



King of Thorns

Mark Lawrence

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In Book One of the Broken Empire, Mark Lawrence brought to life the “morbidly gripping”* (*Publishers Weekly*) story of a boy in search of power and vengeance. Now, in *King of Thorns*, that boy’s journey into manhood takes him to the dark depths waiting within his soul...

The boy who would be King has gained the throne...

Prince Honourous Jorg Ancrath vowed when he was nine to avenge his slaughtered mother and brother—and punish his father for not doing so. When he was fifteen, he began to fulfill that vow. Now he is eighteen—and he must hold on by strength of arms to what he took by torture and treachery.

King Jorg is a man haunted: by the ghost of a young boy, by a mysterious copper box, by his desire for the woman who rides with his enemy. Plagued by nightmares of the atrocities he committed, and of the atrocities committed against him when he was a child, he is filled with rage. And even as his need for revenge continues to consume him, twenty thousand men march toward the gates of his castle. His enemy is far stronger than him. Jorg knows that he cannot win a fair fight.

But he has found, in a chamber hidden beneath the castle, ancient and long-lost artifacts. Some might call them magic. Jorg is not certain—all he knows is that the secrets they hold can be put to terrible use in the coming battle...

King of Thorns Details

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Author : Mark Lawrence

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From Reader Review King of Thorns for online ebook

Milda Page Runner says

Sometimes the world slows and you notice every small thing, as if you stood between two beats of eternity's heart.(...) The air hung heavy with the metallic scent of rain. I wondered: if I stood out there, in the flood, would the rain wrap a grey life and make it shine? Should I stand, arms spread, and raise my face? Let it wash me clean. Or did my stains run too deep?

Err... * picks up the jaw from the floor* Wow!

This book is in an entirely different league than Prince of Thorns. So many layers, so many meanings... Pandora's box of lost memory, Schrödinger's cat in a box, the notes trickling one by one into an all encompassing melody that hits you like trainwreck with the new meaning. I don't think my review can do it justice.

I did not expect that, but it blew my mind.

I'm not sure if the last book can live up to it.

"The world isn't shaped by reasonable men," I say. "The world is a thief, a cheat, a murderer. Set a thief to catch a thief they say."

sometimes it's easier to love someone who has flaws you can forgive in return for their forgiving yours.

There is no sound more annoying than the chatter of a child, and none more sad than the silence they leave when they are gone.

They say God watches us in every moment. But I think, in some moments, when some deeds are done, he turns his face away.

A time of terror comes. A dark time. The graves continue to open and the Dead King prepares to sail. But the world holds worse things than dead men. A dark time comes.

My time.

If it offends you.

Stop me.

Mark Lawrence says

Six death scenes cut from the book:

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

My latest book, Grey Sister, (not connected to this series) is out now.

+++++

King of Thorns was a gamble on the intelligence of my readers - I bet on it being pretty high - I appear to have won.

Some readers struggle with the non-linear progression through two time-lines and various memories. It is, I'll agree, not the standard way to write a fantasy book, though those who read literary fiction will be more used to seeing a narrative flex its muscles in more imaginative ways.

The fantasy genre tends to reserve its imagination for the content (dragons, wizards) rather than the form, and I'm afraid I rode over that rather rough-shod. I'm very glad that so many of my readers were able to stick along for the ride though.

When I handed the book in the first batch of editor's notes to come back included the line:

...it is shaping up to be the most extraordinary work of fantasy I have ever read: because you take such risks...

Well I wasn't aware I was taking risks as I wrote it but I've come to understand that she was talking about the structure/style of the thing. I guess if I were a planner I would have looked at the diagram of times/places/events and shaken my head, crumpling the page to toss at the bin. But I write stories as they roll out of my head, so I never saw the whole 'mess' of it until I looked back behind me at the end.

Check out Road Brothers if you want background stories on Jorg and his companions.

Join my 3-emails-a-year newsletter #prizes

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Alienor ✕ French Frowner ✕ says

(06/09) King of Thorns? Probably the best of all SO. MANY. FEELS.

Do you know what I love in these books? Picture the perfect hero. Kind. Skilled. Supported by all kind of prophecies. *See this guy, the perfect Gary Sue of fantasy?* **Well, here, you root for the other guy who wants to kill him.**

Because Jorg is some kind of anti Knight in Shining Armor.

"I don't play by the rules you choose."

✧ Hello, Knight in Shining Armor : Prophecies see you rule the world because you're *the One*.

♠ **And Jorg?** Prophecies see you rot in Hell and witches bet against you. *Screw you.* Well, now, there's this Necromancer who's dying to have you as ally, but is it really a good thing?

"If he told me something about the glories ahead for the Prince of Arrow I would have trouble restraining myself. If he suggested I might be born in the year of the goat then there would be no restraint!"

That doesn't work. Too long. Let's nickname our heroes, shall we?

✧ **KiSA** : Everybody loves you, because you're *that* merciful.

♠ **J** : Nobody should love you because the only way to live for you is merciless. Now, there are fools everywhere. People who love you don't know why though.

✧ **KiSA** : If you'd earned a medal each time you won a great battle, their weight would stop you from walking.

♠ **J** : If there's something I learnt, it's that you know when to run. And when to come back.

✧ **KiSA** : You lead an army which is formidable in many ways : in numbers, in courage, in skill... Damn you're exhausting me here.

♠ **J** : Well, you can be dazzling, but a trick is a trick. By the way, you own the best ideas and made me giggle like crazy at times. You **surprise** me. And with surprises, I'm like a little child : *Aww thank you, and can I have some more?*

"As Maical would say, it helps to have the elephant of surprise on your side."

✧ **KiSA** : Yes, but you *are* good.

♠ **J** : Don't care, you're funnier, little smart-ass.

✧ **KiSA** : You follow some kind of rules in your life. In the best case you even have a book where they're written just for you. *Lucky you!*

♠ **J** : Rules? What are you talking about? There's no such things as rules in this world!

✧ **KiSA** : You do what is right.

♠ **J** : You do what is good ... for you

"Sensible, honest. I don't even know how to pretend those things."

✧ **GS** : You're fucking handsome and you stay it.

♠ **J** Well... Hmm... No offense Jorg, but I might find you scary in the real life.

✧ **KiSA** : Professional savior is your full-time job.

♠ **J** : There was a moment in this book when you save someone you didn't even know! I was so proud of you, Little Jorg. Careful though, don't go all weak however.

✧ **KiSA** : You want to rule because you want to bring justice in this world

♠ **J** : You want to rule because you can, *DUH*.

"I wonder if we don't all go stamping and crashing, crashing and stamping in our own little circles going nowhere. And I wonder who it is that laughs at us."

✧ **KiSA** : You wear your kindness on your face.

♠ **J** : Damn, you've got so many secret failures hidden in your heart it took a whole book to unravel them - but that was worth it, because above all we already know about you, in this book you become *more* - a complex King who's growing up, acquiring maturity and who perhaps, perhaps will learn to be better, yet can never forget what he truly is, his devil inside and his wickedness.

Flash news! Knight in Shining Armor is in this book! **Luckily that's not Jorg.**

Meanwhile? **Damn you, Jorg of Ancrath, to make me care so much I almost cried for you.** We can follow a good hero and feel his pain but what happens when a flawed bastard we love is hurting and lets go of his shell to show us his vulnerabilities? **We cry, plain and simple.**

"We're not memories, Katherine, we're dreams. All of us. Each part of us is a dream, a nightmare of blood and vomit and boredom and fear. And when we wake up - we die."

I think I'm kind of ruined for future heroes now. *Sigh*.

PS : **One thing to know** ➡ the rhythm is way slower than the first one and if it didn't bother me because I honestly thought that the story needed it in order to develop Jorg's characterization, I think it would annoy some readers. *Voilà*, that was my only complaint toward the book. But then, the back and forth between past and present was worth it. Even if I was frustrated more often than not.

There was a time when Jorg was only a prince...

➡ **Book 1** : Prince of Thorns ★★★★★

➡ **Book 3** : Emperor of Thorns ★★★★★

For more of my reviews, please visit:

Bookdragon Sean says

Unpopular opinion time!

There are some brilliant anti-heroes in the realms of fiction. Anthony Burgess' Alex from *A Clockwork Orange* and Byron's *Don Juan* immediately spring to mind. In both cases, the characters are undeniably flawed and twisted; they exploit the world, and other people, to meet their own ends: they are egotistical bastards with little (to no) scruples.

Mark Lawrence's Jorg Ancrath is no different; he is a nasty piece of work who lives simply for himself. There's nothing wrong with such heroes in fiction, sometimes it works amazingly well. Despite how horrible Byron and Burgess' characters are, I still secretly rooted for them. Whilst reading I had a flicker of hope that they would see the error of their ways. Underneath their despicableness they are still inherently human: they can become something better if they put their energies into self-improvement. However, Jorg is beyond help.

Why won't he die?

Unfortunately, whilst reading an *King of Thorns* I so ardently wished for Jorg's death. Such a thing is slightly problematic. If the central character is so despicably evil, and so far beyond help with his psychotic ways, that I want him dead, I may as well give up reading because it is so clear that Lawrence would not kill off his main character. Nothing short of seeing him in a pool of his own blood would redeem the story for me. He is a murderer and a rapist. I wanted to hear no more of his words. There's not even a glimmer of potential character development.

Moreover, he's totally invincible. Whenever he comes close to death or an enemy overwhelms him, he suddenly discovers a secret ability he didn't know he possessed. It's so annoying, whenever he was on the cusp of defeat; he bounced back with some ridiculous luck. What makes him so especial and effective? Nothing. The new found abilities were never explained; there was no real reason for him to have them and all they did was keep him stationary in the plot. He never grows or learns but instead just portrays the same dark personality.

To make matters even worse the book is split into two time frames, one four years earlier that narrated past events and one in the present. Yay. So basically it was more of the same. This book seems to be very popular amongst fantasy fans and, I must admit, Lawrence did identify (whether purposeful or indirectly) a major gap within the market. His anti-hero is exceedingly dark, but is that really a good thing? Food for thought.

I did read the third book after this, my rating of this is also in consideration of how it all ended, which is something I'll address in my eventual review of *Emperor of Thorns*. But for now though, I'll end by saying I really hated this book: it was dreadful.

The Broken Empire Trilogy

1. *Prince of Thorns*- A heartless 2.5 stars
2. *King of Thorns*- **A dreadful 1 star**

Jeffrey Keeten says

"I read the small forgotten books. The ones found behind the rows on the shelves. In locked chests. In pieces to be assembled. They look old. Some are--a hundred years, three hundred, maybe five, but Orrin's are most ancient. Mine though, they look older, as if what is written in them takes its toll, even on parchment and leather. Mine were set down after the Burning, after the Builders ignited their many suns."

I first met Jorg Ancrath in the first book of The Broken Empire called Prince of Thorns. I must insist that anyone interested in reading this series start with book one. Jorg evolves a bit in book two and it would be best...if you wish to keep your head attached to your shoulders...that you know as much about the young whelp as possible before you actually start to like him.

Now Jorg is a complicated guy. He is a prince. In book one he is 14 years old and swings a sword as well as most grown men. He is brutal, angry, unsympathetic, and consumed by revenge. His mother and brother are killed brutally and he is flung during the melee into a thicket of thorns. Now these are not ordinary thorns, but spiny plants with hooks that once beneath the skin can kill a person. Jorg is found hanging in the thorn thicket bleeding from the numerous barbs that hold him suspended above the ground. It turns out to be really inconvenient for a lot of people that Jorg lives. His father moves on quickly marrying again and siring another heir. He doesn't like his son (an asshole in his own right who seems to recognize those tendencies in his son) very much from his first wife and the writing is on the wall that the new heir will inherit. Jorg goes on the road accumulating a band of misfit brothers that he wanders about creating mayhem while he contemplates what to do about the killer of his mother and brother. He resolves the issue in spectacular fashion.

Book one was so gritty, so pleurably wicked that I didn't even know quite what to say about recommending it to other people. I winced, laughed, felt guilty for really liking the book, felt my own buried hormonal rages stir with delight, and came away from the experience realizing I'd never read anything quite like it before. My 16 year old son asked me about reading the book and I replied that maybe when he got older...somewhere around 30.

So there has not been a more anticipated book for me in a long time than the *King of Thorns*. At first I was thinking WTF? Did Mark Lawrence grow up between book one and book two. Has he stepped back from the gore and the random violence and the whoring and wrote...what...a more philosophical book? I gnashed my teeth and clipped my fingernails with snippy disdain. I intended to set the book aside for a while, but after reconsidering I thought to myself maybe the fact that I've read 80 pages and no one has been impaled or eviscerated or a village consumed by fire or a priest beheaded is because Lawrence plans to have me in blood up to my elbows for the rest of the book. It is rather disturbing that I found myself feeling this way. I don't as a rule like excessively violent books. I blame Lawrence, somehow the way he writes it makes me want more.

"You can cut seven shades from a man. Scarlet arterial blood, purple from the veins, bile like fresh-cut grass, browns from the gut, but it all dries to somewhere between rust and tar."

Now the thing of it is Jorg is in love with Katherine Ap Scorrion. Their previous meetings have not gone well. The last contact he had with her in person involved crushing her mother's vase over her head. In Jorg's defense she was trying to stab him at the time. The opening quote in this review is from Katherine's journal which are sprinkled through out the book between chapters. The further I read in the book the more I loved finding those little gems seen through the eyes of Katherine. Now if you have any doubt about how Jorg feels about Katherine and believe me you will have doubts that the young man feels anything for anyone you might be reassured by a few of Jorg's thoughts on the matter.

"In memory I study the light on her face, beneath the glow-bulbs of the Tall Castle, beneath the cemetery trees. I envy those patches of sunlight, sliding over her hair, moving unopposed the length of her body, across her cheekbones. I remember everything. I recall the pattern of her breath. In the heat of Drane's kitchen I remember a single bead of sweat and the slow roll of it, down her neck, along the tendon, across

her throat. I've killed men and forgotten them. Mislaid the act of taking a life. But that drop of sweat is a diamond in my mind's eye."

Jorg's main rival for control of the empire and for Katherine's hand in marriage is Orrin of Arrow. He is charming, intelligent, and brilliant swordsman. Even Jorg can't help but like him and there is nothing more annoying than liking your rival. The Prince of Arrow intends to rule the empire and King Jorg is as worrisome to him as a pimple on his chin. Now Orrin has decided that he is god's gift to the people and that everyone would be better off with him commanding the empire. So for their own good he is conquering all the fiefdoms that exist across the Broken Empire and of course eventually he arrives at the gates of Jorg's castle.

Map of the Broken Empire

Now the castle's are left over structures from the Builders. Skycrapers or parking garages that have been fortified and turned into defensive structures. One structure even has a working generator that continues to supply power to dull glowing light bulbs. The builders when they released their suns shattered the structure of civilization and left the world a land of sword wielding soldiers and goat herders. The residual computer image of a builder named Fexler Brews, existing only because that generator continues to function, explained what happened when those thousand suns were unleashed. *"We weakened the barriers between thought and matter."* *"They did not bring magic into the world, but strengthened the link between want and what is."*

Humans are like cockroaches no matter what we do to this world a few will always survive. Some might say we display a lot of pluck, a resiliency to be admired, but ultimately what we do best is adapt.

Voodoo was once explained to me. Voodoo only exists because people believe it exists. If you don't believe in Voodoo it can't hurt you. The magic that exists in this world may be real or may just be a dream, but the dreams to Jorg are very real. *"We're not memories, Katherine, we're dreams. All of us. Each part of us a dream, a nightmare of blood and vomit and boredom and fear. And when we wake up--we die."*

There is magic in this world, dream travel, and necromancy.

Okay so even though Mark Lawrence didn't give me what I expected with Book Two I have to admit he wrote a better book, a more mature book. We find Jorg beset with new worries, kindness creeps into his soul, and he ponders his own desires and wonders if they are his own or some powerful entity trying to control him. It was written that he should have died on the road with his mother and brother. It is written that the Prince of Arrow is supposed to rule the kingdom. As we know what is written is rarely completely true. Jorg by some miracle has lived to see 18 you'll have to read the book to figure out how that is possible.

I do intend to find Mark Lawrence. He has dual citizenship with Great Britain and the United States. He has security clearance in both countries so he knows a little about playing two ends against the middle. I'm sure he can disappear like a man out of a

John LeCarré novel and maybe he has a bit of magic in his fingertips, but since I am a collector and I don't have his signature I do need to pin him down and put a pen in his hand.

WANTED!!!

If you see this man please contact me.

**If you wish to see more of my most recent book and movie reviews, visit <http://www.jeffreykeeten.com>
I also have a Facebook blogger page at:<https://www.facebook.com/JeffreyKeeten>**

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

Rick Riordan says

I think this is my favorite book in an excellent trilogy, because the odds are so severely against our anti-hero Jorg. The stakes are high and the plot twists are perfect. Having killed his uncle and secured a small kingdom in the mountains, young Jorg now faces a powerful, charismatic enemy – the Prince of Arrow – who seems destined to unite the Broken Empire. The action jumps back in forth in time, from the siege of Jorg’s capital to several years before, showing us how Jorg traveled the empire and gathered his resources to fight a seemingly impossible battle. We also see part of the story from the viewpoint of Katherine, the woman Jorg wants more than anyone, and the woman he is destined not to have. Though Jorg continues to be the most Machiavellian of protagonists, not hesitating to kill, maim or destroy if it serves his goals, we come to understand him more in this book, and it is impossible not to cheer for him. He is a refreshing, brutal wind, blowing away all the romantic trappings of high fantasy – chivalry, honor, good versus evil, and faith in a higher cause. Sometimes, when you see that white knight riding by with his armor gleaming and his smile flashing, you just want to pull him off his horse and punch him in the face for being too perfect. If you’ve ever had that feeling, Jorg is your man.

Bookwraiths says

Originally reviewed at Bookwraiths Reviews

2015 UPDATE AFTER FINISHING THE TRILOGY

In the below review, I had many criticisms about the story, specifically how Jorg seemingly produced "super-powers" out of thin air to save himself. While that is exactly how I felt after closing *King, Emperor of Thorns* satisfactorily explained those aspects of the story, so when reading this review, please understand many of my criticisms were later made moot by Mr. Lawrence.

THE SOCIOPATH IS AT IT AGAIN!

While I despised Jorg in *Prince of Thorns*, the story itself was highly entertaining and kept me turning pages as quickly as I could read them. However, I did not find this novel as engrossing, perhaps because I’ve grown somewhat use to the main character’s sociopathic behavior.

In any event, since the “shock” value of Jorg didn’t overwhelm me this go round, I found myself focusing a great deal on the story itself, which quite honestly was a bit underwhelming. I could write a multi page review about everything I disliked about this book, but in short, the storytelling was lacking, the character

growth was non-existent, the plot had glaring holes, and Mr. Lawrence continued his trend of what I like to call: the superpower of the day solution to problems.

Please allow me to explain.

In the first book and now the second, Mr. Lawrence writes our favorite sociopath into situations where no reasonable person can expect success. Things look really grim for Jorg many times. However, whenever he needs it, Jorg miraculously discovers some new superpower (magic, science, math, or whatever) to save his ass. To be specific, in *Prince of Thorns*, Jorg was given necromancer power that kept him alive when a normal man would have died. In *King of Thorns*, Jorg gets new, updated necromancer powers, fire-magic skill and Builder tools exactly when he needs them to SAVE HIS ASS YET AGAIN!

Of course, the negative issues with those powers – as shown clearly by their affect on other characters in the novels – miraculously leave Jorg unaffected. And don't even bother to ask how he actually gets a thousand year old Builder's tool in book two, or how a thousand year old tool would still even work. Who knows, because Mr. Lawrence never tells the reader either of those things. Just poof, Jorg has this thousand year old tool, and it works and SAVES HIS ASS AGAIN!

Damn, it is good to be Superman in a Superman comic, isn't it?

But I digress.

Like I stated earlier, I felt this story had glaring holes in the plot. They ranged from unexplained entities controlling everyone to Jorg traveling to seek a fire-mage for no apparent reason to the sheer unbelievability of the battle for Renar and finally the impossible ending. Honestly, I cannot think of a single thing in the novel which did not just leap out at me as unbelievable and obviously yet another way for Jorg to be provided with a new "superpower."

Now, Mr. Lawrence attempted to minimize these problems, glossed over them as much as possible, and his usual method appeared to be mayhem or gore whenever the story was not really working. However, this time around all the blood and brains Mr. Lawrence splatters across your reading eyes doesn't conceal that this story is not making any sense at this point. Because, unfortunately, too much of *King of Thorns* is isolated incidents of horrendous gore or ghostly undead or sociopathic musings without any of it coalescing into a coherent story.

Another major issue in this novel was the format, specifically the flashback chapters. I loved the whole flashback concept in *Prince of Thorns*, as I experienced Jorg's sociopathic behavior played out in present day yet was able to slowly understand how he reached this depraved state when younger, but the "Four Years Earlier" chapters in this book did not work at all. Indeed, the flashbacks in *King of Thorns* merely interrupted the flow of the story when there was no need to do so, because – other than the one detail contained in the box about Jorg's new, baby brother (which honestly didn't amount to much) – nothing in the back story would have prohibited Mr. Lawrence from beginning at the end of *Prince of Thorns* and detailing this next four years of Jorg's life in a linear fashion.

And before anyone mentions it, I do not want to hear about Sageous, because he is only trotted out a couple times in the book and is basically a non-entity – except when Mr. Lawrence wants to somehow blame him for every horrendous thing Jorg has ever done in his life. This one, minor character is not a reason for a flashback story.

As for the Katherine diary chapters, they can be summed up as boring and not relevant to Jorg's tale at all. Sorry, they did do one thing: give Jorg unexpected help of exactly the right sort at exactly the right time to SAVE HIS SOCIOPATHIC ASS YET AGAIN!

Did I mention it is good to be Superman in a Superman comic?

Oh, I did, didn't I. Sorry.

I realize most fantasy fans absolutely adore this book. It is hailed as the best thing since sliced bread or the internet or whatever. But, honestly, just like the Emperor didn't have on any clothes, *King of Thorns* is just an okay novel. Sure, it is entertaining, but it really isn't more than that.

I suppose if you idolize Jorg, it's great fun to see him overcome impossible odds to gain his desired goal. (Of course, you have to overlook the superpower of the day problem, but fanboys don't really care about that anyway.) But even in fanboy land, it is obvious that this novel does not rise to the shocking brilliance of *Prince of Thorns*, which – even with its obvious weaknesses – grabbed hold of your throat on the first page and pulled you through its gore coated world whether you wished to follow or not.

And, you know, maybe it was wrong of me to expect Mr. Lawrence to write that sort of book again, because there is only so much raping/killing and other sociopathic behavior one can throw at a reader before he or she grows numb to it. Though the sadistic torture of the innocent dog in this novel was a great try.

However, what I had truly hoped for in *King of Thorns* was some growth in Jorg's character, and for a while there, I truly believed Mr. Lawrence was providing us that. The encounter with the ghosts of Gelleth and the trip to find his mother's family along the Horse Coast – while out of character for the Jorg portrayed in book one – seemed to hold out the promise of a maturing sociopath. But alas, I was mistaken, because by the end we discover that Jorg's touch of humanity was all an illusion caused by a "magic" box, and now we are back to the same Superman Jorg who knows all, has all the luck, and has all the powers at just the right time with the same old, sociopathic outlook on everything. Zero growth. Same old same old.

And that stupendous post-apocalyptic setting that Mr. Lawrence teased us with in the first book. Great idea. Very intriguing. Not developed at all in this novel. There is a short bit about a holographic projection of a long dead "Builder," but even that doesn't really add anything except a vague explanation of where magic came from. In fact, the main role of this mysterious "Builder" hologram in the story is to give Mr. Lawrence an excuse as to how Jorg finds two Builder toys to (drumroll please) SAVE HIS ASS YET AGAIN!

Quite frankly, this great post-apocalyptic setting is going to waste, used more as a grab bag for weapons for Jorg than anything else. And since we are talking about this, why don't we the reader know anything about the history of this place?

This series is called "The Broken Empire," right?

Jorg Ancrath is trying to reunite it as emperor?

Wouldn't it be useful for a reader to actually know what Empire we are talking about, or maybe why it split apart? Perhaps some history about the last thousand years of human existence since the big apocalypse. I mean, we get lots of talk about ancient Greek legends or ancient philosophy but nothing about this world's history at all.

Are there no legends or stories about the last thousand years?

Guess none of that is as important as watching a sociopath murder or maim someone else.

I realize that as I published this criticism of the beloved sociopath Jorg that I will have offended the pride many of you have in this character. I'll most likely get so much negative feedback that I could drown in it all and that my pride might suffer immensely.

A time of negative comments might come. Bad times for me. The fanboy universe opens up and all the haters come out to get me. But the world holds worse things than pissed off fans, because I'm a hater too. So, the time of haters can come.

It will be my time.

If it – and my dislike of Jorg – offends you.

STOP ME!

Damn, I do love me some Jorg quotes though. :P

seak says

Mark Lawrence stormed onto the scene (well, as much as you can in the publishing world) last year with his debut, *Prince of Thorns*, book one in *The Broken Empire*. This divisive book found a fan in me, despite this particular first person point of view that all notions of good and virtue tells you to hate.

I found a lot of things that I liked about Jorg even though I didn't love everything about him. Lawrence's captivating writing and smooth prose keep the pages flying and have not a little to do with making this work genius in its own ways.

King of Thorns is quite the experience to say the least. Jorg really resonated with me in this sequel, he's growing up a bit, still self-obsessed, but seeing things a little differently than his kill everything/everyone past. I like his whole, "I'm going to make this happen no matter the odds" philosophy, but at times he really is hard to read.

While his disposition on let's say kicking severed heads was enlightening, clever, and funny, it's also terribly creepy. And that's not the only one. I've heard it compared to "staring at a fire," you just can't stop, but how much are you really enjoying it? The more I think about it, the more this describes my reading experience. I don't really know how much I actually enjoyed the reading experience especially with the amount of cringe-worthy moments.

This being said, I am vastly impressed by Lawrence's talent to not only keep you reading despite these moments, but to keep you rooting for a character who can be so deplorable. I say "can be" because he does have his moments of goodness, they're just peppered with moments that make you a little sick or shocked even.

Along with the character of Jorg, Lawrence employs a plot device throughout *King of Thorns* that I thought was incredibly interesting and worked extremely well. The book takes place four years after *Prince of Thorns* and consists of the present day and then lengthy flashbacks to four years earlier, when Jorg was newly "crowned" king of Renar. The present is actually his Wedding Day, but at the same time the Prince of Arrow has marched on the highlands of Renar with his countless soldiers. By flashing between these two time frames, we begin to find out that Jorg has not only grown, but has had dealings with the Prince of Arrow in the past.

In the present, we see Jorg is going through some, let's call them mental experiences. He sees a dead child everywhere he goes, which is obviously a hallucination, and he holds some mysterious box. The box is not

only an interesting addition to the story, but works as an impressive plot device, but I'm wary of revealing too much. Let's just say there is an addition means of keeping information from the reader.

As well as using clever plot devices, I found Lawrence's human to be clever in the extreme, with little gems like this strewn throughout:

"They call it a gate but it is a door, five yards high, three yards wide, black oak with iron banding, a smaller door set into the middle of it for when it is simply men seeking entrance rather than giants."

For many instances of humor, I had to reread, almost missing the joke entirely. This is definitely the kind of humor I prefer and Mark has a subtlety that just worked for me.

Lawrence has created a series that challenges your perceptions and manages to be compulsively readable. The Broken Empire trilogy is an experience to say the least. I couldn't put it down and that's partly because I just couldn't look away. King of Thorns takes the anti-hero to a whole new level, one who might even give Logan Ninefingers of Joe Abercrombie's First Law trilogy a run for his money.

4 out of 5 Stars (Highly Recommended!)

Kyle says

As good as the first? Not quite but I still really liked it.

The story is told from three points of view, Jorg's present as he faces a massive army set to destroy him, flash back four years as Jorg tries to discover the origins of a mysterious copper box that seems to have stolen some of his memories, and finally the journal entries of Katherine Jorg's love interest.

At times I found this bouncing back and forth confusing but I'm pretty sure it was only because of how slowly I was forced to read the book.

The world created by the author is rich and fascinating. The characters are real and I definitely started to care about what happened to them. Although Jorg is not the typical hero I'd relate to in a novel, I still find myself relating to his circumstances and wanting him to overcome the obstacles put in his way.

I can't wait to pick up the next book in the series and read more.

Petros Triantafyllou says

If you regularly follow my reviews, you must have already noticed that nice out of ten times I don't get to enjoy the next installments in a series as much as the first one (probably due to the fact that I'm already acquainted with the world & character building, as well as the magic system, so i am less impressed by the rest of the story). King of Thorns is the exception to the "rule". The one out of ten.

"Fifteen! I'd hardly be fifteen and rousing villages. By the time fifteen came around, I'd be King!"

Prince Jorg of Ancrath succeeded in defeating his uncle's forces, claiming his kingdom and crowning himself King. But, perhaps it was not meant to last... King of Thorns has three different POV's. The first is featuring Jorg sometime in the past, trying to locate the origins of a mysterious box. The second POV is some journal entries of Katherine Ap Scorrion. The third and final POV is featuring Jorg in the present, following his desperate efforts to defend his Kingdom from a massive army set to conquer the entire Broken Empire.

“Memory is all we are. Moments and feelings, captured in amber, strung on filaments of reason. Take a man's memories and you take all of him. Chip away a memory at a time and you destroy him as surely as if you hammered nail after nail through his skull.”

Lawrence manages once more to deliver a grimdark masterpiece, combining old school fantasy with modern elements. The pace is slow at first, offering an enjoyable and relaxing read, while building momentum for the finale. The world building is exceptional and ever-expanding, and the magic is beautifully structured and well balanced. The rest of the characters are further developed, making the reader to identify with their feelings and actions. Finally, the excellent use of archetypes, didacticism and euphemism, as well as the philosophical and existential dilemmas raised by the author, are placing King of Thorns as one of the best fantasy fiction books of our time.

You can find more of my reviews over at <http://BookNest.eu/>

Peter says

With my reading time becoming increasingly precious, only the very best authors make it to my reading pile at all, and of those, I went with Lawrence to read after finally finishing edits to The Daylight War.

Lawrence's poetic prose is amazing, far and away the best of the modern fantasy authors. The prose can get a little hard to follow if you're sleepy or your brain is fried after a long day, but this is hardly a quibble.

First person narrative is arguably the most difficult POV style, and Lawrence pulls it off brilliantly, putting you in the mind of a thoroughly despicable character and somehow making you root for him to succeed. The limited scope, however, forces Lawrence to jump around in time a bit and use some plot devices to feed information to the reader at an even pace that keeps ratcheting tension. At times this can be a bit confusing, but for the most part the frustration only invests you further.

And let's face it, I can hardly point fingers at people who jump around in time to tell a story.

As with many fantasy series, there is more magic in book two than the first, sometimes in ways that are convenient for the protagonist, though it is largely window dressing. Almost everything that happens in the book plays second fiddle to Jorg's inner struggle as he attempts to find himself and unravel his own thoughts and desires from the influence of others. This is the REAL story, and it is a very satisfying one.

I had the pleasure of meeting Mark when I was in London last summer, and he is a great guy in real life in addition to being one of my top ten favorite authors.

We share publishers in the UK (and thanks to the Penguin Random House merger, soon the US), and you can bet I will be pulling strings to get an early review copy of the third and final book in the series.

Markus says

"The warrior rides a black stallion. Smoke shrouds the castle ruins behind him and the wind gives only glimpses of the corpse-choked gap between high and broken walls. That same wind streams long dark hair across his shoulders, like a pennant, and flutters the remnants of his cloak. To his left and right more riders emerge from the fog of war, warriors all, their armour dented, torn, smeared with soot and blood."

Honourous Jorg Ancrath, the Prince of Thorns, has become a king in his own right, and from the fortress of the Haunt, he rules the Renar highlands. But the crown is a heavy weight to bear for the eighteen-year old king.

His life at the Haunt is plagued by nightmares of the atrocities he has committed, he finds the diaries of Katherine of Scorrion, the only woman he truly wants, and the raging pain of his dark past is almost overwhelming. At the same time, young king Jorg faces his greatest adversary yet; Orrin, the Prince of Arrow, who has united six kingdoms beneath his dragon banner and who is preparing to make a bid for the throne of the Broken Empire itself...

Originally, I was going to give this book three stars, as it started out really slowly. Jorg had apparently become full of doubt and regrets, and didn't seem like the brutal, care-free antihero of the first book. The story also lacked a lot of the drive, and I began to think that the magic Mark Lawrence worked in *Prince of Thorns* was ebbing out of the story. I'm happy to say I was wrong.

The longer I got into the book, the better it turned out to be. The story was constantly improving, the supporting characters were way better than in the first book, and even though the story of *King of Thorns* is told in three different periods of time (making parts of it a bit confusing), the narrative is still remarkably well written. Then there is the ending, full of shocking twists and surprises, and the best part of the series so far. Ultimately, this is a solid sequel that truly lives up to the high standards set by *Prince of Thorns*, and skilfully sets the scene for the conclusion of the story.

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

Jorg Ancrath, you little fucker.

My feelings towards Jorg and this book can be best described as **the epitome of an abusive relationship**.

Jorg is not a nice man. Actually, for most of the book, he's 14 years old, so fuck the "nice man" part because he's not even a man yet. But he'll rip your head off, quite literally, if you say that to his face.

He is a rapist. A murderer. He tortures. He kills haphazardly. He is destructive, capricious. A madman in every sense of the word. He will wound you, physically and emotionally.

You will want to run away. You hate him. You despise his actions. You can't believe that you could ever love someone like that.

Enough is enough. It's time to stop the cycle of abuse. It's time to be decisive. It's time to leave him, forever.

There's no forgiving someone this despicable.

And then out of the blue, his vulnerability surfaces. He begs for redemption. He does something so kind, so selfless that it breaks your heart. You get a glimpse of his inner hurt. His inner demons.

You weep for what made him into a monster. He is, after all, just a wounded, hurt little boy who needs to be loved.

And just like that, you come back to him.

And the cycle of abuse repeats itself.

Jorg, you little fuck. I love you. You dumb little piece of shit. I hope you die.

Don't leave me.

Petrik says

2.5/5 Stars

A lot of reader and fans claimed King of Thorns to be the best out of the Broken Empire trilogy, it pained me to do so but I can't agree with that notion.

I'm going to inform you right from the beginning of my review, **there's an innocent dog torture scene in this book** and I'll admit that part was quite tough to read. However, this doesn't mean that the scene itself isn't important to the overarching story, there's a reason behind this scene. It's really well written and in my opinion, the most emotional and powerful part of the book. The plot actually started going downhill right after this particular scene for me.

Picture: Chibi King Jorg by peastri

The storytelling method in King of Thorns is told in an unconventional way, there's two timeline like the previous book, **'Wedding Day (Present)'** which informs the reader of a day in Jorg's 18 years old life and **'4 Years Earlier (Past)'** which continue the story straight after the end of the previous book. However, there's two more timeline to follow, one of **Katherine's diary** that Jorg found and another, a **hidden timeline** that appears in both present and past frame. The narrative juggles continuously between these four frames that it requires only maximum focus to read or believe me, you'll have a hard time understanding what's going on.

Although I find this narrative a unique experience, personally it's also quite tiring to juggle continuously between four timeline in a single book. Katherine's diary aside, all the other three are told in Jorg's voice which made it tedious to read. Plus, the huge amount of amnesia, illusions and dream sequence in the book made the story even harder to digest. However, my main gripes with book lies not in its unconventional narrative but in the same problems I found with the first book except that it only grew worse for me here.

Jorg, whether you love or hate him is an insanely fascinating character to read. In fact, Jorg sociopathic behavior is the major factor that drove me to finish this book or the trilogy itself. I'm intrigued to find out

what he's going to do next and I love how his character develops. Unlike the first book, there is more color to him now rather than only his endless thirst for vengeance and "*I don't give a fuck*" attitudes, I love reading his growth and complex personality, which at the same time brought me to one of my main problems with the book, no other compelling characters.

Picture: Red Jorg (*Interior Artwork from Broken Empire Omnibus edition by Jason Chan*)

There's just not enough development for all the other characters in the book, not even those who's been there since the first book. I can't give my empathy to all the side character's fate and from what I've read until now, seems like this peeves of mine will continue until the last book. Another part that I dislike is again, its world-building.

I'm more or less okay with the fact that the world being in the same world with us already but seriously, it's the end of the second book and there's still no proper explanation to why the world became this way other than some really vague explanation. The book would definitely grab my attention more if there's more information to why the world became this way but my biggest con of the book is in how things always worked perfectly for Jorg despite how impossible the situation looked like.

Jorg saved himself all the time by conjuring these special superpowers and tools without any limitation, explanation and they're always there for him at the right moment and the right place conveniently. I won't bother you with the details but I'll let you know that these superpowers and tools that he used is uber powerful and there's no repercussion from using them. As of now I still have no idea if these '**Gary Stu**' characteristic of him will be redeemed later on but like the first book, Jorg escaped all his problems way too EASY with his miraculous circumstances and if it does get redeemed, I won't change my rating for this book as this is how I feel about this one. I can't have the explanation to these miraculous superpower outbursts withhold until the last book. I kept on saying "*Not again....*" every time he got out of these trouble with ease (*which is every time, literally*), Kira could write Jorg's name in Death Note and with his maximum level of luck, Kira would probably misspelled his name or something.

I won't assume to know Mark's decision behind this plot device and whether it's truly his intention to make Jorg immensely lucky or not, whatever his intention was, there's nothing wrong with it objectively and I know Jorg will survive the ordeals he faced, otherwise, you know... the story will end already and there won't be a book 3 but still, I always prefer the story I read to have the main characters struggle to win/lose rather than have everything handed to him on a silver platter.

In terms of prose, Mark's prose is beautiful and philosophical but at the same time it could be quite tedious to read when there's way too much unnecessary explanation. Sometimes, it felt like reading a philosophical essay during Jorg's endless inner monologue. However, there's no denying the fact that there are a lot of high quality philosophical prose such as:

"There is no sound more annoying than the chatter of a child, and none more sad than the silence they leave when they are gone."

There's still tons of this high quality prose in the book, I'll let you find out for yourself.

King of Thorns for me was slightly weaker compared to Prince of Thorns and it may be one of the most overrated books I ever read. Some elements work better, some are worse. It's definitely not an easy

book to read, Mark's prose combined with the unconventional storytelling and plot will require only the highest of your attention to read. This book is all about Jorg Jorg Jorg Jorg Jorg, if you love and became a fanboy/girl of him since book 1, the high chance is that you'll love the hell out of this book. In fact, the majority of readers and my friends love this book so this is definitely an unpopular opinion. Sadly, my affection for Jorg isn't enough to make me overlook the other problems I experienced with it. I do however will continue with this trilogy and hopefully enjoy the last book.

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