



The Crimson Queen

Alec Hutson

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2016 Ink and Insights Competition - Judges' Favorite

Long ago the world fell into twilight, when the great empires of old consumed each other in sorcerous cataclysms. In the south the Star Towers fell, swallowed by the sea, while the black glaciers descended upon the northern holdfasts, entombing the cities of Min-Ceruth in ice and sorcery. Then from the ancient empire of Menekar the paladins of Ama came, putting every surviving sorcerer to the sword and cleansing their taint from the land for the radiant glory of their lord.

The pulse of magic slowed, fading like the heartbeat of a dying man.

But after a thousand years it has begun to quicken again.

In a small fishing village a boy with strange powers comes of age...

A young queen rises in the west, fanning the long-smoldering embers of magic into a blaze once more...

Something of great importance is stolen - or freed - from the mysterious Empire of Swords and Flowers...

And the immortals who survived the ancient cataclysms bestir themselves, casting about for why the world is suddenly changing...

The Crimson Queen Details

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Author : Alec Hutson

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From Reader Review The Crimson Queen for online ebook

Will Wight says

All of the epic fantasy elements you know and love are here: spider-filled dungeons, holy paladins, ancient forces stirring, dark wizards plotting. But these old, familiar pieces are made to serve a beautiful new story.

I have no caveats to offer, and that's not something I can say about many other books. If you're looking for a new epic fantasy story, read this one. Full stop.

Mark Lawrence says

I've not read this book yet, but it's one of ten finalists in the Self-Published Fantasy Blog-Off 2017.

So there's that!

Review here:

<http://fantasybookcritic.blogspot.co....>

More about the SPFBO here:

<http://mark---lawrence.blogspot.co.uk...>

List of finalists here:

<http://mark---lawrence.blogspot.co.uk...>

Kitvaria Sarene says

This one was a bit tropey, but tropes aren't there by accident, but because they usually are what a lot of readers do enjoy to see in a book. So I won't take any star for that - just mention it, so if you are looking for a very original book this one might not be for you. If you do not mind some tropes on the other hand, this might well be perfect for you!

I myself am quite fine with a bit of genericness, as long as I like the characters, worldbuilding and plot - and all of those worked out well for me.

The prose was consistent and well edited. The world was interesting and I liked exploring it!

The characters were a bit of a mixed bunch. While I did like to read about most of them, I did have a hard time to keep some few of them apart, especially in the second POV thread. It took me a while to get those straight in my head.

The story on the other hand was really good, and had me hooked pretty quickly!

Over all a really good read that kept me well entertained all the way through!

Karyn says

Pros: Excellent freshman effort, non-annoying teen protagonist, good plot twists.

Looking forward to #2

Kaitlin says

This is my final read for the #SPFBO and I am happy to say it finished up on a high. I think this is definitely the sort of fantasy read I enjoy, and although it does fall into some of the stereotypes and cliches I've come to know from fantasy, it still felt fun and original at times too.

This story follows Keilan Ferrison, a young fisher boy from a small village in a remote part of this world. Keilan's village is small and disconnected, but even as far from the thrones as he is he has heard the tales about terribly evil sorcery and the Pure who hunt down those with powers. Keilan believes in a kind of magic, because he himself may have some. He's a young boy who doesn't use his magic often, but when he and his father go to fish they can usually call the fish to them and end up with a good haul. Keilan doesn't really think of what he does as magic, more it's just a talent he has and one he and his father keep quiet about, but when a Paladin turns up to take him away Kelian's life is irrevocably altered as it seems there's a lot more to his magic than meets the eye.

What I liked about this story is that it's a multiple pov book and nearly all of the threads we follow were pretty exciting. We have Kelian as our main character throughout, but along the way we get to see inside two empires/kingdoms, follow the Sword of a sorcerer, follow Xin the warrior, follow a man who may very well be immortal, and much more. Each of these people brings something interesting to the story, and I felt like the balance of time given to each was just enough to flesh out the world and shape the character's plots.

My quibbles with the story come from the slow start, this is definitely drawn out more than it needed to be and I feel like it's only the last quarter of the book where the stakes are suddenly really high and exciting. Although there is action and magic along the whole way, it only really becomes deadly later on, and I think I would have liked things to move at a quicker pace overall.

With that being said, I think that the magic of this world is a lot of fun and we have a world where there's not too many explanations for the magic, it's more just about what the magic can do and what it's capable of in the hands of crazy powerful sorcerers who may be returning to the world. We see spider creatures, shape-shifters, explosions of magic, an underground library which I would like to visit, despite the 'being' that lives there. There's a lot to enjoy in this book.

I think in the end it comes down to this feeling like a solid 3.75 out of 5*s (or for #SPFBO a 7.5*s). This is the beginning of a series which, with the next book, shows real signs of promise, but this one feels more like a set up than a book in its own right. I think this author is for sure one to watch, and I enjoyed the read-through of this so would recommend it :)

Ryan Mueller says

This was a very good beginning to a series and author I'll be watching closely. It's classic fantasy done very

well. Fans of The Wheel of Time will find a lot to like here. It isn't a copy by any means, but it gives the same vibe.

The best thing about this book is the sense of mystery throughout. You get the feeling that there is always something more beneath the surface of every interaction, every place in the world, every revelation. That sense of mystery propelled me through the book.

The characters are mix of the likeable (Keilan, Nel and Xin), the conflicted (Senacus), and the mysterious (Jan and Alyanna). This mixture in the characters really worked for me because it provided a lot of variety and had me interested in every point of view.

I'm not sure what to expect from the magic of this world yet. A lot of it still remains a mystery, but that's okay. There are definitely a lot of competing factions, both magical and non-magical, that make things interesting. You have immortal sorcerers, demons, magical assassins, paladins that hunt sorcerers. It has a lot of the great ingredients that make me love a fantasy book.

It also had some good action scenes. There weren't a lot of them, but they were good when they did happen. I won't quite put them up there with my favorite action scenes, though. I also thought at times that Hutson got a bit too descriptive, but that's about my only major complaint with this one.

Rating: 9/10

Laura Hughes says

Really enjoyable yarn in the epic fantasy tradition of Feist and Eddings. Hutson's use of familiar tropes to spin a tale that is nonetheless compelling and new is truly commendable, and I for one can't wait to dive back into this series when the sequel is released later this year.

Celeste says

Full review now posted!

Original review can be found at Booknest.

Rating: 4.5/5 stars

I'm completely blown away. This book completely obliterated my expectations. It was fantastic! I've not read as many self published books as some of my friends and fellow reviewers have, but I've read enough to see that they are just as hit-or-miss as traditionally published books. As far as I can tell, there are more self-published works of fantasy and science fiction than in any other genres, which means there are lots of misses out there. Thankfully, there is also a plethora of hidden gems just waiting to be discovered. Alec Hutson's The Crimson Queen is undoubtedly one of those. While I've loved other self-published novels, this is the one that left me flabbergasted. I've read a multitude of traditionally published fantasy novels that didn't hold a candle to this debut, and I truly don't understand how or why a publishing house hasn't jumped on it yet.

As soon as I started reading, I was excited. So excited, in fact, that I messaged friends recommending the book to them before I was even a quarter of the way in. Hutson created a varied, interesting world that

gripped me from page one. We see many facets of the world, from the islands to the forests to bustling cities to ruins of lore. Each of these places is populated by vastly different people, with different gods and myths and customs. There are also multiple empires in this novel, some fighting subtly for dominance while the others choose to keep their focus turned inward. I loved getting a tour of the world of the Raveling through the eyes of various characters.

There were tropes in this book, but they felt fresh to me. Hutson wasn't leaning on them so much as finding new ways to make them shine. Tropes become such because we love them, otherwise they would never stick with the genre for so long. I love when authors take tired tropes and breathe new life into them, and that's exactly how I felt Hutson handled the tropes he utilized. There's a lot of exposition in this novel, but I never felt bogged down by it.

Hutson's characters are also a diverse lot, ranging from your quintessential chosen one, a gifted but ignorant boy on the cusp of manhood; a man who awakens one day to realize he's actually immortal and is missing nearly a thousand years worth of memories; a Fist warrior, who is as one with his four brothers to the point that they feel each other's emotions and hopes and fears; one of the Pure, the warriors sent out into the world by a god to eradicate sorcery; a self-absorbed emperor and the courtesan who leads him by the nose without him realizing that he's relinquished his control; a sorcerer and his knife, the woman who keeps him safe; and many more.

And then, there's the title character: the Crimson Queen. For more than half of the book, this Queen is almost a creature of myth, unseen but ever present in the minds of the people. She is loved and hated and feared, but is rarely understood. There's a level of mystique to her character that I absolutely loved. I won't say anything else about her, because I want other readers to be able to experience that mystique for themselves.

This world faced cataclysms in its past, and is desperately trying to avoid them in its future. But there are some characters who seek to recreate these cataclysms to their own ends. Hutson did a great job of creating a villain who was intriguing but self-absorbed to the point of evil. I found said character fascinating to read about, though the further I got into the book the more I curled my lip while reading this person's perspective.

Something I really loved about this book was the handling of magic, and its unapologetic presence. I feel like modern fantasy novels often either shy from magic, keep it too mysterious to understand, or develop an almost scientific system for it. This book did none of those things. Magic was present, those gifted enough to wield it, but it wasn't formulaic. There were also mythical creatures who weren't fully explained, but who were very present in the story. I just felt that Hutson did an excellent job of balancing the mystery of magic and the presence of magic, without compromising either aspect for the sake of the other, and it's something that I really appreciated. The magic was also widely varied, with different facets shown by the various methods used by the divergent groups.

Hutson's writing style is also to be applauded. He managed to develop prose that is so highly readable that it almost disappears as you read the story. His words painted pictures in my mind instead of catching me up in the loveliness of the wording. I appreciate both methods, but Hutson's choice of readability over profundity worked best for this story. Not that there weren't profound statements made, mind you. I have to include a few pieces of his more philosophic dialogue, because they stuck with me. Here's what he had to say about free will:

"All that a man has in this world is his own will, the freedom to do what he desires. Taking away that is the greatest crime one can inflict on another. Murder - it is terrible. But it is over in an instant and the dead never can truly understand what has happened to them. They are simply gone. But slavery - day after day, year after year shackled to another's whims - it is the most heinous of crimes."

PREACH. It's good stuff, right?! Free will is one of the greatest gifts we've been given, and stripping another person of that free will is one of the greatest wrongs we can inflict.

Here is one of the character's thoughts on the written word:

"A book is the pinnacle of arrogance for it demands to be heard, but it cannot listen. It desires to communicate, yet it refuses conversation. ... The arrogance of writing comes not from the finished creation, but from the very act itself. What hubris is required for a single mind to believe that its thoughts should populate the world? What unbridled arrogance is it to disperse ideas like the petals of a dandelion in the wind, allowing them to float free, to germinate in the minds of others like an invasive weed?"

I. Love. THIS. Seriously, I've always been held in thrall by the power of the written word, but I don't know that I've ever considered the arrogance of writing. I'm not positive I agree with the spirit behind the words, but it's definitely an opinion that makes sense and has merit. It's a theory that will stick with me. But if writing is arrogance, I'm incredibly thankful that so many people have chosen to give into that arrogance and share their stories with the rest of the world.

I'm so glad I read this. The plot was compelling and incredibly enjoyable. I loved the characters and setting, as I stated above. And the book had just enough ending to be satisfying, while leaving enough up in the air to make me almost desperate for the second installment. I'm incredibly impressed, and highly recommend this book to any and everyone. I'll leave you with one final quote from the book:

"We make our own destiny. Believing otherwise abdicates responsibility for what happens, and I refuse to do that. Failure or glory, the result belongs to us."

The Nerd Book Review says

Alrighty then, I hope to do an interview with Alec at some point but I will be giving a full review since this is a SPFB0 finalist this year.

I really enjoyed this book, it was a no question 5/5 for me. I thought it was fast paced and wildly entertaining. I want to read the 2nd book immediately and can promise I will read it as soon as it is available. I also have to mention that it really reminded me in some ways of the Wheel of Time series by Robert Jordan. As someone who has read the entire WoT series more than a few times I say this as a positive. One of the PoV characters, Alyanna really reminded me of Lanfear, but a better version of her. Lanfear always seemed to me to be a character who could have been much more in the series, I mean she was a millennia old sorcerer who was renowned for playing others from the shadows but she never took risks and Alyanna is a really fun character who lurks in the shadows but is willing to strike when necessary. This series is much more fast paced than WoT, which was written in the older style of epic fantasy where there were a ton of campfire stories and lulls as characters journeyed. TCQ was always entertaining and didn't take chapters off to talk about chairs no one would ever sit in as Jordan was infamous for. Most of Hutson's characters are far more nuanced and aren't usually pure evil or purely good. There is no Dark Lord to defeat. The only thing I didn't like was that we don't get the full version of songs that people are singing. One of our characters is a great bard and we only get to see part of the songs he sings. We also don't tend to get full stories. I know some people can feel like they bog a story down but if done right I really enjoy listening to the stories within a story.

So now to the story itself. At its' heart this is a book about a coming conflict between the idea that wizards and sorcery is evil and that it can be helpful and do good if it is properly wielded. A thousand years ago the age of sorcerer kingdoms was ended through a great cataclysm caused by magic. A man claiming to be the

prophet of the god Amon, along with his followers, were given the power to become immune from magic and the ability to sense those who use magic. They became known as the Pure and have rooted out magicians and purified them for the last thousand years.

On the other side of this is a nascent power led by a sorcerer queen named Cein who is called The Crimson Queen. She won't have any PoV chapters in this book and we won't directly meet her until the last third of the book, but her influence is everywhere in the storyline.

There are several PoV characters but Keilan is our Main POV character. When the story begins he is a young boy from a fishing village who has some extra "talents" that help his father catch more fish than the other villagers. The other villagers do not appreciate these talents and they consider sorcery evil. Once the mendicants of Amon find out they send a member of the Pure to bring Keilan to be purified. Keilan is going to be important to a lot of groups thanks to his Talent. This is the beginning of one heck of an adventure that will be pretty much non-stop action once Keilan is taken from the village.

We also have a couple other PoV characters who get a fair amount of page time. Jan is a thousand year old bard (not much of a spoiler since we find this out in his first chapter). The aforementioned Alyanna will have a fair number of chapters and her chapters are the most illuminating on the background of the world. There are a couple of characters who get a few chapters. Xin, pronounced Shin, is a fist warrior. They are slave fighters who are trained to fight with 4 other brothers and are considered the best swordsmen in the world. Xin was a great character and I loved that he always referred to himself as "This One". Seneca is the Pure who takes Keilan at the beginning and is an interesting and insightful character. He might be the character I am most intrigued by as he moves forward into more books.

This is a book that is both character and story driven and I will not be surprised if it wins the SPFBO competition. It has a traditional fantasy coming of age story that people love so well but written in a modern style with a fast paced plot that doesn't take chapters off. The map is easy to follow and I was easily able to superimpose ancient Europe in my mind as a way to follow the movements of the characters. I thought of the Menekarian Empire where the Pure are the elite soldiers as the Byzantine empire and then we journeyed west until we hit Dymoria and a people that reminded me of the Celts. This is obviously over simplified but helpful in giving me a nice mental image of the peoples in the world as I imagine the story in my mind. I just finished the novel and I will try to update this once I've had time to think it over a bit

Lukasz says

Two months ago I opened Crimson Queen and DNF-ed it after few pages. I'm not sure why. Evidence suggests I have some undiagnosed neurological issue because once I opened it a few days ago I couldn't put it down. The world sucked me in and characters were so interesting and well written that I was anxiously followed their fates.

The story starts familiarly. Our main character comes from a small fishing village. His mother was a stranger saved from the sea by his father. Her past is unknown, her fate was cruel – villagers killed her after accusing her of sorcery. It seems Keilan has her power. Actually, it seems he has a lot of power as in the beginning of the book he almost wakes up a sleeping god. It wasn't unnoticed by other forces presented in the book. It seems everybody's interested in Keilan – an Empire who hates magic and wants to Cleanse him, a brilliant and cynical immortal who has her plans for him, Crimson Queen who plans to bring back magic to the world.

The book is told through few POVS and we get almost all the goodies fantasy can offer. There's a Paladin, swords with names, a holy empire that hates magic, shape shifters, demons, mysterious assassins who move through shadows and use blades made of the night. There's also an immortal wizard who pulls all of the strings from behind the scenes. Personally, I love these tropes, especially when they're done well.

The story is quite complex and immersive. I'm satisfied with all reveals and twists. I can see that some readers may accuse the book of being based on tropes but personally I don't mind. I like tropes. The writing style is flowery in places and rich and I liked that. The writing, unveiling the pot and the world through the eyes of multiple characters kept the story fresh and interesting. I rooted for all characters, even the evil ones who are quite fascinating. The character I somehow relate most to was, unexpectedly, Jan. I really wonder what plans Alec Hutson has for him? I'll be sure to check it once the sequel hits the shelves.

Of course, it wasn't perfect – some events weren't fully explained. In some moments the story felt too rushed, in others possibly interesting times were summed up in few pages (Keilan stay at Scholia, students interactions). It won't change my rating though as the book was hard to put down and never failed at keeping up the tension.

It's also worth noting Crimson Queen has a great balance between darker and lighter tones. Personally, I dislike books that try to be ultra-grim just for the sake of it. In Crimson Queen we experience tragedy and loss of characters we may start to root for and yet there's still hope and some light left.

Well done Mr. Hutson. I want a sequel. Right now.

Hannah Ross says

Lately I have read quite a few books by indie authors, and sometimes I find myself saying forgivingly, "well, this is pretty good for an indie book". But The Crimson Queen is an excellent book by any standards - epic fantasy at the best of the genre, with a captivating plot, engaging characters and intricate world-building. This is a beginning of a high fantasy series which has the potential of becoming very successful - and certainly deserves to be so. Alec Hutson has put a lot of work into crafting his tale, and it shows.

I would recommend The Crimson Queen to fans of books written in the style of A Song of Ice and Fire, with multiple POVs that let us experience the world through the eyes of each character in turn, with plenty of backstory, intrigue and deadly twists and turns. Let's just hope the author, unlike George Martin, produces the next book in the series soon!

Mihir says

Full review over at Fantasy Book Critic

Author interview for those interested.

OVERVIEW/ANALYSIS: The Crimson Queen by Alec Hutson is at first appearance a book that might cause your eyes to glaze over it. Its cover has an unusual shade of yellow in its background along with a generic appearance of an old city. That however would be your first mistake. This book since its release in late 2016 has been slowly making waves and was slotted in to the 30 books afforded to us. Of the first batch of books that I read, it was the best and hence was our first semi-finalist.

The story blurb again talks of an old cataclysm which shaped in the world into what it is currently. The main story opens in a very Wheel Of Time fashion with the prologue showcasing someone or something that is old, possibly immortal and talking of events that will change the world. The story then opens us by showcasing the life of Keilan Ferrisorn who lives in a small fishing village and has a sorrowful past that

impedes his village life. Janus Balensorn is a person who we quickly learn has more to him than just a honeyed voice and an arresting manner. Senacus is a paladin of Ama and one of the Pure, a sect of Templar-like knights who have powers and seek to stamp out magic. Senacus' path brings him in conflict with certain wielders of magic and his path to Ama will be sorely tested. There are a few more characters but that's the gist of the protagonists who power the main plot threads.

The book has a strong mystery to almost every aspect of it. Firstly there's the mystery of the world itself which is mentioned in the blurb. Secondly there's the two characters Keilan and Jan (as he refers to himself constantly). Both these characters have mysterious tragedies in their past which fuel their behavior and there's also the titular character who's as slippery as they come. In fact the author builds up her mystique by not introducing her until the last quarter but at the same time we are constantly hearing about her exploits and her fame. Then there's the other characters in the book who take on POV roles and are as intriguing as our two main protagonists. Even though it's his debut, Alec Hutson has managed to write some solid characters. Sure they stick to fantasy tropes (orphan village boy, unknown traveler, and deadly warrior) but he writes them with a fresh perspective and make sure that they don't seem jaded. Case in point the book's main protagonist (at least by POV chapter count) Keilan who is a half-orphan and pretty soon discovers how ignorance plays out among the scared rural populace. While this seems very generic in the fantasy landscape, Alec Huston has imbued enough freshness in to Keilan that you want to root for him and get invested in his past.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out that Alec has a real solid knack for writing engaging characters. Be they villains, heroes, or merely misguided ones, nearly all the folks we meet are fully formed personas who act and behave with their own agendas in mind. The book also has female POV characters and in fact they are the real mysteries of the story. One of them is the titular character and the other one, well you'll have to read the book to know more about her. I must point out that at this point I'm very, very curious to know more about Cein d'Kara the noted Crimson Queen. Plus kudos to the author for presenting her as a multi-faceted person who depending on which angle you view her from, can be a tyrant or a savior or both. So very much like Dany if she had already conquered Westeros and now was eying Essos & Southros.

What I also thoroughly enjoyed about this book was the way the author introduced the world. There's a solid mystery afoot about what happened over a millennia ago and how it has impacted the world that we are currently introduced to. The world map showcases the different regions and most fantasy readers will be easily be able to recognize the real-world facsimiles. Plus the author makes sure to slowly unveil aspects of the world and there are no big infodumps that threaten to derail the plot or the pace of the book. The story also visits quite a few locations listed in the map and while that seems very trope-ish, it doesn't feel forced at all. The author also mentioned in his interview with us (to be posted tomorrow) about where he got his influences from but the world he creates is his own with touches of our world here and there.

In our current atmosphere of solidly grimdark books, this fantasy debut takes route less soiled. Alec Hutson's world isn't necessarily grim but neither is it a bed of roses. He doesn't really take the gritty route but manages more of a traditional heroic fantasy route. This works to his favor as I believe writing a grimdark story just for the heck of it, would certainly fall flat. Here I believe the author set to write a fantasy story more in line with the late 80s & 90s fantasy titles which were epic in content, but not grimdark as the current trend is. I can't exactly say that Alec Hutson's writing is like certain author X or writer Y but what I can surmise is that he brings to the table certain elegant qualities.

Imagine the best of Robert Jordan's worldbuilding skills, laced with Terry Brooks' fluid characterization and topped off with a pinch of David Gemmell's heroic fantasy escapades. Then you get an indication of the fun that awaits when you crack open *The Crimson Queen*. I'm sure Alec Hutson might disagree with my estimation but honestly it's very clear that he's his own writer and wants to write a certain kind of story. Were there any drawbacks to this story, yes there are some flaws. Plot wise this story doesn't offer anything new that fantasy readers haven't seen so far. The author incorporates lots of fantasy tropes and that might be

a turn off for certain readers. One can even make a premise that the book's pace falters a bit in the middle but it's only a mild stumble and then picks up the pace as it hurtles towards its conclusion. Another point might be that there's a lot of unexplained things introduced but since this book one of the Raveling series, I can't really hold the author to that.

CONCLUSION: Alec Hutson's The Crimson Queen is a rare indie gem, sure nowadays we are unearthing more and more of them than say 4-5 years ago but it doesn't take any sheen off the efforts that have gone into completing this one. The Crimson Queen is a fantasy debut that will have the reader rooting for its main characters, enjoying the plot mysteries and wanting the next book desperately. That is a hallmark of a true winner and I don't think there's much more to say beyond that.

Nimrod Daniel says

Summary: In short, I'd say that it's a captivating classic epic fantasy with a few twists, that is set in a really interesting world. I did this as an audiobook and I'm glad I did because Guy Williams did a great job in narrating most of the characters. (\$1.99 for audiobook upgrade btw).

I'll break this review into a few sections:

Writing-style - I really liked Alec's writing-style, the book is really well-written with vivid descriptions. Plus, his storytelling technique is great, so it was a really fun to read and very easy to be fully immersed in the story. Actually it's quite surprising that it's his debut.

4.5/5

Setting/world-building - The Crimson Queen is set in a fascinating world that might appeal to all fantasy fans. The world has an interesting history, that unravels before the reader as you go along. History has a very significant impact on almost everything that happens in the book, but I'll keep this in mystery and won't reveal too much :)

There are mages from different disciplines, holy paladins with cool powers whose mission is to keep the world clear of mages, ancient order of assassins with cool abilities, warriors with great skill, cool monsters, demons, ancient deities that reside in the world but stay away from everyone, lurking, and a shapeshifter. A lot of things to keep you intrigued and curious to learn more about the world.

4.5/5

Plot - To be honest, the book is full of fantasy tropes, some tropes have a twist, but the tropes are evident everywhere. The main character is a young boy and you may call it a coming of age story, but the book focuses on a few other characters too and they're not young kids to say the least ;)

With that being said, the book definitely has some modern touch to it, as things aren't black and white, and there's no dark lord that should be defeated, it's more about ancient and new powers of sorcery. Plus, the loyalty of some characters is not entirely clear, they seem to have their own motives and not only to their faction and that makes things more intriguing as you are wondering about their true motives. There are some interesting plot-twists and revelations that will keep you captivated.

The story is well-paced from the get go, but the pacing in the second quarter felt a bit uneven. You won't get bored:)

4/5

Characterization - Even though there's an interesting cast of characters and the characters are pretty much well-portrayed most of them lack depth. It's the only weakness that I find in this book.

3.5

All in all, it's a very good debut that lays the foundations of a series I'd be interested in reading.
I'd highly recommend it to classic epic fantasy fans.
4-4.25/5

Alec Hutson says

I've been waiting all day for my 999 ratings to click over finally to 1k. I can't take it anymore!

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

UPDATE: 99 cents on Kindle US today 12/23/18
