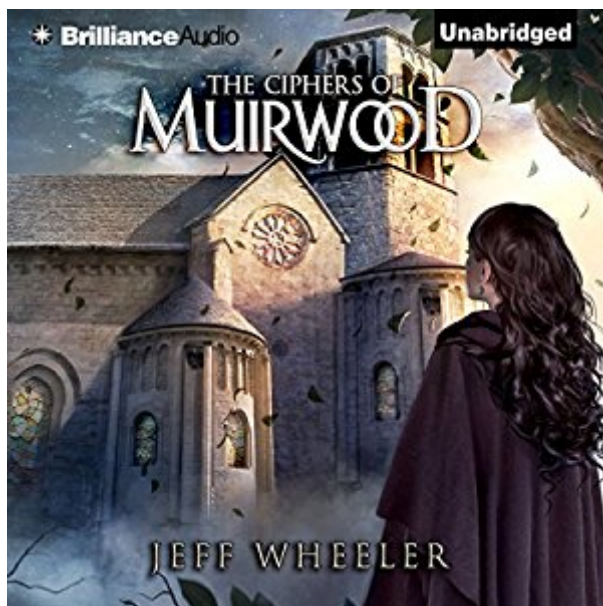


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The Ciphers Of Muirwood: Covenant Of Muirwood, Book 2



Synopsis

From the moment she was banished by her father, the king, Princess Maia journeyed to seek sanctuary at Muirwood Abbey, the epicenter of magic and good in the land. Now safe for the first time since her cruel abandonment, Maia must foster uneasy friendships with other girls training to be Ciphers: women who learn to read and engrave tomes of ancient power, despite the laws forbidding them to do so. As Maia tries to judge whom to trust, she makes a shocking discovery: her destiny is to open the Apse Veil and release trapped spirits from her world. Then she learns that her father is coming to Muirwood Abbey to celebrate the Whitsunday festival - and Maia's estranged husband, whom she was forced to abandon, will join him. Torn between deadly political machinations and unstoppable spiritual forces, Maia must channel unknown powers within herself to save her friends, the abbey, and the entire kingdom of Muirwood.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As the author points out in his afterword, his second books delve a little more into relationships and personalities. Watching Maia and Collier's relationship grow (and also Suzenne and Dodd's), was one of my favorite parts of this book. Some have complained about the parallels the author draws between the belief in the Medium and Christianity. To me, it doesn't have to be Christianity but whatever your life's guiding force is. Embrace it, let it lead you. When you are quiet and listen, the answer is usually provided.

I read the original Muirwood series, and fell in love. I love fantasy and science fiction, and Muirwood seems to have a bit of both. In this book, *The Ciphers of Muirwood*, Maia arrives at Muirwood Abbey with her grandmother, the High Seer. There she meets other students, including Suzenne and Dodd. The girls meet in secret to study and learn from the tomes. Maia prepares to take the Maston test. When she goes to take the test, she feels strongly that it's not time. Her father, the king of Comoros, and his retinue, arrive at Muirwood Abbey to celebrate Whitsunday. Finally, Maia takes the Maston test and opens the Apse Veil. She has quite a surprise when Lia and Colvin come through the Veil! There is a battle at the Abbey. I really enjoyed reading this book, and loved getting to know Maia and Collier better, and seeing Lia and Colvin again. I know you will really enjoy this book, with all of its twists and turns.

Great story and it picks up right away from book one. I appreciate his comment on how his daughter stayed up all night to finish it. Two things I take away from that comment. 1. It is that good that you want to keep reading. 2. His daughter was reading it, which to me means it is a book the whole family can read and enjoy. No profanity and still a great book, (imagine that). I also loved how he linked the other series together by bringing Li and Colvin back. It brings back good memories of first series. Would recommend to all ages, even though some of the names are hard to pronounce, but fun trying and it increases my vocabulary.

PROFANITY: noneSEX: noneVIOLENCE: mildAge appropriate 12-adultThough sometimes I feel that Wheeler is heavy handed in his explanations, telling too much of his characters motivations as if he fears the reader won't figure it out, I have no other complaints. Wheeler's plots are unique and complex but his characters are even more complex. It's a delightful read, peeling off the layers of the characters. Maia, princess of the realm, vanished, demeaned and abused, remains almost too good to be true. At times I have a hard time relating to her because the author succeeds in making the reader hate the king so we are unable to relate to the compassion Maia feels for him. That's a tricky bit of writing.

I started this series while waiting for the next Queen's Poisoner books. These are definitely not Jeff Wheeler's best books. Most of the main character's problems arise as a direct result of her being too nice. She's a sad sack of niceness. If she ever once got angry enough to stand up for herself, her situation wouldn't be so dire, but instead, at every opportunity she meekly turns her other cheek. People suffer and die because she's too nice to do anything about it.

I have really enjoyed this author but I have really, really disliked Maia and her story. Lots of needless suffering, blundering around ignorantly, and just general helplessness that makes me crazy. The whole story seems to be a rewrite of the biblical job and how suffering for your God/religion is your lot in life I skipped thru the last 100 pages and couldn't wait for it to be done. Will not be reading further into this series.

I absolutely love Jeff Wheeler's Muirwood series, I reviewed the first trilogy, and looked forward to picking up the Covenant books. Wheeler creates a believable world, not unlike our own medieval histories, with echoes of Harry Potter and students of magic, and appealing characters with realistic baggage and internal conflicts. The romance between Maia and Collier, rightful queen and king of separate hostile realms, is masterfully developed. The reader senses the rightness of their impromptu marriage, even as it is annulled and unconsummated and ill-fated because Maia has unwittingly become a hetaera, a dark siren whose kiss brings painful death to the men she seduces. The sexual tension is almost unbearably high-strung without being graphic or x-rated. Despite this irreversible curse, the mutual attraction grows as they fight to save their kingdoms and battle enemies bent on destroying their kingdoms and their neighboring allies. Their friends and protectors provide further suspense and surprising subplots. Wheeler avoids the frustrating cliffhanger endings by providing a hopeful resolution to each of the three books. I hope Jeff Wheeler is not done with Muirwood and its beautiful people.

As an adult reader of youth fiction, I fully enjoyed this novel. It was sufficiently detailed and original to maintain my interest and presented positive values. Although exploring dark themes including concentrated and misuse of power, the story also stressed the importance of hope and faith in life. Jeff Wheeler always comes forth with a positive story even in worlds full of danger and challenge.

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