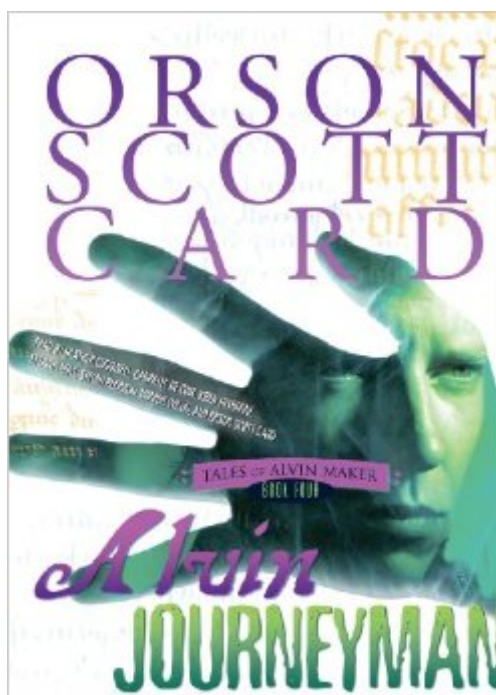


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Alvin Journeyman (Tales Of Alvin Maker, Book 4) (Tales Of Alvin Maker (Audio))



Synopsis

[Audio CD Library Edition in vinyl case] [Read by Orson Scott Card, Heather Cogswell, Gabrielle De Cuir, Kirby Heyborne, Stephen Hoye, Stefan Rudnicki, Mirron Willis] A 1996 Locus Award Winner for Best Fantasy Novel Alvin is a Maker, the first to be born in a century. Now a grown man and a journeyman smith, Alvin has returned to his family in the town of Vigor Church. He will share in their isolation, work as a blacksmith, and try to teach anyone who wishes to learn the knack of being a Maker. For Alvin has had a vision of the Crystal City he will build, and he knows that he cannot build it alone. But he has left behind in Hatrack River enemies as well as true friends. His ancient foe, the Unmaker, whose cruel whispers and deadly plots have threatened Alvin's life at every turn, has found new hands to do his work of destruction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Many other reviews here seem to be highly praising, but I found this fourth installment of Card's clever, original series a big disappointment. Nothing really happens except a lot of chatting and repetition. How many times do we have to hear the plot of "Red Prophet" and "Prentice Alvin" restated? The former was a bit preachy, the latter more exciting; I enjoyed both but didn't need to hear their stories repeated in almost every chapter, it seemed. Moreover, I kept waiting for the stupid trial to end so everyone could get on with the story and actually DO something but when the trial ended so did the book! The book wasn't terrible, however--Card always writes with skill and a unique

voice (though he rambles in ways a beginning author could never get away with.) For some good points, Calvin in Europe was fun, and I liked the British attorney, and I loved learning what Taleswapper's true knack is. Yet Alvin and Peggy both seemed too old for their roles. The innocent spunk that made them such fun when they were younger is boring and stale a little strange in people in their late twenties. They finally get together, but it seemed anti-climactic. And Peggy's pregnant already? How divine. Most of all, though, is that I feel Card is badly misusing his alternate history. It's fun to see the twisted-around versions of real historical figures, but Card disappointed me with almost all of them. For example, William Henry Harrison was delightful as a cruel military man in "Red Prophet," but in this book he does just what he did in real history: become president and die after getting sick at his inaugural address. I guess Card was having fun with making events seem inevitable, but that seems a waste of a good alternate history.

The Alvin Maker series starts off with a unique and fascinating alternate history of a world where people have "knacks" which allow them to do what would be considered "magic" to most of us. Alvin's knack is "making" and the first two books explained his world and shaped his character through some interesting and unique experiences. The third book signalled the beginning of a decline in the series as Card moves toward his favored story of a main male character (Alvin) who is supposedly noble and good above all else. The third book is saved by an interesting and appropriate storyline about slavery but the same cannot be said of the fourth. Unfortunately, in the fourth book, he makes the Alvin behave so stupidly as a means of attempting to martyr him that the reader soon loses respect for the main character. There is honor in self-sacrifice but not in someone who thinks that covering up the lies and misdeeds of others is a form of "good". Doesn't Card ever think it might be interesting to explore the theme of fostering positive character growth in others by having their lies and misdeeds dealt with directly by the person who they have harmed? I'm not talking about Rambo-type behavior but the fact that the Ender's series, the Homecoming series, and now the Alvin Maker series have pathetic men who believe bad decisions make them strong and noble is getting tiresome. The worst part isn't the retread of the same old story but the fact that this story simply goes on and on and seems to have very little point other than to drag poor undeserving Alvin through the muck and have him sit by and do diddly about it. This is not only uninteresting for the reader but actively annoying.

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