



Empire of Unreason

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There has never been an epic quite like The Age of Unreason. By interweaving reality with arcane fantasy, J. Gregory Keyes proves himself a literary alchemist who vividly recreates the eighteenth century—and brings it brilliantly to new life.

When Sir Isaac Newton uncovered the secrets of alchemy, he could never have imagined the tragic results. Dark sorcery rules. Europe is lost and the American colonists have been driven south. The demonic creatures known as the Malekim won't tolerate even a flicker of hope. Any who oppose them—Franklin, Voltaire, even the mysterious daughters of Lilith—will be swept away. However Benjamin Franklin and his secret society, the Junto, manage a precarious existence founded on the mutual trust of Native Americans, whites, and freed blacks. And as armies and alchemy clash, the Choctaw shaman Red Shoes witnesses a vision of an ancient, implacable evil—and of a young boy who shines as brightly as an angel . . . *the fallen, avaricious kind.*

Empire of Unreason Details

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Sean says

Honestly i din't think i'd like this book quite as much as i did. Colonial historic fiction/sci-fi/fantasy is a first for me, and admittedly i was a little leery particularly of one starring such famous historical figures as voltaire & benjamin franklin. The whole concept of benjamin franklin leading a secret force against demonic forces trying to take foothold in america and priming an apocalypse was pretty interesting. But altogether it was very well written, strikingly original, and overall a very amusing and fun read. I look forward to the second book in the series, "The Shadows of God" :-).

It took me a while to read it, but only because i've been so very busy with work lately, and thus a bit too drained for the extreme prolonged reading bouts that i usually do. Now i can actually get around to reading and reviewing those First Reads winners that i won in the goodreads books giveaways a week or so back.

Joel Flank says

Book 3 of the Age of Unreason takes place 10 years after a Calculus of Angels. Ben Franklin has returned to America after saving Venice, founding a secret society called the Junto whos purpose is to protect against warlocks possessed by angels, demons, or malekim as modern scientists refer to the ethereal entities who seek to finally destroy mankind. Adrienne heads the Russian ministry of science, devising new and deadly weapons for Tsr Peter's armies as they continue to sweep across the world.

Things change dramatically when Red Shoes, the Choctaw shaman receives a vision of a great danger to the West, and sets of the discover what is coming to destroy the world. Meanwhile, a subtle invasion of America begins when the pretender King of England arrives at the head of a fleet, and tries to win over the Americans to become his new kingdom. This sets off a war that the Americans cannot hope to win with conventional tactics. Fortunately for them Ben Franklin is a master of innovation in the face of overwhelming odds. Adreinne begins a quest to find her long lost son after an assassination attempt provides her with a clue in her long cold trail to find him.

These events set the stage for the final climax in the story of a world turned different due the the angelic interference in the affairs of man, and deftly twines science, magic, superstition, and soldiery into a sweeping desperate tale of resistance against overwhelming odds. This time, events are too large to contain in a single volume, and are continued in the final book of the series...

Marijan says

[u kojem voltaire piše deklaraciju nezavisnosti (hide spoiler)]

Nicolas says

Que peut faire un auteur lorsqu'il a désintégré l'Europe, a failli s'attaquer à l'Afrique, tout en faisant de la Russie une nation légèrement attardée ? Simplement franchir l'Atlantique. Et c'est ce que fait Keyes dans ce

troisième tome qui emmène les personnages survivants en Amérique, pour notre plus grand plaisir. Parce que si le deuxième tome était à mon sens un peu loupé, les dix ans d'intervalle qu'il place entre ces deux derniers tomes lui permet de remettre à plat un certain nombre de choses et, en quelque sorte, de reprendre sa respiration sur un rythme plus adapté à la taille de son ouvrage. J'ai dit à propos du deuxième tome qu'il était en-dessous du premier. Celui-ci aussi. Pourtant, grâce justement à ce délai, et à la respiration qu'il nous impose, j'ai pu me rendre compte de la qualité de ce cycle. En effet, ce troisième tome est vraiment bien, les retournements de situation(1) sont assez subtilement amenés, et la diplomatie indienne réserve quelques bons moments. Et, pour mon plus grand bonheur, le quatrième et dernier tome m'attend chez moi, prêt pour clôturer, j'espère avec classe, cette saga complètement démentielle.

(1) qui ont parfois un petit côté Dallas

Connie Fogg-Bouchard says

many front doors

Ben has returned to his beloved Colonies but not alone. death has followed him. the malakim are determined to finish what they started centuries ago. fleeing Russia and desperately looking for her son, Adrienne seeks to recapture the scientific knowledge she once knew before the malakim clouded her mind while holding onto the power they grant her. ever more deadly shots have been fired in a war fought by men but commanded by death itself.

spectacular simultaneous run of two characters lives whose stories dance together to make one whole. my only complaint is the large amount of typos in this kindle version. they can be ignored if you try; the story is so worth it

Tal says

much faster paced than it's predecessors, this is a book of a world at the beginning of a Russo-American war. or rather, the malakim versus humanity. or possibly one woman's search for her son.

in actuality, it's all of the above and i'm now more interested in book 4 :)

Philip Chaston says

Historical characters, a steampunk version of the scientific revolution and a set of "angels" hiding within an Aristotelian framework (much less explicated here than in Brian Stableford's "The Werewolves of London") and in Orson Scott Card's alternate America. Like all such light romps, the action soon mutes and mutates history, leaving touchpoints to aid familiarity (Look, here's a musket! There's an angel equivalent of a nuclear bomb!) At least there is an internal consistency though unengaging characters and infant messiahs of an evil nature invert Christology for a turn of the century audience.

Ron says

“There is nothing logical about war.”

If you haven't previously been reading the Age of Unreason series, don't start here. It will yield little sense or enjoyment. This installation is a mere stepping stone to an increasingly inevitable conclusion. The storytelling is good. Cliffhangers abound.

“This is all an elaborate trap.” “What will you do about it?” “Walk into it, of course.”

As Keyes strays farther from actual history into the speculative, the tale becomes more fantasy. The “angelic” actors get more powerful with each volume, but the heroes manage to keep their heads above water.

“If I wore silk, I would still have all the same faults, with vanity added them, and would have gained nothing but the respect of fools.”

Keyes' fictional Benjamin Franklin, aphorisms asides, sounds increasingly like John Adams. The other protagonists are sufficiently flawed to maintain reader interest. (I miss Blackbeard.)

“Happiness is not so much the product of rare occurrence as it is of many small and everyday things”

Robert Negut says

I am noticing more issues with the writing, but that may well be because I'm looking for them more. Otherwise, it's still a very ambitious story that required an immense amount of work. This time around, the number of answers seems to slowly start to exceed that of new questions, and those answers do make quite a lot of sense, so I'm looking forward to the final book in the series, even though at the same time I dread a potentially disappointing ending or even worse writing.

Andy says

A continuation of the Age of Unreason....

Not as good as the first two books, but enjoyable nonetheless.... Demons/Angels seem to be an easy route to control nature, but... are the Malakim angels or demons or both?

After the destruction of London by a comet sent my the French, and the upheaval this causes in Europe and beyond, North America is plunged into war...

Andrew says

OK first admission - this book has taken me ages to read and its not all the stories fault - there have been just too many other distractions and other books to read. So why have I marked it down. Well if the story was

truly captivating I would not be able to put it down.

OK less of the excuses and more of the book. This is the third of the series and as you would expect they are upping the stakes - the characters you saw come together in the previous books are now heading off on their own adventures and side stories. This one rather than a standalone feels more like its setting the stage for the final climactic instalment. We shall have to see what happens.

BriAnna says

Ok so this is the third book of the series and it is by far my least favorite ever. It took me 5 times as long to read as the others because it couldn't seem to grab my attention. It really felt like a whole book where everyone walks around lost not really accomplishing anything as they ever so very slowly get nowhere. I didn't like the weird relationship issues it brought between many of the main characters and I really didn't care for the slow almost non-existent way they moved. Yeah it wasn't one for me at all. I had to take a break from the series after this so I've lowered the priority of the fourth book. Hopefully that will perk me up as it seems some things are finally coming to a head in it.

Adysnewbox says

If you've made it this far into the series, you'll probably still enjoy this third entry. Empire Of Unreason (AKA S**** Gets Real In America!) is an interesting alternate take on the founding of the United States. Instead of throwing off King George, we're throwing off the Jacobites, who are really puppets of the demon-controlled Russian Empire! Who have also crossed the Bering Land Bridge and are invading America from the west as well! With airships! And huge death-rays! And Enlightenment-era submarines! And a Creepy Kid who is probably demon-ridden but whom the Russians revere as some sort of destroying angel/prophet figure (I couldn't quite figure it out, since the kid is quite the cipher in this book).

But all is not lost for our rag-tag group of proto-Americans, led by Benjamin Franklin and his Junto of political/social advisors. This America is more ethnically diverse from the start; the "rebels" consist equally of white men, Native Americans, and freed black slaves. Oh, and *SPOILER* Voltaire shows up for the ride, too...and he writes the Declaration of Independence. Good times!

As you can probably guess, the author's story may have grown beyond him a bit, and he struggles to balance everything. Adrienne's story in particular feels very slight, drawn-out, and tiresome. Ten years have elapsed since the events of the previous book, and yet her situation (and her character) seem completely unchanged. She also has an adulterous subplot that is terrible; it is ultimately pointless, too! And then her storyline just kind of...stops. I feel she will be fairly important in book 4, but here, she's got nothing to do.

I heard that this series was originally planned as a trilogy, and then got expanded to four books...and it really shows in this one. The pacing problems that plagued the first book are back in spades; there are a lot of great individual scenes, but they don't hang together well (indeed, you could say that they "hang separately"--HA!). I still (mostly) had fun reading this, but there was a lot of fat that needed trimming.

Anna says

How exciting! This is one of the most intriguing mish/mash of genres books i have ever read. Benjamin

Franklin battling evil angels in a completely steampunk setting alongside Voltaire and other famous historical figures. Such a fun meld of Verne style Sci-Fi, western action, biblical fantasy, high politics and real history. I look forward to reading the first two now.

Karen says

I am really struggling with this one... I loved the first book. It took me 2 tries, but I did like the second book. I find that I keep loosing interest in the third one. Is it me? Is it the story line? I don't know...
