow Ree as she comes upon a caravan on the road, the people she finds are part of a persecuted group who are fleeing the band of warriors that are persecuting their people, heading to seek help from the king. Part of their group is a free Archon/Archai, which is some sort of Djinn-esque summoned being bound to their summoner, and turns out Ree is as well but broke free of her bond. Ree is missing big chunks of her memory, so the other Archon offers in trade storytelling for her to come along to help protect them. They make it to the king where Ree actually has a bit of an in, and manage to get an audience with the King himself to ask for help defeating the warriors, he agrees to help but not without his own demands.

There were a lot of cool things in here, the concept of the kings wives being both male & female being more official political role than a romantic one, Ree being a kind of saber wielding badass, uncovering her memory, the mythos and courtly rules (not for everyone, but I love stuff like them going through the formal process of having an audience with the king). I also think it worked perfectly fine without having read the previous book in this series, other than a few allusions to things that clearly happened in the previous, seems clear there will be more and they are intended to stand mostly alone. However, this did also suffer a bit from being a novella I think, there is a ton of really great worldbuilding that seems a kind of crammed in, disappointed the Archon's storytelling takes place entirely off page - I would have loved to hear his stories, and a handful of things that are mentioned repeatedly never actually pop up for any reason.

For people who like this, I really recommend checking out A Star Reckoner's Lot as well. It has a similar feel though a very different story and benefits from being able to pace more as a full length novel.

The Captain says

Ahoy there me mateys! I received this fantasy eARC from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. So here be me honest musings . . .

If ye haven't read the first book in this series, cold-forged flame, then ye might want to skip this post and go read me review for the first installment. If ye keep reading this log then ye have been forewarned and continue at yer own peril . . .

Now I cannot say enough goodness about the first book. I reread it in preparation for this second installment and enjoyed it just as much the second time around. I adore Ree as a character and the world-building so very much. I cannot believe I had to wait 268 days between the two, however it was worth the wait!

One of the awesome circumstances of the first story is that Ree cannot remember anything about herself, her nature, or even her name. I am a sucker for that kinda thing. By the end of story one, ye know her partial name and some of her nature but have way more questions than answers. As does Ree.

I was so exited to see where she would go next. It of course did not go anywhere that I expected! This story takes place several years after the events in the first one. While this episode has a lot less mystery than the first, I still found it engrossing and enthralling. In this second installment, Ree meets another archon which sets off another mission fer Ree, answers some of her questions, and of course gives her so many more. My favorite aspects are following Ree in her journey to reclaim parts of herself and her attempts to figure out what has been lost. The glimpses ye do get are tantalizing. It was also extremely nice to see Aadet again.

Oh and this cover is awesome. Don't ye want to read about giant black cats? Ye know ye do. And that is all I am going to say about this one cause it is short and awesome and ye should discover what happens fer yerself. I want the third one!

Random fact about book two from the author's website is this:

"And you'll see the Mayan calendrical system with a minor fictional paint job showing up in Lightning in the Blood because years ago I read about it for fun and wound up incorporating it into a story more or less wholesale, complete with fiddly little details about Year-Bearers."

I need to go off an' do research bout Mayan calendrical systems now. Go out and get the first episode if ye haven't. Read this one if ye have.

So lastly . . .

Thank you Macmillian-Tor/Forge!

Check out me other reviews on <https://thecaptainsquartersblog.wordpress.com>

J.A.Birch says

[After defeating the island and reaching the cauldron the protagonist faces the being who lives there. This creature is like her, and the protagonist's newly-found companion, Aadet, speaks a word that releases memories. (hide spoiler)]

Minna says

Good, but nowhere near as fascinating or compelling as *Cold-Forged Flame*. I realize this is the second in the series but the time skipped between #1 and #2 (and all that happened in that time) made the connections between the books somewhat confusing and distanced. Mevres, certainly, was not as strong a character as Aadet, and I found that the beginning of *Lightning* was not as gripping as *Cold-Forged Flame*. The ending was better, especially the teeny little nuggets of information about Ree and the introduction of the mysterious Korenat spirits (see: book cover), but I couldn't help feeling like this was something of a bridge book between Ree's appearance in the world (book #1) and her trip to Krvos with Aadet to discover more about her heritage (I assume, book #3).

Brandon St Mark says

I'm conflicted on how to rate this book.

I like the concepts on this book. I wish this wasn't a novella series because I think there is a lot of potential in this world, so much so to be enough material to fill a full length novel. I also like Ree as a character, however, she isn't the most interesting in that we only get a small section of her life. She has great potential, but again, because these books are so short, it's almost a waste.

I think maybe I'm subconsciously comparing these to the Lady Trent books, which isn't fair. I decided to give this four stars because I feel like if I were to give it three, I wouldn't be judging this book fairly.
