



The Serpent Tower

William King

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“The King of High Adventure.” Starlog.

In a world of magic and gunpowder, the half-breed Rik must rise from simple soldier to the deadliest assassin the world has ever known.

The Serpent Tower is an impregnable fortress built by an ancient, pre-human race, bristling with terrifying, magical weapons, watched over by unsleeping, sorcerous sentinels. It has never fallen to siege. Now it is the lair of the sinister sorcerer Lord Ilmarec who holds Princess Kathea, rightful heir to the throne of Kharadrea in his clutches. In order to save his own life, Rik must penetrate the ancient secrets of the Tower and rescue the Princess from her lustful uncle. And all the while he is pursued by an undead horror born from the vilest necromancy, created by a deadly conspiracy that plans to rule the world.

The Serpent Tower continues the thrilling saga of muskets and magic begun in *Death's Angels*. In it, the bestselling creator of *Gotrek and Felix* blends Lovecraftian horror with high adventure in the tradition of Sharpe.

ABOUT THE SERIES

A thousand years ago the world of Gaeia fell to the Terrarchs, cruel and beautiful alien invaders with a deadly secret. Masters of sorcery and intrigue they have ruled humanity with a fist of steel inside a glove of velvet. For a thousand years, ancient demons have slept, waiting for the moment of their return. Now the stars are right. Old and evil gods are waking. New revolutions are being born. A genocidal war that will destroy civilization sweeps ever closer.

Born a Shadowblood, one of a clan of genetically engineered super-assassins created to serve a long dead Dark Lord, the outcast Rik must master his deadly birthright before his own lost kinfolk can kill him.

BOOKS IN THE TERRARCH SERIES

Death's Angels

The Serpent Tower

The Queen's Assassin

Shadowblood

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William King lives in Prague, Czech Republic with his lovely wife Radka and his two sons Dan and William Karel. He has been a professional author and games developer for almost a quarter of a century. He is the creator of the bestselling *Gotrek and Felix* series for Black Library and the author of the bestselling *Space Wolf* books which between them have sold over three quarters of a million copies in English and been translated into 8 languages.

He has been nominated for the David Gemmell Legend Award. His short fiction had appeared in *Year's Best SF* and *Best of Interzone*. He has twice won the Origins Awards For Game Design. His hobbies include role-playing games and MMOs as well as travel.

The Serpent Tower Details

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From Reader Review The Serpent Tower for online ebook

Brian Turner says

Second book in the Terrarch Chronicles series.

A smaller group of main characters than book 1, it still reads like a cross between a Warhammer Fantasy novel (where William King got started) and Glen Cook's "Black Company" series.

The story moves along at a good pace and the characters are well written, although only a few get a decent amount of page time.

Lokidm says

Un paso atrás respecto al anterior libro. El 90% del mismo es paja remarcando que el protagonista (que ha abandonado el ejército, pq es mucho más que un simple soldado) es la leche, y un ser que con entrenamiento será casi invencible.

Los personajes pierden el (poco) carisma que tenían, y el villano es aún menos carismático que el del primer libro. Prácticamente es como leer el mismo libro dos veces.

Thommy Doombringer says

False

Sam says

Not bad

Are you a gamer? Do you still think fondly of your childhood playing D&D or the like? Then step into the world of our young hero in the making Rik.

Fco. Salvador says

Los tres tomos que componen la trilogía Terrarca son bastante cortos. Tienen unas 300 páginas, y sinceramente creo que deberían haberse añadido otras 50 a cada uno, para redondear la narración en diversas partes y sobre todo para no dejar esa especie de finales abruptos (que no inacabados, ojo, simplemente que es un "pimpán, matan al malo, y ya te imaginas que vuelven a casa y todo eso"). Supongo que el sr. King es uno de los que se aburrió con el final de "El retorno del rey".

La ambientación de Gaeia se aparta de la fantasía medieval al uso, y digamos que realiza un traslado de varios siglos hacia adelante: rifles, pistolas, casacas,... ¿A alguien le suena? A mí me recuerda al Viejo Mundo de Warhammer. Lo bueno es que la raza dominante (los terrarcas, cuyo aspecto es bastante élfico) llegaron de Al'Terra hace dos milenios, con un dominio mágico superior al humano y todo un surtido de dragones y wyrms (que vendrían a ser dinosaurios de diversas especies) a su servicio. Mucho después, hubo una secesión entre los dominadores, y para cuando comienza la historia hay una guerra en ciernes.

En el segundo libro de la serie el esquema vuelve a ser el mismo que en "Los ángeles de la muerte", con un cambio de lugar, de enemigos, y de ritual, pero el mismo. De hecho, hasta aparece un nerghul (una suerte de golem), que me recordó a las ratas-ogro que Thanquol siempre envía contra Gotrek y Félix. Se soluciona un poco la falta de originalidad de los personajes, que son básicamente estereotipos (y los estereotipos están bien, si se los sabe colocar y usar adecuadamente, y aquí no se hace): algunos reciben un poco de relleno al desarrollarse su psicología (sobre todo el caso del teniente Sardec, que para mí es el mejor).

Si les apetece una lectura rápida, amena y repleta de acción, sin muchas pretensiones y nada de intriga o misterio, sumérjense en la Trilogía Terrarca. Si buscan algo más, creo que les defraudará.

Abhinav says

You can read the full review over at my blog:

<http://sonsofcorax.wordpress.com/2014...>

It wasn't until 2010 that I found out that one of my favourite Black Library authors, William King, had been on an extended sabbatical from writing anything for the publisher, and that he had spent time working on and developing his own original series, The Terrarch Chronicles. And it wasn't until 2012 that I finally read the first book in the series, Death's Angels. It was a pretty damn good and fun fantasy romp, doing a new take on the typical elf-human relationships within epic fantasy. And it was packed with all the typical William King fun that you'd expect, which was a huge bonus.

However, it wasn't until January this year that I got around to reading the sequel, The Serpent Tower. And reading the novel made me realise just what it was that I was missing. Because the second novel is every bit as good as the first. In fact, it is quite a bit better! It avoids all the typical "mistakes" of a second novel, the so-called "sophomore slump", and it is a fun and enjoyable novel to read from start to finish. It also helps that Bill significantly ups the ante, and explores more of this world that he built up in Death's Angels, and showed a much more awe-inspiring side of it.

William King has always been a masterful world-builder. It is one of the most enjoyable aspects of his Black Library work, and through Death's Angels and now The Serpent Tower, I've found that this is true of his original work as well. The first book in the Terrarch Chronicles series introduced me to a fantastical world called Gaeia which had been invaded by the extra-dimensional Terrarchs some centuries earlier. A race of magically-advanced elves from another world in time and space, these Terrarchs were running from a horror and they practically enslaved the indigenous peoples of Gaeia, specifically the humans. And now, the Terrarchs are the ruling class on this world, with the humans as second-class citizens at best.

All of this provides quite an interesting setting for the story of the Terrarch Chronicles to take place. Our primary protagonist is the half-elf Rik, a bastard son of unknown Terrarch lineage who is a foot soldier in the army of the ruling Terrarch Queen. And he is pitted against Lieutenant Sardec, a high-born Terrarch of an illustrious lineage who believes himself destined to great things and is often a very typical example of his

kind. Together, the two of them drove much of the plot for Death's Angels and in the second novel this continues forward.

Now, Rik is learning to control some of his powers under Lady Asea, a powerful Terrarch noble and an accomplished magician. His half-Terrarch blood has granted him some unique powers unseen by the Terrarchs in a long, long time, and this makes him a unique asset for someone as politically-oriented as Lady Asea. And on the other side, Lieutenant Sardec is slowly moving up the Terrarch noble hierarchy thanks to his association with Lady Asea and her brother, General Azaar. Together, these two subplots make The Serpent Tower a very exciting read indeed. And that is largely because of the stakes involved. One character explores a legacy denied to him by the circumstances of his birth while the other solidifies his own power, even if that is in service to someone yet higher than himself. Often times either character appears as a cliché, perhaps because of the situation he finds himself in, or because that's just how it is in the overall picture. Regardless, Bill still infuses both of them with a particular high note when the chips are down and when it all really matters. He puts his characters through the wringer again and again, exploring their evolving motivations.

As with the previous novel, The Serpent Tower contains a ton of politicking between the Terrarchs. New characters, whether heroes or villains, are introduced and through them we see an evolving Gaiea where alliances between the Terrarchs are ever more uncertain and there are increasing threats of a massive civil war. In any fantasy novel, especially an epic fantasy such as The Serpent Tower, I think it is always important to see a slice of the political machinations that run everything and that provide the impetus for the heroes and villains to do what they do. Where this novel is concerned, Sardec and Rik are drawn into a plot to destabilise the existing Terrarch ruling structure and to deny the forces of Queen Arielle from sweeping up all the forces arrayed against them, specifically the magician Lord Ilmarec, the master of the Serpent Tower. In Death's Angels we saw how Bill used the concept of Elder Races to provide narrative tension in the novel, and the "level boss" that Sardec and Rik defeated was a part of one of the Elder Races of Gaiea, races that are now pretty much extinct. In The Serpent Tower we see a continuation of that concept as Bill tackles the Serpent Men this time, a much more benign race than the one we briefly met in the previous novel. The Serpent Men are all extinct now, but their legacies linger, and the Serpent Tower is one such legacy, with Ilmarec busy probing its deepest and darkest secrets to oppose the heroes and, by extension, their Queen.

Bill Ramsell says

Good story, good read!

Cheryl says

Kniha mi p?išla o n?co mén? zajímavá než li p?edchozí díl. Snad to bylo zp?sobené tím, že jsem se jakž-takž zorientovala ve spleťtém sv?t? a historii terraršského sv?ta a nepudila m? touha na dalších stránkách pochopit a objevit to, co mi dosud uniká. Možná jsem o?ekávala, že stejn? jako první díl bude i tento napln?ný dobrodružstvím, prastarými démony a nejistotou.

M?la jsem problém pro?íst se úvodem knihy, což zp?tn? hodnotím jako zvláštní, protože po do?tení mám pocit, že práv? začátek a záv?r byly nejdobrodružsn?jšími ?ástmi - meziprostor byl vypln?n Rikovými úvahami a intrikami terrarch?. Záchv?v zájmu p?išel společn? s odhalováním Rikovy minulosti, ale nakonec nebylo prozrazeno více než se autorovi momentáln? hodilo pro nadcházející akci - samotné gró knihy, tedy hadí v?ž.

Za p?e?tení ur?it? stojí, ale doufám, že další díl m? osloví více.

Joseph says

Probably more like a 3.5 -- I wish we could do half-star ratings. Ah, well. The second in King's new series; as mentioned previously, the setting owes heavily to Napoleonic-era England, complete with muskets and the like, but with a ruling class of elves and with various eldritch horrors. More fast-paced, well-constructed adventures -- exactly what I was in the mood for.

Helen Ayim says

Loved the second book too. There are all these different races on Gaia, humans, the ruling Terrarchs, and remnants of the Elder races, like the Spider God they fought against in Death' Angels, and in this book we meet the Serpent Men.

And once again there is a lot of Terrach politics and power play. Some really dark sorceries and some unexpected high technology. I liked how the lines between magic and science began to blur.

The characters aren't very complex, but they do develop, especially the Terrach Sardec shows real growth.

I don't want to write spoilers, so I'll contain my squees and just say I enjoyed the story a lot.

Volpot says

5 stars. Good sequel

Marcus says

I voluntarily reviewed an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review

This is the second book in the series which follows Rik and his fellow soldiers and it has them facing off against more fantasy evil creatures, evil sorcerers, war, famine, and all the general inconveniences of being born on the wrong end of the gene pool. Their chief opponent in this book starts out as the Serpent Men and the Serpent Tower which Rika must get inside and stop the madman evil sorcerer that has made it his home. This tower is protected against any and all magical means of intrusion, but it still must be entered and destroyed. This is what makes the story all that more interesting because just below the storyline, the reader is pulling for the underdog. A very good story
