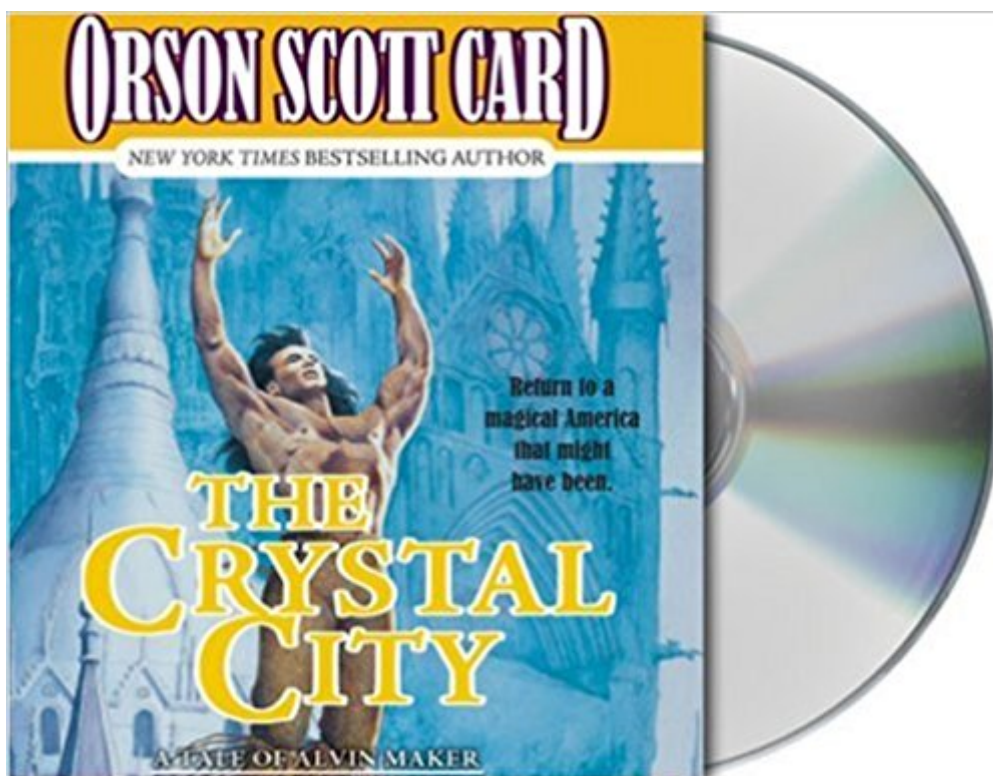


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The Crystal City: The Tales Of Alvin Maker, Volume VI



Synopsis

This full-cast production of Orson Scott Card's newest title is finally available on audio. From the end of the 18th century, Americans travelled west to find new homes and new lands. They brought with them the magics of plain people. It is from these roots of the American dream that award-winning writer Orson Scott Card has crafted what the Charlotte Observer called "a uniquely American fantasy." Using the lore and the folk magic of the men and women who settled a continent, and the beliefs of the tribes who were here before them, Card has created an alternate frontier America. Charms, beseechings, hexes, and potions all have a place in the lives of the people of this world. Alvin Miller is the seventh son of a seventh son, born while his six brothers all still lived. Such a birth is a powerful magic; such a boy is destined to perhaps become a Maker. Rejoin the tale of Alvin and his wife Peggy as they work to create the Crystal City of Alvin's vision, where all people can live together in peace.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If not the best in the series, Card's latest Alvin Maker novel (after 1998's Heartfire: Tales of Alvin Maker V) still enchants. In the author's alternative American frontier world, Indians work the magics of nature, Africans transform themselves with trinkets and whites have knacks-magical talents that allow them to shape metal, find water, win the hearts of followers and more. Alvin, the powerful seventh son of a seventh son, can create things that cannot be destroyed. He also has more than

his fair share of knacks as well as some Indian magic. Determined to stop suffering where he finds it, he dreams of building the Crystal City, which will help mankind live in peace. A large part of the appeal lies in the book's homegrown characters using their powers for ordinary purposes. A blacksmith's knack shapes axes that never dull, while a midwife can sense the health of her patients. Even as Alvin performs miracles to lead thousands of slaves out of bondage, he is filled with uncertainty about what to do with his life and self-doubt because he couldn't save his stillborn child. Alvin's fans will be relieved to know that the City is indeed begun in this volume, but those who were expecting the start of the civil war, previously billed as forthcoming, will have longer to wait. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Card creates a solid episode in what is perhaps his most interesting ongoing series.”
“By mixing real settings, people, and situations with his own brand of characterization and biblical metaphor, the author has created an early America as it might have been if magic had played a part in its development.”
“Rocky Mountain News on The Crystal City --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This was another very entertaining addition to the Alvin novel. I assumed it was the final volume because I purchased all that were available, so after being incredibly disappointed by the ending, I was pleased to learn it wasn't the last, but crushed to learn that others had been waiting since 2003 for volume 7. Eleven years! I'm relieved to have discovered it so much later as I can't imagine the frustration. Hopefully, 2014 is the year for both this novel and also his Mither Mashes "Gate" trilogy to serve up the final volumes. Otherwise, I WILL wait!

Loved this story as Card spins his web of personalities. Questions abound although the story is complete. What will Calvin do? What of Bowie? Can't wait to read Book 7.

Having read the whole series, I felt there was a lot of repetition when introducing the characters and giving background. I realize this is necessary for those who are reading only this volume, but it made it boring and slower for me than it had to be. I have loved the series, however, and was excited to finally read the last book.

I had to go back and see how long it had been since Uncle Orson had published the last volume in the Tales of Alvin Maker, but I waited until after I read Book 6, "The Crystal City." It had been about five years, but without ever going back and jogging my memory I was able to pick up the narrative thread in the ongoing story. Besides, I was encouraged by both the title and the cover art for this novel that Alvin was finally going to take that golden plough out of his poke and finally lay the ground for his city, and in that regard I am not disappointed. However, this is still not the climax of the tale. Orson Scott Card's Tales of Alvin Maker series is set in an alternative America where some people are born with knacks, a magical ability that is both a great gift and a deep burden. Alvin, the seventh son of a seventh son, is a "maker," who can make things and fix things, using his doodlebug to get a sense of what needs to be done. After the death of his newborn son, Alvin is persuaded by his wife, Peggy (a "torch," who can see the various paths into the future that a life might take), to go to Barcy (the New Orleans of this world), and so he travels down the Mizzissippi with young Arthur Stuart on a flatboat with Abe Lincoln and his friend Coz. This matters because while Alvin Maker has his dream of the Crystal City, Peggy is concerned with preventing the great war that she sees coming over the issues of slavery. In this America the United States is put one of several "countries" competing for the North American continent. The south consists of Crown Colonies, Spain controls Florida and Nueva Barcelona (Louisiana), and the French still have Canada. Meanwhile, the descendants of the Aztecs are still performing human sacrifices in Mexico and Alvin's friend, Tenskwa-Tawa, the Red Prophet, controls the lands to the west of the Mizzissippi. Beyond the Hio Territory where Alvin was born in Hatrack River, the Wobbish Territory where Vigor Church and Carthage City can be found, and even beyond the Noisy River Territory, Alvin needs to find a place for his Crystal City. Because when he saves a single life in Barcy, the act changes everything and forces a series of issues. The establishment of the Crystal City is obviously a major moment in the series, but clearly it is not the big payoff. As always, it is interesting to see Uncle Orson's take on some of the figures of American's history. If he liked John Adams, he likes Abraham Lincoln any more. However, Stephen Austin and Jim Bowie do not fare well, and Alvin has to worry about the latter almost as much as he does about his younger brother Calvin. I know there are those who want to read these stories as a religious allegory, but I have enjoyed taking the narrative at face value and I remain ignorant enough of the major tenets of Mormon theology so that I do not see anything more here than the American ideal dressed up in alternative clothing. However, I find it hard to believe that there is only one volume left in the series, because there seem to be too many threads left to weave together.

The only thing I can say is that I hope the author writes a last book for the Maker series. I love reading his stories. I think I started reading Orson Scott Card's stories with the Seventh Son and Ender's Game. Now I have read most his stories because he is my favorite Author.

I love how Card is able to link his books with that of human nature, and why it is that is that we do what it is that we do. This book is no exception each character wants something and the way it is written I understand why, and can't help but want it also. I to consider myself to be a maker. I understand the joy of making something that works, that lasts. I would recommend this book to anyone who loves to make things.

After reading all the fairly high priced volumes that at times seemed a bit heavy on filler; I expected Alvin Maker to start pulling all of the previous life experience to give me a hint of his destiny but this book just literally stop mid thought. I feel that I wasted a lot of money on an author that knows and has done better works. I hope the next volume gives readers a sense of closure or purpose. No recommendation from me.

Wasn't a fan. Too much god and not enough fantasy stuff. Just wasn't what I was expecting. Others may like it. I was just expecting and kept waiting for things to get better for Alvin but they don't.

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