



## The Kingless Land

*Ed Greenwood*

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## **The Kingless Land** Ed Greenwood

Aglirta is known as the Kingless Land--once prosperous and peaceful, it has now fallen into lawlessness, studded with feuding baronies engaged in a constant state of war. The only hope for peace lies in the legend of the Sleeping King: destined to rise and restore peace when the Dwaerindim stones are recovered.

Lady Embra Silvertree is the sorceress daughter of a bellicose baron with an eye towards world domination. She has been imprisoned by her father who hopes to use her as a magical battery to fortify his castle. When a pair of good natured rogues attempt to steal one of her jewel encrusted gowns, they are quickly enlisted as allies to help her escape and, with the aid of a shape-shifting cleric, to seek out the Dwaerindim.

## **The Kingless Land Details**

Date : Published February 15th 2001 by Tor Fantasy (first published 2000)

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Author : Ed Greenwood

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## From Reader Review The Kingless Land for online ebook

### Forgotten Realms Queen says

Once upon a time, I thought myself a fan of Ed Greenwood and his writings.

And don't get me wrong, I still love the bearded old man because he gave me my beloved Forgotten Realms franchise.

But I don't think I'm a fan of his writing anymore.

Before The Kingless Land, the first in his Band of Four novel, I had only ever read his Forgotten Realms works and the first half of the first book in his Falconfar trilogy, Dark Lord.

Now his Forgotten Realms works I loved, despite the obvious reasons. I liked the story, it was well paced, and I loved the characters he created. I didn't like Dark Lord, but I figured it was because I saw too much of Ed Greenwood's own disappointment in the direction Wizards was taking the Realms and D&D in general with this story about a writer who sells his story to a game company only to have them change pretty much everything, and he has to go into the world he created in order to save it.

Sounds familiar?

So I figured I'd like the Kingless Land. But I was wrong. I think.

The problem is, it took me a good month to read this book. I didn't dislike it enough to put it down and be done with it, but neither can I say I liked it.

I think I'm just too confused by the events in the book and the way it was written to form an opinion like that.

The story revolves around a sorceress who also happens to be the daughter of a very evil, very powerful noble who also happens to be using her to fuel his own magics, in a way. Enter two thieves, looking to break into her bower to steal some jewels to live, only to steal her away from her evil father. They flee to some old ruins where they meet a healer who tells them they must undertake a quest with him to find some ancient stones to awaken a legendary Sleeping King who is basically this world's version of King Arthur.

So the Band of Four as they are now calling themselves, are running around trying to find the first of the three stones, while being hunted by mages, blundering into armed patrols looking for the same thing, there's a snake cult rising in power in the background, and at the very end another fabled secret society rears its faceless head and makes a play that is seen by the Four through a magical portal.

Confusing, ain't it?

I think the biggest problem is that there is so much going on. You're thrown all these names of all these people, given snippets of their lives away from the Band of Four, only to have pretty much everyone ever mention except for sed Band to be dead by the end.

The narration is choppy, jumping from one person's viewpoint to the next, from one time to another. There are numerous references to a dead Baron named Blackgult, who started a war with our sorceress' father Silvertree, (and for whom our two thieves worked for) and we're told from day one that he's dead. And as

we're reading along, we think this entire story is happening as we read it, but in the end it turns out it was all a narration from one bard to another that we met on page one and haven't seen since. And not only that, but the Blackgult is still alive and is the biological father of the sorceress! What. The. FRACK!

So yeah. For me, not so good. But it is one of Greenwood's earlier works so I will continue on with book two (eventually) and hope for the best.

Now if you folks can make heads or tails of what I just told you, by all means be my guest and give it a shot.

Good luck.

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### **Jim says**

I got over halfway through this, but it took several tries. The narrator was good, but the story just couldn't hold my interest. Too many over used tropes & discordant notes. Very typical fantasy & it just didn't hold my interest, so I'm bailing.

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### **Peter Kalin says**

This is a peculiar read. I want to like it, and think maybe I do, but I'm not entirely sure. This seems to be very much a book that was inspired by role-playing games - hell, the characters fall into the role-playing core group of four; healer, fighter, thief, mage. The book's opening is hard to fathom because we're thrown in amongst characters that have no context to them and are very much drawn in tropes. For some reason, and perhaps it's my love of role-playing games, I enjoyed the story. I can't really recommend this book other than to someone like me with a love of fantasy roleplaying and the nostalgia that comes with it.

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### **Ty says**

Sucked. Terrible. I wanted some adventure, but anytime I pick up a fantasy book, it's all about vignettes that barely connect, and violent/sexual encounters that exist only to exist, and not to forward the plot.

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### **Jim Pike says**

I'm really torn on this book. While it was an excellent story, with some very likable characters, I felt most of this book was mashed together too much. You're reading along, following one story line, then the next paragraph, it's jumped to someone else. But you're not aware of this change (though it makes no sense to what you were just reading), until it mentions a name, or descriptive of someone else.

I was very hesitant about reading this series. I know Ed Greenwood does a lot of the "Realms" stuff for AD&D, and I really was hoping it wouldn't read like a campaign module. I was partially pleased. While some really did read like a module, other parts filled in, to make it at least more enjoyable.

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## **Lukas Lovas says**

The only reason I didn't stop reading this book after the first ten pages is, that I had a really boring few days, and there was absolutely nothing better to do but continue. I mean...I could have stuck a fork in my eye to relieve boredom.....I'm not convinced I made right choice...

Disjointed scenes, sometimes even interesting, but I'm missing any sort of connection to glue the pages of this book together. I mean...stuff is happening...and I have no idea, why, to whom, and what happened to the previous scene. It was irritating and boring.

So....to sum up: I didn't enjoy this book.

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## **Aaron says**

I have mixed feelings about this book. The story involves a quartet of people thrown together by fate who must put aside their differences and find the magic stones that let them revive the Sleeping King. They are opposed by the soldiers and wizards of the different baronies in the land, who want the magic stones for their own purposes. I feel that there isn't enough character development in this book for the main characters. They are more caricatures than fully fleshed people, so I didn't feel much empathy towards them and didn't care much whether they succeeded or failed. What I did like was how the author played all of the competing factions off against each other. Our four heroes would most assuredly have failed early on if all of the wizards opposing them weren't so focused on destroying each other. That was fun, but overall this story isn't all that it could have been.

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## **Laura says**

Un ladrón y un caballero deciden ir a apoderarse de las joyas de una dama, que vive en un castillo fortificado. Por supuesto que las cosas no salen como esperaban. Si has jugado rol de mesa alguna vez, reconocerás muchos elementos, como las trampas, las batallas, los golpes de suerte (buena o mala) dictados por los dados, y las situaciones imprevistas que debes de enfrentar con tu personaje. Y cuando esta pareja de ladrones se encuentran con la Dama de las Joyas a la que pretendían robarle algunas de sus piedras preciosas, se encuentran con que ella no tiene interés en hacer lo que su padre quiere que sea.

Y ahí empieza la huida, primero, y la misión, después, acompañados por un anciano sanador. Así, la party de cuatro (pícaro, guerrero, hechicera y sanador) comienzan sus aventuras. Y si bien hay elementos que denotan que esta novela se escribió hace casi veinte años, la historia en general es buena y se disfruta, más si alguna vez has jugado Calabozos y Dragones u otro juego de rol.

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## **Rhyson says**

I read this book for no other reason than to see the explanation of where those potions came from. First chapter, two main characters are breaking into a castle. It's so early into the story, we don't know why or even who they are. One guy gets hurt. Other guy pulls out a healing potion. >:(

I continued on, still hoping for that explanation. Author goes into a backstory about the guy who got hurt. He's a soldier. His general gets fatally wounded. Guy pulls out a healing potion. General doesn't die after all.

>:(

But the two guys breaking into the castle are there to kidnap a sorceress. Even she doesn't mention where the healing potions come from. >:(

But to use some kinds of magic, she needs these magical figurines. Which she pulls out of her pockets. >:(

Everytime. They have a healing potion in their pocket. They never run out. And the bottles never get smashed. >:(

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## **Chip Hunter says**

Well, it looks like this one has been slammed sufficiently by other reviewers already, so I'll take it easy on the negative aspects here. Actually, if you know what you're getting into (and you should if you have any idea who Ed Greenwood is), you'll probably enjoy this book enough. Mostly a mindless hack-and-slash, blast-and-burn, fast-paced fantasy where the band of heroes stumbles through an impossible journey, survives through luck (and a mysterious protector), and ends up completing their quest when the artifact they seek almost literally falls into their hands. Absurdly one-dimensional, stereotypical characters (both heroes and villains) free up Greenwood to fill up all the space he has with action, action, and more action. No need for character-building here, as you pretty much know everything you need to know about each of these guys from their initial descriptions. But, isn't that kind of read fun sometimes? It'll make you appreciate the more well-developed fantasies you read.

The new world Greenwood has created really fails to impress. Dark and dangerous enough, with seemingly every person being either a wizard, thief, warrior, or baron. The system of magic used here is very generic, with what seems like anything being possible at the speed of thought (especially with the use of the World Stones). The world also seems to be overpopulated with dangerous monsters like the Living Dead and Nightworms (whatever those are). Greenwood has also laughingly turned his most interesting character (Embra) into a slutty whore, making it a point to constantly lose her clothing, ect throughout the book. (The scene towards the end of the book with the four heroes sitting naked in a hot-tub is hilarious.. "I'm hard as a rock!" -Saraspar.) Finally, the level of violence, pain, and suffering Greenwood puts his heroes through is somewhat absurd. These people sure have good attitudes for being perpetually crushed, cut, poisoned, and burned, only to be healed just before the brink.

Basically, this is just what you should expect from the creator of Forgotten Realms and a D&D junkie. Mostly silly, wholly unbelievable, but thankfully short, this one can serve as an entertaining distraction, if that's what you're after.

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## **Ryan Toxopeus says**

Overall I enjoyed this story. The pacing was good, with memorable characters and lots of action. There were plenty of unique uses of magic, and you get the sense that this is a huge world with thousands of stories yet to be told.

This isn't surprising. After meeting Ed Greenwood and listening to him talk, he had an idea that I loved. With the Forgotten Realms, he had only one demand: For every story you tie off, leave three threads dangling for future stories. They might never be stories that the author would touch, but it left avenues open for new

authors to choose. When you're building a gigantic world with multiple authors working in it, that just makes sense.

We start with a warrior and a rogue breaking into a castle, where they meet an imprisoned sorceress. After freeing her, they flee her father, a power-hungry duke who's bent on dominating everything.

And it wasn't long before I started to nitpick the magic system and notice problems, which is why this story wasn't 5 stars. The magic was erratic. For instance, there's a spell where the sorceress can teleport herself and anyone touching her to anywhere she's ever been before. Why didn't she just use that straight off the top? Seems like a good way to get away, rather than running and risking capture by a band of warriors and wizards.

Even the same spells feel different throughout, sometimes. The wizards can summon these huge, winged creatures with two heads that sound nearly impossible to slay in their first encounters, requiring powerful magic to drop. But later a sword is sufficient.

Characters are introduced that have no importance in the story whatsoever. Some are literally introduced, and die before they can accomplish anything of note, despite scenes being written about them. It left me with the feeling that the book could have been shorter, and wouldn't have suffered for it at all.

And there were points where the POV changed so fast in a scene that I felt dizzy, especially earlier in the book. But this settled down more toward the end, or I just didn't notice it as much, I'm not sure.

I may or may not pick up the next book in this series. While I liked the characters and pacing, I'm still on the fence about whether I care enough about where the story appears to be going next.

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### **Robert Negut says**

Maybe good for a basic background of a game, maybe also good for reading, but... Something seems unbalanced. The first half of the book didn't seem to be heading anywhere, then everything just happens way too fast in the second half. Magic users way too powerful, fighters way too dumb, though the thieves were nice, and twists that were way too strained. Going out of your way to make things seem impossible and then "forgetting" a problem or putting characters in the middle of the action out of the blue to do things that the main characters couldn't... (view spoiler)

Quite good enough, but too forced somehow.

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### **Ben Arispe says**

I have to say I really liked this one. I've read a lot of other reviews that other people have written stating it wasn't a good book. Repeatedly they said it wasn't among Ed Greenwood's best work. I have to say I disagree. Granted, I've only read the first book. And I've read a fair amount of Greenwood's other work both Forgotten Realms and others. The Band of Four gives us some great characters. Lady Embra is like no other character I've ever read from Greenwood. Though it does almost read like a D&D module, I don't think it takes away from the story at all. My only real complaint about the story is that we don't see very much in the way of an explanation of magic. Other than that, it's a great read, even if it does start a little slowly.

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## Desirae says

**2017 Reading Challenge: 52 Weeks, 52 Books! #52wks52bks**

**Prompt #3; adult SFF book**

As a rule of thumb, I try my best to not read reviews here before I finish the book. Mostly because I don't want to be unduly influenced. But this is one of those books where I wish I had.

**If you have not read this book yet, my advise to you is this:**

But hey, if you want to read a book full of fantasy tropes and limp writing then all the power to you, but this wasted hours of my life that I will never get back.

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## Jakk Makk says

Hard to follow. I'm not sure if it's the pompous narrative voice or the audiobook reader, but everything mashes together-- making a mess on the canvas of my mind. I shouldn't need to rewind in the first ten pages, when I'm attentive, let alone the first ten sentences.

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