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Raymond E Feist Reading Order

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Navigating the Worlds of Midkemia: The Definitive Raymond E Feist Reading Order

For over four decades, Raymond E. Feist has been a towering figure in epic fantasy. His sprawling saga of Midkemia and the empire of Kelewan has captivated millions of readers, weaving a complex tapestry of magic, war, gods, and heroes. Yet, for new readers (and even seasoned fans revisiting the series), the sheer volume of books—over thirty novels spanning multiple story arcs—can be daunting. Anyone searching for the correct **Raymond E Feist reading order**quickly discovers there are two main approaches: publication order and chronological order. Each has its merits, but understanding the overarching narrative structure is the true key to an immersive experience. This guide is designed to offer a clear, comprehensive, and naturally flowing path through Feist's masterwork, ensuring you don't miss a beat in one of fantasy literature's most beloved universes.

Why the Reading Order Matters

Unlike some sprawling fantasy series that are purely linear, Feist's works are structured as distinct story arcs, often referred to by fans as "cycles" or "serpents." Characters age, kingdoms rise and fall, and major events in one book set the stage for conflicts that may not fully erupt until several volumes later. Jumping ahead without the proper context can spoil major twists or leave you struggling to understand political betrayals and magical rules. The **Raymond E Feist reading order** is not just a list of titles—it is a guide through a carefully constructed timeline. The most widely recommended approach for first-time readers is **publication order**, as Feist himself wrote the books to build upon each other. However, for those who crave a story that unfolds in strict timeline sequence, a chronological read is also possible. This guide will first present the publication order (the standard for most readers) and then offer notes on the chronological alternative.

The Riftwar Saga: Where It All Begins

The journey begins with the original quartet that launched Feist's career. These four novels are the essential foundation for everything that follows. If you read nothing else, read these.

Young Pug, an orphan boy working in the kitchens of Castle Crydee, dreams of adventure. An ancient rift in the fabric of the world brings the warlike Tsurani to Midkemia, plunging the Kingdom of the Isles into a devastating war. This is the novel that introduces the core characters—Pug, Tomas, Princess Carline, and the indomitable Arutha conDoin. The magic, the world-building, and the coming-of-age story are pitch-perfect.

The second half of the original novel (originally published as one massive book in the UK, but split into two in the US) immediately continues the story. Pug is taken through the rift to the alien world of Kelewan, where he discovers his true talent. Meanwhile, Tomas undergoes a transformation of his own. The war escalates, and we witness the first of many universe-altering events.

Note: Many readers read "Magician: Apprentice" and "Magician: Master" as one story. Always read them consecutively.

A few years after the Riftwar, Arutha is about to marry the Princess of Krondor, but a poisoned arrow sends him on a desperate quest for a rare magical flower. This is a tighter, more personal adventure that deepens the characters and sets up the final battle of the first arc.

The epic conclusion of the Riftwar Saga. All the threads come together: the armies of the Emerald Queen, the Nighthawks, and a greater evil that threatens to unmake all of Midkemia. This book features one of the most memorable climaxes in fantasy and ends on a note that is both satisfying and teasing for what comes next.

The Empire Trilogy (Co-authored with Janny Wurts)

This is a fascinating companion series. While set concurrently with the events of the Riftwar Saga, it focuses entirely on the Tsurani Empire of Kelewan. The books are written in collaboration with Janny Wurts and offer a deep, political, and cultural exploration of the Tsurani world.

Mara of the Acoma is a young woman who inherits a struggling house after her father and brother are betrayed in battle. She must navigate the cutthroat Game of the Council, using her wits to survive in a society that undervalues women. This book is a masterpiece of political intrigue.

Mara's web of influence grows. She adopts forbidden practices and challenges the ancient traditions of her world, all while the Riftwar rages in the background. The stakes are personal and galactic.

The conclusion of Mara's story. Her machinations lead to a seismic shift in the balance of power on Kelewan, with consequences that ripple into the later series. While not essential to the core Midkemia plot, reading these after the Riftwar Saga enriches the overall lore immensely. They can be read at any point after the first four books, but publication order places them here.

The Serpentwar Saga

Jump forward twenty years in Midkemia time. A new generation of heroes emerges to face an ancient, serpent-like race known as the Pantathians. This series is often considered Feist's best work in terms of pacing and character development.

Erik von Darkmoor, a former slave, and Roo Avery, a cunning merchant, are recruited into a secret army to spy on a growing threat. This book introduces a grounded, gritty tone that contrasts with the high magic of earlier works.

While Erik faces war, Roo builds a financial empire in Krondor. This book is unique in Feist's bibliography—a tale of trade and corruption that is both thrilling and deeply human.

The serpent armies are on the move, and the Kingdom faces its greatest test since the Riftwar. Old characters from the first series return, and the plot hurtles toward a massive battle with catastrophic consequences.

The aftermath of the war. The Kingdom is fragmented, and new enemies arise. This book provides a satisfying conclusion to the Serpentwar Saga while planting seeds for future conflicts.

The Riftwar Legacy

This is a pair of novels that revisit characters from the original Riftwar Saga, particularly James "Jimmy the Hand" and Prince Arutha's sons. They are set chronologically after the Riftwar but before the Serpentwar. However, they were published later and are less critical to the main timeline.

Based on the video game "Betrayal at Krondor," this novel expands on a plot involving the Nighthawks and ancient artifacts.

Jimmy the Hand's early days as a thief and his rise to become a Squire.

A quest for a magical jewel to prevent a plague.

Note: Some readers choose to skip these as they are somewhat standalone and do not advance the main

Raymond E. Feist reading order

Raymond E. Feist reading order here for completeness in the

The Conclave of Shadows

A darker, more desperate trilogy. The world of Midkemia is recovering, but a new, sinister organization—the Conclave of Shadows—operates in secret to protect the realm from unseen threats.

Kieli, a young man from a nomadic tribe, is the sole survivor of a massacre. He is taken by a mysterious sorcerer and trained as an agent of the Conclave to exact revenge.

Kieli (now called Talon) becomes involved in the political games of the Kingdom, aiming to infiltrate and destroy the Dukes who ordered his tribe's murder.

The story shifts to a new character, Kaspar, a former duke. This novel explores redemption and introduces the threat of a greater evil from beyond Midkemia.

The Darkwar Saga

The scope expands once again. The Conclave of Shadows faces an enemy from the void between worlds—the Dasati, a race of pure evil that threatens to consume all realities. Pug, who has become one of the most powerful magicians in existence, takes center stage.

An ancient cult of assassins resurfaces, linked to an invasion from another dimension. The tone is grim and urgent.

Pug and his companions travel to the Dasati homeworld, a realm of constant war and cruelty, to try to stop the coming apocalypse.

The desperate final battle. This book brings the conflict to a dramatic conclusion, but the cost is immense.

The Demonwar Saga

A new generation takes the lead. The grandchildren of previous heroes must contend with a new wave of demonic incursions.

A magical catastrophe opens a rift to a world overrun by demons. The elves of Midkemia are forced to ally with humans to survive.

The war against the demons rages on. Betrayals occur, and new spells are forged.

The Chaoswar Saga

The grand finale of the entire Midkemia epic. All the characters—from Pug and Tomas to the newest heroes—are called upon to face a threat that could literally unravel the fabric of creation. This is Feist's original planned ending for the entire series, and it delivers a powerful, emotional conclusion.

The Kingdom is attacked from within and without. Ancient enemies return, and the seams of reality begin to tear.

The political struggle intensifies. The Dukes and kings must unite, but centuries of mistrust fracture alliances.

The final book. The ultimate battle between Order and Chaos. Pug's journey comes full circle, and the fate of Midkemia is decided. This is a bittersweet, heroic ending that provides closure for virtually every major thread.

Alternative: The Chronological Reading Order

For readers who want to experience the story in the precise timeline of Midkemia history (including events that happen concurrently), a chronological order is possible. This involves interspersing the Empire Trilogy and the Riftwar Legacy within the first saga. However, most fans argue that publication order is better because the later books assume knowledge of the earlier ones, and the narrative twists are designed for sequential release. If you desire a chronological read, the order would be:

- The Riftwar Saga (1-4)
- The Empire Trilogy (5-7) — concurrent with books 1-4
- The Riftwar Legacy (12-14) — set chronologically after the Riftwar
- The Serpentwar Saga (8-11)
- Conclave of Shadows (15-17)
- Darkwar Saga (18-20)
- Demonwar Saga (21-22)
- Chaoswar Saga (23-25)

This arrangement respects the chronology of Midkemia but may spoil minor references in later books. It is an advanced approach best suited for a re-read.

Standalone Novels and Short Stories

Beyond the core series, Feist has written a few standalone tales set in the same universe. *Honoured Enemy*(co-written with William R. Forstchen) is a story about a Tsurani and a Kingdom soldier forced to cooperate.

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