



Champion in the Darkness

Tyreon Martinson

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Clara's ready to become a master swordswoman. When she goes to meet with longtime mentor Dantor, Clara is told she's destined to become the Champion, a fabled hero who arises in time of need. Confused by this claim, Clara isn't sure she's ready to be a Champion.

Whether Clara is ready or not, the evil Kalidess has wormed her way into Septily's court.

Clara is aided by another mentor, Stelia, whose knowledge of their enemy is both a bane and a blessing. As evil threatens their land, Clara and Stelia must find the strength to overcome the darkness.

Champion in the Darkness Details

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Jack Baillot says

My review! <http://howeverimporbale.blogspot.com...>

Addyson Huneke says

3.5 out of 5 Stars

While certainly not the best well-written book I've ever read, there was something about this book, I have no idea what, that was just captivating. Not can't-put-it-down captivating, but yet it captured me. I'm not sure if it was the characters, or the plot (whose story structure points were out of place), but I do know it is a book that I will remember.

Writing: 3.5/5

While not bad writing, it wasn't stellar either. There were many instances where things should have been shown and were told. Descriptions were sometimes lacking and things went much too well in the beginning. I know that makes it sound horrible, but it wasn't. It did show in some places, and while Clara's POV was anything but deep, Stelia's and the king's POVs were actually pretty good. I'm hoping the author's writing will improve over the course of the trilogy.

Setting: 3.75/5

I can sense good world building in here somewhere, it just never gets shown well enough. I would really like to know more about the world. It seems intriguing, but the descriptions of it are lacking.

Plot: 4/5

The plot was intriguing, but the story structure was off. The first major plot point was around 17%. It bugged me. I got the sense that the author didn't know where exactly where she was going with the story when she started it and never revised it. I liked the new view on the old "hero-with-a-prophecy-declaring-them-amazing." It was refreshing.

Character Development: 5/5

Honestly, I felt the least connected to the main character Clara than to the others. I liked Stelia and her past, but I got a little tired when they kept on talking and talking about the horrible things Stelia had done without actually saying what she had done. I really liked the parts with King Alexandros and how the stereotype of completely evil king was broken. The secondary and minor characters weren't that bad either. The death of the one character was heartbreaking. I really like the way the antagonist was done.

I enjoyed this book and would like to read more of the trilogy. This is a story with a lot of potential. I would recommend this book for lovers of fantasy and any writers.

I received a free review copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. I was under no obligation to write a positive review. The opinions expressed are my own.

Susan Swiderski says

Remember how easy it was to get caught up in fairy tales when you were a child? It didn't matter how much the story stretched the realm of reality, or how unusual the characters were, did it? No, it was all about the magic of the story. It was all about how a story could carry you away to "another world" and completely capture your imagination. It was about making the impossible seem... possible.

Well, guess what? A good old-fashioned fantasy can even work its magic on stodgy ol' grown-ups. That's what Martinson does for her readers with this book, and she does it very well. But she also does something beyond that. She also infuses her protagonists... and their society... with strong Christian beliefs. Faith, prayer, morality, painful lapses in faith, and forgiveness are all as much a part of the "good guys" as sorcery, depravity, and evil are part of the "bad guys." And it works. It works very well. With the added element of religion, the fantastic battle of good vs. evil takes on another level of meaning. And it's an enjoyable one.

In a nutshell, this book scores very well on its overall writing, characters, and story line, but it would have been even better with another round of editing. Although the errors were distracting to me, I'm a pain in the patootie about those things. It's very possible that most readers wouldn't even notice them. As for me, I plan to let the next book of this series carry me away again. After all, I don't read many books that include a ride on a griffin's back.

Nancy Shepherd says

I received this book free through Goodreads. I read it, really liked it, but didn't review it. I'm sorry I failed to let other readers know about this well-written, entertaining story. Today I happened to read some reviews, and while for the most part the reviews are good, I was disappointed at some readers' reactions. First of all, we need to remember this is a young adult novel, geared to a young audience. Because of this rating, I feel the writer achieved her purpose. The book is clean, uplifting, and just plain enjoyable.

Ashley E says

Champion in the Darkness is the story of Clara, an average student following in her mother's footsteps to become a Sword Master, when suddenly greatness is thrust upon her. Following the shocking revelation that she is to become the next legendary Champion, the city is betrayed from within and Kalidess with her dark army takes over. And the battle, not just for a city, but for the whole land, begins.

I certainly didn't dislike this book. It just didn't manage to draw me in. Though the characters were interesting, the only one I really felt like I connected with was Stelia, and she doesn't get a whole lot of screen time. Mainly, the plot just felt too simplistic and predictable to me. Not a bad book, just... not a great one.

There were a few formatting issues and typos, but nothing that would have bothered me too much if I were more interested. For a lot of people I think this would be a great book, but it just wasn't for me, I guess.

[I received this book for free through First Reads and was not required to write a positive or any other type of review. All opinions stated herein are solely my own.]

Ellen says

There was so much that I loved about “Champion in the Darkness” including its well-paced plot, inspiring stories of redemption, interesting characters, and fantastical creatures. But what I loved the most about this book is that it centers on Clara, a teen-aged girl who receives a calling to become her people's champion. In the process she experiences incredible personal loss and struggles with her own faith, yet continues to be the strong hero that her people need. I loved the fact that men and women are both sword-masters in this society and that the fact that the people's champion is a woman is accepted without question. It's great to see books with strong female characters, especially YA books.

The other thing that I really loved about this book was its rich world-building. The author has created a vivid setting which really came to life and enhanced the story. I particularly enjoyed the nautical scenes and battles that took place on board Clara's ship. I almost felt as though I was there in person, although I'm glad I wasn't – there are some scary and truly evil monsters lurking in those particular waters. :-)

This was a great read and I'm looking forward to the next book in the series.

Christine Rains says

Destined to be the next Champion of Septily, Clara isn't certain she's ready for it. She's young and hasn't received the sword of a master swordswoman yet. The evil Sisterhood has gotten its claws into Septily and is about to render it to pieces. With the help of her mentors and friends, she must find the courage to fight in battle. Clara has to have faith in her Lord and herself even when darkness falls over her world.

A wonderful start to the Christian fantasy series, the Champion Trilogy. The worldbuilding is incredible. I love the peeks at the history and the inner workings of the council. There are lovely details about the land and the people, and creatures that are beautiful and horrific. I'm a fan of the people of Aerland and their griffins. I would love to be chosen by griffin to become its partner!

Clara is an admirable character with her struggles of inadequacy and faith. Though at times she seems wise for her age, she is portrayed realistically as a young woman with a grand destiny thrust upon her. My favorite character other than the griffins is Stelia. I'd love to learn more about her and his past. As for Kalidess, she is a villain you can thoroughly loathe.

I can't wait to read more from Tyrean Martinson.

Medeia Sharif says

Clara is young and unsure of herself. When she's destined to be the Champion of the kingdom of Septily, she has to rise to the occasion. With mentors and bad guys, Clara receives guidance as she battles the dark forces. Also, another nice element is her faith, which isn't preachy or overwhelming in this book. I enjoyed both the world building and character development. I don't read much fantasy, but this novel pulled me into the story.

Nickie says

'Champion in the Darkness' follows fifteen year-old Clara, who's preparing for her final examinations to become a master swordswoman. When she goes to meet with longtime mentor Dantor, Clara is told she's destined to become the Champion, a fabled hero who arises in a time of need. Confused by this claim, Clara isn't sure she's ready to be a hero. She's still a kid, right?

Whether Clara is ready or not, the evil Kalidess has wormed her way into Septily's court through the king. Clara must rise to battle Kalidess and the Dark Sisterhood, or watch the kingdom of Septily and its people fall under the powers of darkness. Clara questions her faith, her strength, and her destiny as she fights to do what is right.

What I liked about this book:

I liked Clara and enjoyed seeing her growth, seeing how she handles her crises of faith and finds the strength to keep going. But I **loved** how well the stories of the minor characters were carried through the novel. One of Clara's mentors, Stelia, has a great redemption/forgiveness storyline as she learns to forgive herself for once being part of Kalidess's army. Stelia is strong on the outside, but carries a lot of doubt and uncertainty within. The other minor characters were well considered and helped to create a rounded story.

'Champion in the Darkness' is YA fantasy/Christian fiction, and while the religious side was evident, it never overwhelmed the story. I appreciated how Martinson not only showed people displaying faith when times were easy, but how she explored loss of faith when times were hard, and how different people coped with doubt, anger, and fear.

What I didn't like about the book:

If you're a crier like me, this one has a five-alarm, Kleenex-emergency ending.

A few parts of the story were almost too fast paced to keep up with. A couple of the battle scenes felt like a blur (but I guess that's how it would probably feel to the characters, too!)

I was also itching for a little more information about Kalidess and the dark Sisterhood. It's hinted that some of those questions will be answered in the next book, but I felt like Kalidess was a bit too evil for evil's sake. It would have been nice to have a little more backstory/motivation for her attack on Septily.

Final verdict:

If you enjoy fantasy and epic battles, give this one a try. It has a nice blend of action, adventure, and tangles with those spiritual questions in an honest, real way.

Sarah Maroney says

This is the story of a young girl who has ups and downs as she fulfills the calling God has placed upon her. She has been training to become a Sword Master and receive a sword of power. She learns of the prophecy that speaks of her calling as she is to receive her sword.

Evil comes to destroy her peaceful life, and she is suddenly thrust into fulfilling her destiny. War breaks out, and the lives of all those she loves is in danger. She, along with others strong of courage fight to save her city

from the reign of the evil Kalidess.

Her struggles with faith after suffering terrible loss and pain draws you in to her life. Even though a fictional person, her life shows you that despite suffering such grief you can still trust God to be there for you. He will never leave nor forsake us.

The characters are developed as you read so that you can feel what they feel. I found myself crying at the loss Clara experienced. I can't wait to start reading the next book to find out more about Clara and her journey as well as the other characters. I highly recommend this book. It is well worth reading.

Claire Bansbach says

[Aiden dies! I totally thought that they were going to figure out a way to

Sharon Hughson says

I really enjoyed Tyrean Martinson's debut novel. She had a realistic main character, an interesting supporting cast and an antagonist readers will love to hate.

This is the first book in a series and that is plain. This story has a single problem that is resolved by the end of the book. The character arc for the protagonist seemed shaky. I felt she was still in the middle of her change and the climax had her acting out of desperation rather than because of lessons learned.

There are secrets still to be revealed which will bring readers back. Also, the main antagonist escapes (otherwise there would be no series) so we have to come back and watch her get her comeuppance. I did feel that the losses the main character faced in this story weren't fully developed and this made her response to them fall flat in my mind.

Martinson has a clear light versus darkness theme and the fantasy world she created has a strong religious system. I felt that giving everyone visions made them less special. Also, the recurrent nightmare seemed more for melodrama than to actually build tension. All in all, excellent first book, worthy of a read and I'm placing the sequel on my "to be read" list.

Ray Simmons says

I really liked Champion in the Darkness by Tyrean Martinson. I liked the straightforward battle between good and evil. I liked the Judeo Christian symbolism. I liked the young female hero who is well trained but as yet untested. Most of all I liked the efficient way Tyrean Martinson tells the story without a lot of unneeded words, thoughts, and emotion. Champion in the Darkness starts has plenty of action and drama but Martinson doesn't draw each scene out until you're tired of it so the novel goes fast and I like that. This is a great novel, especially for young Christians if Mr. Martinson can find his audience and sell it correctly. Don't get me wrong, just about any fan of action-packed Fantasy will love Champion in the Darkness but it will really resonate with Christians and Clara is a great, strong, female role model.

Champion in the Darkness has all the elements of a good Fantasy. A bad king, a good prince, an evil sorceress, and a people crying out for a champion. This can be a good series for young people and in the hands of the right director, it can be an awesome movie. Tyrean Martinson has created a character that could

become as famous and popular as Donald Covenant or even Harry Potter. I hope he does it. I for one would certainly like to read more. It's rare to find an action-packed series that is also just good clean fun. Great young characters, great older role models, and very bad villains. What more could you ask for?

Kelsey Bryant says

Champion in the Darkness was excellent. Many elements stood out from your average fantasy; when I finished it, all I could think was, "Wow! Where's the next book?"

The world is Aramatir, the kingdom is Septily. Fifteen-year-old Clara is the only child of her parents and they, like other believers, have a gift that they use in service to the kingdom: Clara is training to be a Sword Master, like her mother, and her father is a Shepherd. The third discipline or gift is Law-Giver. The three disciplines are taught at centers called Triune Halls. Clara and her parents' lives in Skycliff, Septily's capital, are whole; Clara is about to receive her Crystal Sword which means she is ready to become a Sword Master. But then Clara learns she is the Champion, a hero raised up at different times by the Lord to save the people of Aramatir during great tribulation. Almost immediately after that, the tribulation breaks forth in the form of a takeover of Skycliff by the army of Kalidess, an evil sorceress and pawn of Satan who desires ultimate power over Aramatir. Clara's world falls apart and she hardly knows herself as she must put her training into practice, help lead those who escaped from Skycliff, and become the Champion God called her to be.

Epic fantasies don't always give me thrills because I can't always enter into their world; usually the problem is sketchiness and lack of originality. But Martinson's world felt unique, well-drawn, and complete. Aramatir had a history and geography that was fairly easy to grasp, and the differences between the countries were intriguing and realistic. I think it could have benefited from a map and more description, but as it was I did get a clear picture of each place in my mind. Martinson put me there very effectively; one great method she used was not explaining a custom or action and therefore "assuming" that readers knew what it was, because obviously the characters knew. Like historical fiction, this makes readers believe that they are really in the place and time.

Another thing that some epic fantasies lack is character development. I love character-driven narratives, and that's what Champion in the Darkness is. Almost every character – Clara; the Sword Masters Stelia, Salene, Dantor, and Prince William; the Aerlandian prince Adrian; the Septilian king Alexandros – had an arc and an important, interesting story all their own. The novel incorporates several points of view, mostly Clara and Stelia, but each view is clearly delineated.

The battle scenes and fight scenes were very well-described. I grew breathless every time one of the Sword Masters, such as Clara or Stelia, took part in a fight because I was watching it in my mind. Does the author run her own sword academy? She even got down to the way they trained! This brings up a point that perhaps more than any other aspect gave this book its grip on my mind: the issue of women fighting. The society was essentially androgynous; there were no assigned roles, and women as much as men took part in battles. I haven't read many "Girl-Warrior" books, but the fact that no one balked at Clara, a female, being the Champion made gender a non-issue. Clara was very humble, knew she was a woman, and didn't lord it over anyone, man or woman. It was not "I am Woman, hear me roar!" I like the idea of women being able to fight if they need to (I am a martial artist, after all), but I'm not entirely comfortable with the image of women-warriors in this book. There, I said it. If I had to give my conclusion, it would be: I liked that Clara (and the other women) could fight, but not to the extent that they did so. Contradictory? Maybe, but our feelings about issues like these sometimes are.

Something else that made this fantasy unique was its religion. It's Christianity as we know it, albeit with some differences accounted for by custom, such as we see in the real world. The Septilians know the Scriptures, and the main characters have deep, true-to-life relationships with God and deal with tough issues, tougher than many of us will ever face. One thing that felt very realistic was how they see that the men in Kalidess's army can repent and join the good side.

There are several other points I wish I had room for, but let me end with the ending. I found the ending to Champion in the Darkness to be perfect. There is closure, but it's apparent there's much more to be done to accomplish Aramatir's freedom. It didn't feel rushed or incomplete, and yet it set up the next book, promising a fresh story as Clara continues her journey as Champion. I will be looking for that second book!

Lauren says

Very good story.
