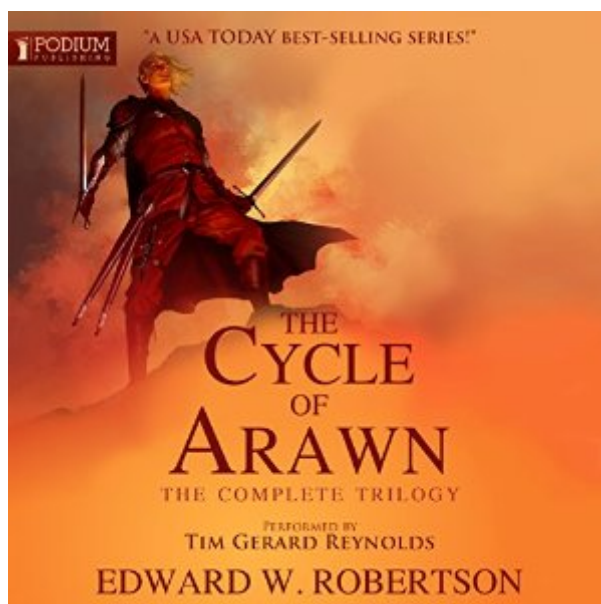


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The Cycle Of Arawn: The Complete Trilogy



Synopsis

The White Tree (book one): In Mallon, the dark magic of the nether has been banned for centuries. Its users have been driven out or killed. Its secrets lost. But the holy book of the nethermancers has just been found by a boy named Dante. As he works to unlock the book's power, he's attacked in the street. The nethermancers aren't gone-and they want their book back. Caught between death cultists and the law, Dante fights for his life, aided by his growing skills and a brash bodyguard named Blays. Together they're drawn into a centuries-old conflict that brings Mallon to the brink of civil war. Surviving won't be easy. But if they make it out alive, they'll step down the path to becoming two of the greatest warriors the world has ever known.

The Great Rift (book two): Dante and Blays have averted war against their new home of Narashtovik. But they didn't do so alone. It's time to repay their debts. The norren who helped them remain enslaved by the Gaskan Empire. While arming the norren clans for rebellion, Dante hears one of them is in possession of the legendary Quivering Bow. If he can track down the weapon, it could secure norren independence. But the wheels of war have already begun to turn. As Gask moves to crush the rebellion, Dante and Blays find themselves at the head of a campaign for survival-for norren and Narashtovik alike.

The Black Star (book three): Narashtovik has been saved-but Dante and Blays' friendship has been destroyed. Blaming the Gaskan king for the loss of his love, Lira, Blays infiltrates the enemy nobility. There he schemes to bankrupt Gask and drive its ruler from the throne. But Dante's been waiting for Blays' return. If he finds and exposes him, Blays will be executed as a spy. As they squabble, strange lights shine in the east. Harbingers of a long-forgotten threat. If the signs go ignored, Narashtovik will be annihilated by an enemy it never knew it had.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm so often disappointed or disgusted early into most e-books these days that when I stumble upon one that's written by someone who knows basic English I'm delighted and when they bothered to develop a smattering of fundamental writing skills I'm overjoyed. But when they actually have creative talent and imagination I'm ecstatic! The author sucked me in immediately and I became involved with the characters. It was a good romp through a well written coming of age epic but still a grown up story...not teen young adult pulp although it is certainly clean enough for a precocious teen to enjoy. It was meaty with FULL novels to chew on unlike the typical 300-400 "page" e-books there is substantial relevant content. There is very occasional rough language that is appropriate to the moment and the characters. In all I thoroughly enjoyed 99 percent of this series; some of the latter battle scenes I skimmed, merely... The complexity of the plots kept me engaged while the dialogue amused and I loved how the the characters grew and matured, including peripheral characters as well as the main. If you like epic fantasy you will probably enjoy this, it's deeper than most fluffy contemporary fairytales and thankfully there are no silly love triangles! Although there is love there is mostly intrigue, magic and adventure males and females will enjoy alike.

If you are a member of the grammar police this one isn't for you. Personally, I found the story was riveting enough to overlook every single one. The character development was fantastic, the descriptions were just enough, and the author didn't tie up pages with useless romance. I dislike when authors feel that a story is not complete without romantic tension. I loathe that kind of unrequired page fluffing. The tale is creative, (It wouldn't surprise me to see maps and drawings of the different peoples surrounding his writing space) and the author kept all the details straight. I appreciate that there was no more death than required to keep the story moving. The characters stayed true and there was quite a bit of high moral standards among them. I would recommend this book to anyone that enjoys a good fantasy. I will not compare/ contrast this series to some of the other known "hits" of the genre, but I will say that this tale stands well against most that come to mind. The language gets a little gruff from here to there but nothing major. There are no steamy sex scenes, no serious blood, guts, or gore- its just a great old fashioned story. I am sad to see it finish though. It is always hard to say goodbye to well written characters. They had become friends and I will miss them, Mourn most of all. I purposely slowed down my reading once I hit 80% to try and draw it out, but to no avail. My dear Mr. Robertson, I hope you find the time to give me another

glimpse into their world and I thank you for the adventure.

THIS REVIEW INCLUDES 3 DIFFERENT REVIEWS FOR EACH BOOK IN THIS OMNIBUS
THIS IS BOOK 1. What I would have liked to know before I bought this book. (minor spoilers)
Note: This book has a lot of crude language that might be offensive.

1. What type of book is it: adventure, action, drama, etc? This is a dark fantasy epic adventure.
2. What is the story about, in general? The story tells the early years of Dante. As he search for the truth of the gods and magical power, he must dodge dedicated shadowy assassins. Along his travels he encounters wizards, thieves, friends, enemies and discovers himself.
3. What/Who is the target audience? Young adult and adult males. Those with a love for dark epic fantasy might love it as well.
4. How is the proofreading? I did see one or two mistakes but nothing excessive or predominant.
5. Is there character development or exploration? Yes to both. Along Dante's path, he will come to many moral dilemmas. He will fail some and he will pass others. These choices build the character of Dante's personality and expose his very human failures to reader scrutiny. One nagging annoyance was that most everyone talked the same, and VERY crudely. All characters have a degree of biting sarcasm. All characters enjoy back and forth repertoire with an equal amount of intellect and viciousness. It's like the same character spoke out through different dresses. Thus, if you don't like how one character speaks ... you probably won't like how ANY of them speak. The antagonists are great. They aren't blatantly evil, they are just ... people. They have a particular view of the world and they want to impose that view. Very well done.
6. Are the characters likable? In my opinion, yes. Though, I can see how their 'attitude' might be grating and how their very crude and filthy language might dissuade some readers. I enjoyed the freshness of their general anti-hero compositions. These characters care about preserving the life of the innocent, yet are almost diabolically selfish in their ambitions. Honor is a commodity, not a rule. Lies are common coin.
7. Do you have to suspend disbelief? I honestly did not feel that I had to strain my disbelief to extremes. There are a few minor things I might consider silly, or even dumb, but they were perfectly within the realm of possibility.
8. Does the story keep its pacing? I am of two minds about this. I honestly felt that scene changes were abrupt, but also appreciated the author for speeding things along. For example, there are lengthy trips that are narrowed down to single paragraphs. Like "2 weeks of travel later..." and things like that. Though I missed a little of the flavor text, I like that there was no wasted page time. You'll have to decide if this thrills or smears your enjoyment. I honestly feel that the author tries to avoid as many cliches as possible, except those done well enough to advance compelling pacing and story drama. Kudos.
9. Is the book worth the asking price? I bought this book as part of the 3 book Omnibus. I found it very

cheap. In conclusion: An interesting world building, adventure and swashbuckling fantasy story. The characters are generally likable, but lack the individualistic verbal nuances that would round out their compelling merits and flaws. In addition, everyone talked very crudely and harshly. This will not be greeted well by some readers. There are no 'white knights' in these pages, just people doing the best they can. There aren't any truly evil antagonists, just people doing what they think is right, given their ambitions. The proofreading is not perfect, but not a deal breaker. The price, in the combo omnibus form, is quite cheap. This is a good first saga book, even if I felt the great characters and story lacked much to offer anyone outside the target audience. The language makes me feel this book is definitely not for children.

3.5 Stars

SPOILER WARNING. IF YOU HAVE NOT READ BOOK 1 READING BEYOND THIS POINT WILL HAVE SPOILERS

What I would have liked to know before I bought this book. (minor spoilers)

1. What type of book is it: adventure, action, drama, etc? This is an epic adventure fantasy book.
2. What is the story about, in general? The story is about Dante and Blays as they endeavor to free the Norren from Gask's slavery in the hopes of forging a City-State at Narashtovik.
3. What/Who is the target audience? Young Adults and Adult male readers. This one has some romance, but somehow it doesn't seem to appeal too much to female readers, regardless of it.
4. How is the proofreading? Same as the 1st book. Some mistakes here and there, perhaps a few more than the 1st book, but not deal breakers.
5. Is there character development or exploration? I think so. Mostly I like how the Blays character evolves. He expands his circle of friends and also finds a core of honor more inclined towards 'goodness' than mere 'personal code'. Dante continues down his 'path of daggers', making choices that are never wholly good and never wholly evil. The relationship between Dante and Blays also evolves. The rest of the characters did not change much.
6. Are the characters likable? Sure, as long the reader understands that the style of conversations will ALWAYS be crude, inelegant and something you might hear in a low class bordello. People continue to talk as if they were facets of the same character in different dresses.
7. Do you have to suspend disbelief? Nope. Everything was well within the scope of the created world. Some actions puzzled me, but they aren't unbelievable.
8. Does the story keep its pacing? I felt a little exasperated with the jumping from area to area and with the character interactions. I did not feel synergy between them. The conversations felt forced ... perhaps even bordering on the feeling of 'theater'. I fully enjoyed the contention between pragmatism and benevolence (with murderous pragmatism usually winning) that persists through the book. As in the 1st book, I have to appreciate, even if it made the pacing a little clunky, that the author tries not to waste time with inconsequential nuances.
9. Is the book worth the asking price? As part of the Omnibus, I felt the book was well worth the cost. Good purchase.

In conclusion: This 2nd book

continues the rough and dirty inelegant epic fantasy adventure of the 1st book. The language, along with forcefully sarcastic and theater character synergy, are my only real gripes with this story. It is deliberately nasty, as if the author wants to strip away all forms of elegance and romanticism from the typical epic fantasy adventure. If that is the intent, he achieved his goal. Regardless of how I feel about that style, the story IS epic and well done, with a fair bit of action and intrigue thrown into the mix for good measure. Heck, there is even some romance. The proofreading remains 'good' to 'ok'. I was tangled in an error here and an error there. The price, as part of the omnibus, is quite cheap and welcomed. This story might irritate the reader because of its style and deliberately crude manner, but for others it might be a breath of fresh air in an overly romanticized genre.4.0

StarsSPOILER WARNING. IF YOU HAVE NOT READ THE FIRST AND SECOND BOOK, READING BEYOND THIS POINT WILL HAVE SPOILERS!!!What I would have liked to know before I bought this book. (SOME SPOILERS)Note: Some of the observations in this book are copy pasted from my review of the 2nd book, as they continue to be true. An area has a SPOILER WARNING.

Please skip if you don't want any spoilers.1. What type of book is it: adventure, action, drama, etc? This is an epic adventure fantasy book.2. What is the story about, in general? The story is about the broken friendship of Dante and Blays as a manifestation of great Netherpower appears in the world, and brings the possibility of ruination.3. What/Who is the target audience? Young Adults and Adult male readers.4. How is the proofreading? Same as the 1st and 2nd book. Some mistakes here and there.5. Is there character development or exploration? To be honest, there is little character development. The characters have already been thoroughly exposed with both their merits and flaws. There IS character exploration of Dante and Blays, but somehow I felt they were acting a little childish. It felt more like character devolution.6. Are the characters likable? The characters are less likable in this book than the other two because they forget to be ... well ... intelligent. There are some rather extreme actions and decisions in this installment that felt thoroughly beyond the scope of the main protagonists. Dante.7. Do you have to suspend disbelief? (SPOILER WARNING. Skip to #8 to avoid) For the first time I have to say, yes. Blays' and Dante's paths are completely divergent, yet they somehow end up at the same place at the same time at the critical moment, in another nation. WOW. Now that's a coincidence for the ages. The interaction between Blays and Dante is ... really childish. I cannot, in good conscience, believe that Dante would betray Blays to the King of Gask. I cannot believe it when Dante didn't even speak with Blays in the first place to try and clear matters up. It doesn't match their constructed personalities in the least. Also, Dante put a BOUNTY to find Blays? A bounty large enough to attract attention from all over the fractured kingdoms? Doesn't anyone think this to be extreme, even borderline insane? Last, the resurrection of Blays ...

son of a gun. I understand why it was done, to show that Dante wasn't all monster, but seriously, a resurrection?8. Does the story keep its pacing? I felt a little exasperated with the jumping from area to area and with the character interactions. I did not feel synergy between them. The conversations felt forced ... perhaps even bordering on the feeling of 'theater'. I fully enjoyed the contention between pragmatism and benevolence (with murderous pragmatism usually winning) that persists through the book. As in the first two books, I have to appreciate, even if it made the pacing a little clunky, that the author tries not to waste time with inconsequential nuances. A few things simply didn't add up in this installment. Events lined up PERFECTLY to solve each other across the distances of three kingdoms. I find that too coordinated to retain pacing and credulity. It was simply too snug: square peg into square hole.9. Is the book worth the asking price? As part of the Omnibus, I felt the book was well worth the cost. Good purchase. In conclusion: This 3rd book continues the rough and dirty inelegant epic fantasy adventure of the 2nd book. The characters acted very strangely and sometimes bordered on illogical insanity. Some actions felt 'over the top' and forced. Said actions didn't quite match the personalities of the protagonists in the least. It's as if they got dumber the more experience they obtained, less prudent. Unbelievable. Some story events are too perfectly aligned to solve each other, so neat as to lack artistry. The language continues to be deliberately inelegant and crude; not a flaw but something to note. Regardless of how I feel of that style, the story IS epic, with a fair bit of action and intrigue thrown into the mix. The proofreading remains 'good' to 'ok'. I was tangled in an error here and an error there. The price, as part of the omnibus, is quite cheap and welcomed. The combination of too perfect aligned distant events and questionable actions by the protagonists zap enjoyment from this read, in quantity. Nevertheless, it is still far above many books out there.3.1 StarsI CALCULATED THE TOTAL AVERAGE FOR MY FINAL OMNIBUS RATING.3.6 Stars

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