



Scorpion Mountain

John Flanagan

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From John Flanagan, author of the worldwide bestselling *Ranger's Apprentice* -- an all-new adventure featuring the Brotherband crew and one of our favorite Rangers!

Fresh off of victory over their longtime nemesis, Tursgud, Hal and the Herons, summoned by King Duncan, set sail for Castle Araluen. Thrust into the dangerous world of Araluen, the Herons learn of a threat to Queen Evanlyn and whispers of a deadly sect known as the Scorpion Cult. Rumors say that Iqbal, who previously tried to assassinate Evanlyn at her wedding to Horace, might be planning another attempt. Not waiting to see if the knife will strike true, the Herons join forces with Gilan and his fellow Rangers to track down the would-be assassins.

In this fifth book in the Brotherband Chronicles, old friends re-emerge to take on new enemies as the worlds of *Ranger's Apprentice* and *Brotherband* join forces! Perfect for fans of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, T.H. White's *The Sword in the Stone*, Christopher Paolini's *Eragon* series, and George R. R. Martin's *Game of Thrones* / *A Song of Ice and Fire* series.

Scorpion Mountain Details

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From Reader Review Scorpion Mountain for online ebook

Kathy Davie says

Fifth in the Brotherband Chronicles adventure fantasy series for middle-grade readers. The story revolves around the young Hal and the equally young crew of the *Heron*.

Scorpion Mountain continues with the *Heron's* tour of duty along the Araluen coast that began in *Slaves of Socorro* , 4.

My Take

It starts off with such promise until Ingvar drops his bomb. Ingvar does raise some good questions, and I'm so glad that Hal took this seriously, though, I hadn't expected Hal to solve this so quickly. I think Flanagan could have milked this drama a bit longer. He certainly had me worried!

Duncan's roaring was certainly dramatic. Nor did it seem within his character. He already knows of the *Heron's* success in *Slaves of Socorro* , how can he possibly even consider making such a statement against Hal and his crew!?

Oh, lordy, Ulf and Wulf are smitten! And is that ever fun to "watch"! Ulf and Wulf are different in this one. Well, part of that is Ulf's tragic event, but the twins are different in this. Flanagan allows us to see how much they care for each other and how much all that arguing is put on. Hal's interaction with Geoffrey is cute, and an interesting possibility for the evolution of *spectacles*. Even if that last line of Geoffrey's does sound a little too modern.

There are some surprises for both sides and a growing mutual respect as they learn each other's skills. Makes me want to go back and start over again with *The Ruins of Gorlan* , 1. Of course, pretty much anything makes me want to re-read this series, lol.

Flanagan ensures the story is at the kids' interest level with all those names they come up with for Philip Tinkytoes, er, I mean, Philip Daintyfin...wait, I know his real name is in here somewhere...

Lydia (and Cassandra to a lesser extent) are good role models for girls as well AND there's some good role modeling for the boys in how well Lydia is accepted and needed by the Brotherband. Be warned, however, Hal does get harsh in a couple of spots. Nothing out of line. So to speak. It's perfectly reasonable for what he needs, I'm just not used to him being this intense.

I think that part of what I love about Flanagan's stories is that the kids are respected. It may not start out that way, but they prove themselves and the adults acknowledge this. I think the stories give kids reading these confidence, a hope that they can be taken seriously and respected for themselves as well *if* they are as caring, moral, and thorough as Hal and his crew.

It's teamwork, support, and loyalty amongst the crew and their friends. Not a bad combination for your kids to absorb.

"The sea is moving constantly and you have to constantly make little adjustments to keep it all going smoothly. You can't take it for granted." Just like a friendship,' she said smiling.
...'Maybe that's why the word ends in -ship,' he said."

That Gilan is definitely a tricky one, lol, while Hal is quite the thoughtful (and hopeful) lad when it comes to distracting his Oberjarl. Kloof may live to strike another day, lol.

It's definitely exciting with Ingvar's challenge and all the sea and land battles the *Heron* and her crew must fight alongside Gilan. New cultures, new ideas, and new enemies to defeat.

The Story

The *Heron* and her crew are heading upstream to Castle Araluen and King Duncan, continuing their turn at duty, sailing and protecting Araluen's shores.

Seems that more than Araluen's shores need protection. The brother of an old nemesis of Princess Cassandra's is hiring assassins to kill her off, and King Duncan wants to stop the danger at its source.

The Characters

Hallasholm in Skandia

Hal Mikkelson is the quietly inventive skirl for the *Heron*. His mother, **Karin**, has been seeing Thorn. **Oberjarl Erak** rules.

The loyal crew of the Heron includes...

...**Thorn Hookyhand**, their battle leader who is still an amazing warrior in spite of his one handedness, and he's a great mentor for Hal. **Stig Olafson** is his first mate; **Stefan**; **Jesper** is their sneak thief; **Ingvar** is huge and his strength enables him to easily load the Mangler even though his nearsightedness prevents his aiming it; **Ulf** and **Wulf** are the quarreling twins who act as one in trimming the sails; **Edvin** is their medic and chef; and, **Lydia Demarek**, a Sister in the Brotherband who is brilliant with an atlatl, has been with them since *The Invaders*, 2. **Kloof** is the dog they rescued from a mountainside outside Hallasholm in *Slaves of Socorro*.

The *Wolfcall* is **Rugen Cloudseeker's** ship. **Agathe** is the widow with whom Lydia lives. *She makes Lydia go to the party.* **Rollond** is the young man who's been romantically interested in Lydia. **Frieda** is his fiancée.

Araluen is...

...**Will Treaty's** homeland, and the Skandians and Araluens have a treaty because of him.

The Rangers

Gilan is a Ranger in Araluen. **Crowley** is still the Ranger Corps commandant. And Gilan's boss. Will Treaty is off with **Halt** and **Horace** on a special task in Hibernia.

Castle Araluen

King Duncan still rules. **Lord Anthony** is the King's Chamberlain. I think **Arthur** is Lord Anthony's assistant. **Princess Cassandra**, a.k.a., **Evanlyn**, is anxious to meet Lydia. Cassandra is also receiving death threats. **Cedric** and **Farrer** are Cassandra's bodyguards. **Geoffrey** the goldsmith is very impressed with Hal's inventiveness. **Milly** is the maid serving the crew in their castle quarters.

Devon Halder is a farmer plowing a field with **Tom**, his plow horse.

Arrida

Wakir Seley el-then, a.k.a., **Selethen**, is an ally of Duncan's and rules from Al Shabah, the capital of the province. He answers to the **Emrikir**. **Kav al Bedin**, master of the *Gerbil*, has a message for Gilan. **Captain Rahim** will command the landing party. **Tabibs** are the tribe's healers, and **Master Maajid** is the best.

The Tualaghi tribe, the Forgotten of God

Yusal is reduced to a drooling idiot after Cassandra's actions in *The Battle for Skandia*, Ranger's Apprentice 4, and his brother, **Iqbal bin Ha'rish**, who now leads the tribe, is determined on revenge. **Dhakwan** leads a *Khumsan*, a company of 50 riders.

Philip the Bloodyhand, a Hellene, is the captain of the *Ishtfana* and has allied with Iqbal, and they've taken over the port city of Tabor. **Kyrios** is his first mate. **Matlos**, **Davos**, and **Patrokos** are some of the crew.

The cult of killers in Jabal Akrab, a.k.a., Scorpion Mountain

They worship the Scorpion goddess **Imrika**. **Ushir** is the first assassin. A **tolfah** is a contract that ends only with a death. **Butrus ibn'Shaffran** is a town dweller and messes up while on watch. The **Shurmel** is the leader of the Scorpion assassins. **Taluf** is an assassin the Shurmel has had to watch. **Ranulf bin Shellah** leads the squad of fifty to attack the *Heron*. **Zafir al Aban** is one of the tribesmen charged with keeping watch.

The Bedullin are...

...a local tribe led by **Umar ib'n Talud**, *Aseikh* of the Khoresh.

Ephesa was a major trading port that was abandoned by the Tuscans. Tribes in the area include the Tualaghi and the Bedullin.

The **Mangler** is a giant crossbow Hall invented and mounted in the front of his ship.

The Cover and Title

The cover uses some chilly gray blues for a close-up of the rippling sand with its outcroppings of rocks and ruins as a nasty, big scorpion pauses under a beautiful damascened sword thrust into the desert sands, its guard and pommel of brass while in between, the grip is wrapped in leather. In the background, a range of spiky mountains rise up. The author's name is in gold at the bottom, the title is a small script in red with "Brotherband" in an embossed and shadowed gold above it. In spite of those chilly colors, the blue sky and the sun flaring in the background gives this cover a warm feeling.

The title is their destination, *Scorpion Mountain*.

Tricia Mingerink says

Yes, this is a re-read via audiobook. And yes, I still think it's awesome. Maybe not top notch for writing style or character development, but with these, I simply don't care. I love a book that is pure plot fun. :) I think this is my favorite Brotherband Chronicles (even though I love all of them) because I simply adore the cross-over with Gilan from Ranger's Apprentice joining the crew and meeting characters from previous Ranger's Apprentice books. :)

Skip says

4.5 stars. Hal and the Heron crew are serving a duty ship for Araluen. King Duncan asks them to join Ranger Gilan to avert an assassination assignment by the Scorpion Cult to kill Princess Cassandra. First, Thorn stops a deadly arrow on a hunt in Araluen, and then they head off to the deserts of Arrida, where they make base in an abandoned city. Hal keep Ingvar in the Brotherband with a creative invention, and then designs a land yacht to race through the desert. Filled with many skirmishes, we get to see our favorite characters continue

to rely on each other, including Kloof, the horse-sized dog.

Jonathan Terrington says

I find it incredibly difficult to find the right words to say about books that continue an ongoing series. Do I praise the series as a whole and encourage readers to begin that series? Do I praise the individual book? Here I guess I can only do a little of each.

Scorpion Mountain continues the Brotherband Series which spins off from Flanagan's tightly written Ranger's Apprentice books. They may not be the greatest books ever written but they have charm, character and are fun reads all to themselves. It's why I keep picking the books up and reading them (and why I will be giving them to any future children of mine to read). As books they provide a good heroic alternative to the confusing muddle of society as it stands. In my opinion these are books that contain characters who overcome their flaws and teach interesting moral lessons - particular ideas such as having the courage to stand up to difficulty, rather than merely running from it all.

So yes, as a continuing book in the series this is well worth a read. I have little else to say given how distracted I've become from reading of late. Hopefully that changes given that there are some new Brandon Sanderson books due out this year. His books always draw me back into reading for whatever reason...

Kenny says

(IS THIS A DREAM OR IS BROTHERBAND AND RANGERS APPRENTICE ACTUALLY IN THE SAME BOOK?)

OMG!!! WILL HALT EVELYN HORACE, WITH ,HAL STIG THORN LYDIA AND THE HERON GANG! YUP WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO SEE ALL THESE CHARACTERS MEET IN THE NEXT BOOK! SERIOUSLY THIS CAUGHT ME LIKE (WHAT IS LIFE?)!

~I am so freaking exited for this 5th installment in the Brotherband series! I see so much great potential with the crew heading to Ardulan and the possibility of us seeing some old friends from Rangers Apprentice!

~I read on Amazon that the crew were going to chase after this interesting Scorpion cult that wanted to assassinate Evanlyn or princess Cassandra! (epic right?) Also there was a rumor that we will get to see Will and Halt too! Even though it is a rumor I am almost certain it will be true!

~ Remember to never get up hope while we wait 3 Months for this amazing book it will come one way or another we will get our hands on this precious book! Remember to drink Coffee!

Tom says

This book was SOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO good!!!!!!! I really liked the action and planning

that occurred in the book. It was really exciting, but this book has one disappointment: So far, it is the last one in the series, so now I am one of those people who actually have to WAIT for another book in the series. Other than that, this book was great, and I would definitely recommend it to anyone.

Daniel Shellenbarger says

The Brotherband is back for another adventure, this time Princess Cassandra of Araluen is being hunted by a cult of assassins hired by the brother of the tuareg brigand she killed way back in Erak's Ransom. Since Will and Halt are off in Hibernia, the King sends Gilan, Hal, Thorn, and the Boys (and Lydia) off to Arrida (aka Africa) to find a way to stop the stream of assassins. Like its predecessors, Scorpion Mountain is a quick and enjoyable read but I struggled between giving it 3 or 4 stars because there's a definite feeling of been there, done that in this book. For one thing, this is the second book in a row that deals with a group of Arridan ruffians. Likewise, we have the Brotherband leading the liberation of a town (much like the attack on Limmat in book two, though far less involved), and the main plot of a cult of assassins reminded me a bit of the cult of gold-obsessed schuysters from Halt's Peril, not to mention that this is all a spin-off of Erak's Ransom, one of the weakest of the original Ranger's Apprentice books (ironically, I actually enjoyed this much more). The biggest problem is that the Brotherband series still hasn't really found a compelling main narrative since the end of the whole "we must hunt down Zavac to recover the amber orb and regain our honor" thing. I will say that at least Hal had some nice opportunities to use his cleverness in this book (which I won't enumerate since that would give away some of the book's best moments). I do feel a bit bad giving this just three stars, since it's generally quite readable, but the series feels like it's on autopilot, with Flanagan recycling plots and settings and I just can't reward that, particularly when there's so much great mythology and history out there to give you plenty of awesome ideas for Norse-themed YA fiction (I'm still saying it, Hal doing the Leif Ericson thing: discovering new lands... it would be awesome, just have to think of some compelling reason to get the crew (or at least Hal) exiled). Hopefully, now that the Brotherband is done with its service to the Araluens, Flanagan will feel free to try something a bit more novel with the series.

Hannah says

Oh my stars!!!! YES!!!! So excited! This book is going to be beyond amazing!
But December? Really? What am I going to do with my life until December!?!? Fantasize about Brotherband characters meeting Ranger's Apprentice characters, probably! Just imagine: Evanlyn and Lydia, Halt and Thorn, and Will and Hal!!! It's going to look so good on my shelf next to all my other Brotherband Chronicles and Ranger's Apprentice books! Until December!
-King's Ranger, Blaze

Connor Connealy says

Loved it, can't wait for number 6

Too many writers try to make their books revolutionary, unlike anything anyone's ever read before. John Flanagan doesn't have this problem he found a style of writing that works, very much like that of Brian Jacques in my opinion, and he's stuck to it ever since
When the Ranger's Apprentice series ended (the first time, after Lost Stories book) I found myself saddened. I didn't think that the Brotherband Chronicles could live up to Ranger's legacy, but it has. Familiar characters

from the Ranger's series and constant references to Ranger's events make the Brotherband series seem like it is more of a spin-off than a completely separate series, in a good way. There are lots of great parts of the books, inventions, humor, and action are all abundant in the series so there's something for everyone. The Flanagan's novels are "recommended" for middle school to high school students, but really people of all ages can find something to enjoy in his writing.

Jenks6 says

Another great book by John Flanagan! Hal and the brotherband go off in pursuit of the scorpion cult, made up of highly trained assassins. There is lots of combat and it is very interesting. Great plot and I couldn't stop reading it! I would highly recommend this book.

Janet Wu says

I WANNA SEE WILL!!!!!!!!!!

Nariman says

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Miffy says

Flanagan is VERY good at this. He is a clever storyteller, great at creating and maintaining characters, and even though the combined series' of Rangers and Brotherband is getting extensive, none of this feels stale.

There are some significant shifts in the way characters are speaking to and about each other - particularly with reference to the relationship between Lydia and Thorn. What has previously been antagonistic, and it times sexist on Thorn's part, has turned into an exploration of the worth of women in a male-dominated world. Cassandra/ Evanlyn and Alyss are both strong characters, but they play second fiddle to the Rangers and the male interactions and friendships. Lydia is an integral and necessary part of the Brotherband - in fact, I can't imagine the series without her commitment to her craft, her high standards, and her standouts refusal to be an accessory to the boys. She is her own person, and my favourite character.

This is a cracking read. Get some Brotherband into you!

colleen the convivial curmudgeon says

In my review for the prior book in the series, I listed some general grips that I have for the series as a whole,

and these last two books in particular. In the name of laziness, that review is here:
<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

One of the particular issues I had was that I felt Gilan was sort of wasted as a character in these books. I understand that Hal & Co have to reign supreme, but I felt some of the shunting made Gilan seem sort of superfluous at best, and kind of stupid at worst.

There was one part in particular in this book which I felt was a huge wasted opportunity, specifically the part where (view spoiler). I get that Hal's skirl and knows most about ships and sailing, but in the tactical planning involved, I felt this was a perfect opportunity to see the two really work together and come up with a good plan, but, no, once again everyone defers to Hal's brilliance, since he seems to be the only one capable of having an idea in this series. (Ok - slight hyperbole, but it often feels that way.)

That aside...

Well, that aside, this book was kinda meh. It felt draggy and I had to force myself through parts. Maybe I just shouldn't have read several back-to-back because they're too samey.

I feel like there's not as much character development in this series as there is in RA, so while I do like the crew interactions and banter, even that's kind of more of the same. There were some moments of growth, I suppose - though I'm not sure we're meant to be surprised that (view spoiler).

The one bit of character change that did happen I didn't like - referring to the turn Ingvar's taken since he got his glasses. The last book wasn't as bad, but in this book he seems far too blood thirsty for the Ingvar we've come to know and love.

Overall -

Can't say I was pleased with this installment of the series. :-/

Holden Phelps says

Great! As usual.
