



# First Rider's Call

*Kristen Britain*

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GHOSTLY RIDERS

Karigan G'ladheon had been a Green Rider, one of the king of Sacoridia's elite magical messengers. Being a Green Rider was more perilous than Karigan had ever imagined, for a rogue Eletians had cracked the magical D'Yer Wall which had protected Sacoridia for a thousand years from the evil influence of Blackveil Forest--the arboreal prison of Sacoridia's ancient enemy Mornhaven the Black--and had brought the threat of dark magic into the land. In the messenger service she had been caught up in a world of deadly danger, and though she had defeated the Eletian, she had nonetheless been tainted by his wild magic.

Exhausted in body and spirit, and determined to be the mistress of her own destiny, Karigan has returned to her home in Corsa. But Karigan's determination was no match for the Rider's call. Ghostly hoofbeats echoed in the deep regions of her mind, and when she awoke to find herself on horseback halfway to Sacor City--in her nightgown--she finally gave in.

Back at court Karigan found the Green Riders weakened and diminished. Rider magic was becoming unreliable, and she herself was having ghostly visions--visions of a strong woman with wild flowing hair and a blue and green tartan draped across her shoulder, pinned with a golden brooch. This woman was no stranger to Karigan nor would she have been to any Green Rider, for she was Lil Ambriodhe, First Rider, and founder of the Green Rider corps. But why was she appearing to Karigan? And would Karigan be able to seek the help of a woman who had been dead for a thousand years?

## First Rider's Call Details

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## From Reader Review First Rider's Call for online ebook

### Ren says

You know when it's a nice Sunday afternoon, and it's raining, and you're just curled up with a good book and some tea? Well it's like that except it's a thunderstorm, and instead of tea you have Kleenex.

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### Andrea O'Brien says

I enjoyed this book. Its been a while since I have really sunk myself into a good fantasy series. I am glad that this one was suggested to me.

The plot is really interesting and I was sucked into the story quickly. The characters are great although by the end of this one I am pretty mad at Alton (which makes me really sad because he is one of my faves).

The pacing was a bit off with; the beginning was fast paced and action packed but then the middle slowed way down. However she picked up with gusto at the end and I didn't put the book down for its last 70 pages. I already have plans to buy the next one.

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### Scott says

I am really astonished at how much better First Rider's Call is than Green Rider(#1). This book is much darker than the first, but Britain's prose doesn't feel forced here to become such, as I felt it did throughout Green Rider. In fact, just in general, I feel her writing improved a thousand fold. The world building has become very solid and engaging, the pacing is fantastic, and the interlude excerpts from the Journal of Hadriax el Fex are a great addition to the narrative. Smartly written character growth for Karigan here, and for what seemed to be a general idea of who she was in the first book quickly deepens now, and much of her growth makes sense for what she is now being forced to contend with. I loved the ghostly/spectre aspect of this story, and the dark intrigue of Blackveil has definitely lured me full on into this series. I'm also interested in how the descriptions of objects described as "mechanicals" will further the subsequent story arc of these books. Overall, a wonderful combination of magic, supernatural mystery, time-travel, courtly dealings, and romance.

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### Elizabeth says

This is the sequel to 'Green Rider', and a well done sequel at that.

Karigan G'ladheon had gone home to follow in her fathers footsteps, to be a merchant, determined to leave the world of kings, advisors, and Green Riders, behind. Everyone told her she wouldn't be able to resist the call of the Riders, that once chosen, you stayed chosen, but she would have none of it. She didn't want to be a Green Rider, she didn't want to be a messenger. The brief period she had spent finishing the job of a dead Rider was more than enough for her, thanks.

But when she wakes up half-way to Sacor City in her nightgown, atop her horse, not remembering how she

got there, she decides that it is useless to fight.

And so she enters training to become a Rider.

Ever since an evil mage, that had since been defeated, had managed to put a crack in the D'Yer wall, the wall that protected the land from the evils of the Blackveil forest beyond, things hadn't been right. Groundmites kill villages, people and wildlife alike were turning to stone, and the Rider's magic brooches were failing.

To make matters worse, there are wraiths on the loose. Wraiths that were once men, men who had been second in command to Mornhaven, the evil mage that they had defeated over 1000 years ago in the Long War.

When the First Rider, Lil, begins visiting Karigan in her ghostly form, she thinks she is going crazy. The First Rider had come to try and help Karigan bring the few riders left together. She brings Karigan back in time, to view how things were when they defeated Mornhaven before. With the help of a 1000 year old ghost, Karigan must figure out how to fix what is wrong.

This book was good! I normally don't expect too much from a sequel, but I was pleasantly surprised this time!

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### **Shayla says**

LOVED IT SO MUCH! I finished this a few days ago and it was so so good. I had really enjoyed book 1, but this blew that one out of the water. An awesome fantasy story, I loved it. I wish I could be a rider or Karigan G'ladheon herself. I was super into the story the whole time, though it was kinda painful because there were so many heart-wrenching deaths and I cried like 4x. This was one of those books that felt written just for me, I love stories where women sword fighting is commonplace

Can't wait to get my hands on book 3 as soon as possible!

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### **Jennifer says**

This volume was noticeably better than the first, in my opinion. Kristen Britain's writing seems to have matured, and the plot and character development are definitely stronger. Britain also manages to successfully weave multiple story threads together in a way that makes the story richer, rather than cluttered, as if often the case when authors attempt to do so. Although the first volume was supposed to be exciting, I personally found it a little dull and generic, an obvious combination of Mercedes Lackey plus *The Fellowship of the Ring*. In this second volume, Britain comes more into her world-building.

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### **Gergana says**

Read in March, 2016. **DNF:70%**

A highly relaxing and predictable read, great for lulling me to sleep! :)

I enjoyed the first book enough to want to buy a Hard Cover copy and to get my hands on the sequel right away. Maybe if I've tried it earlier in my life-time I would've totally loved it and rereading it would've been a happy nostalgic experience. Unfortunately... it's just plain boring for me. Moving on!

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### **Kathleen says**

3.5 stars. Another good read, if slightly too long. I enjoyed the scenes in the ancient past, time travel with Legendary Lil, the first Green Rider. I also enjoyed the journal of Hadriax el Fex, with short, succinct entries. Vivid and scary scenes in the Black Veil.

Interesting plot development involving a secret society, The Second Empire. But hard to believe the Arcosians wouldn't have fully integrated after 1000 years. Only think how (comparatively) quickly the Anglo-Saxons accepted the invading French Normans. Hard to imagine an uprising between American Natives and the invading Europeans 1000 years onward. Arcosians involved in the secret sect would be considered lunatics, even by their own people, I would think.

**Quibbles:** Author REALLY needs to work on characterization. Karigan needs to be growing and maturing as the years progress. She is quick to take offense and petulant at times, and too slow to believe in magic, despite all she has seen.

Characters need to stay in character. For one example, the king's guards (his swords) would not need a 20-something rookie to save the day when the king is attacked. They can do it. Why else do we constantly hear that his Swords surround him in the shadows and that they are masters at arms? For another example, why couldn't the king or his advisors or his guards bring order to the room, when the crowd of petitions became too restive?

The characterization of Alessandros Mornhavon was hard to swallow. The optimistic, intelligent, and good-natured fellow depicted in childhood and during the voyage from Arcosia became an insanely evil sorcerer in Sacordia. His sense of abandonment and his disappointments with empire-building did not provide enough impetus for a 180° character change. I suppose he went crazy from something in the water. Something he was smoking?

Secondary characters need to become real, not just red-shirt cannon fodder. Not just props for the amazing feats of Karigan the Courageous. Let them win sometimes. Let the whole team work together to solve some problems. I see some of this, especially with Captain Mapstone, but not enough. It's mostly all about Karigan.

As for pacing, it's not bad, but as I stated in a status review at one point: "After all that adrenaline, can't we all just stop for a breather? Gather round the table. Be warm, well fed, and safe. For just one little chapter?"

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### **Mike (the Paladin) says**

\*\*\*Update: The forth book to this "trilogy" was just published. Oh well.

This is a good follow up (second book) in a good trilogy(sorry, series).

\*This is a mainly character driven book. The "courier" is in fact an interesting historical character in "his or her" own right. Traditionally given special consideration (passing through enemy lines in battle, traveling enemy territory allowing communication between hostile powers etc.) they are fascinating. Of course what I mention above is the "ideal" in reality a lot of messengers didn't actually manage to make it to their assigned destination....

\*from first books review.

The story grows here and so do the characters. The world is solid (some may want more detail but the story is being spun and characterization (the prime mover here) will move at it's own pace. This picks up about a year after the events of Green Rider. The kingdom is in great danger again, Dark Magic is stirring in Blackveil Forest and Karigan needs to step up again. Visions and even time travel will ensue in this one. Good book.

Like "good" epic fantasy? I think you'll like this.

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## **Eric Overkamp says**

I really liked this book from Kristen Britain. It's the second book in the Green Rider series and follows the Story of a new Green Rider named Karigan G'ladheon. The Green Riders are a special messenger service for the king. Black and evil things are waking up in Blackveil Forest, a place where unspeakable evil had been banished and locked away for a long time. Karigan (and some others) must do what they can to help keep this threat contained for as long as possible.

I love the fantasy world that the author has created even though not everything is quite that original. Once you've read some epic fantasy by authors such as Tolkien, Brooks, and Jordan, you kinda see ideas, characters and races being recycled. Examples, Groundmites = Jordan's Trollocs; Morhavon's wraiths/generals = Jordan's Forsaken; Blackveil Forest = Brooks' Forbidding; strange events = Jordan's Bubbles of Evil. There are a few more, but it doesn't detract from the author's work in any way. In fact I enjoyed these elements which reminded me of other books...

I found this second book much more enjoyable than the first, with much more action and with more suspense throughout. I also enjoyed the tiny bit of romance that also occurred and wonder how this will evolve in future books.

All in all, a very solid and entertaining fantasy book that will please fantasy lovers. The recycled fantasy elements are understandable, as most all fantasy builds on ideas of the Fathers of Fantasy.

Happy Reading!

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## Meg says

I almost gave this one 3-stars like the first book, but let's face it friends--any 600 page book that you finish in 2 days is a 4-star at LEAST. Not a great work of literary prowess, but a GREAT STORY. This time around I cared a lot more about the characters--especially Captain Laren, Lord Alton, and Lil--the "First Rider." I LOVED the time travel aspect of the story. That can just never get old to me--so many possibilities. The world and the magic are entrancing.

That being said, it still bugs me... just more of a gnat kind of bug than a dragonfly now. Britain is really an AMAZING writer, though a little inconsistent. She sets up her world of heightened language, then throws in some weird phrase of modern speech every fifty pages or so that completely jars me: saying some material was made of the "best fabric ever," or that Karigan "fell asleep for real this time," or that it must be "that time of the month"... It's really such little stuff--guess I'm just an elitist snob of a reader and I need to get over it. But really, it should only further testify of her talent as a writer. I get so lost in her story that inconsistencies jar me so.

Also, I don't read much fantasy so I'm kinda ignorant about this... but do most fantasy writers use the omniscient perspective? It reads so juvenile to me, and kind of provincial since most fiction has tended toward 3rd-person limited of late. The tone is overly-informative and seemingly unjustified to me. But I recognize that's a stylistic choice.

All that being said, if you love fantasy, I'm sure you'll LOVE this series. It's certainly swept me up, and I plan on reading to the end.

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## Adrianna [SypherLily] says

This series is fantastic. This felt slower than the first, but there were a lot of chilling moments where we find out so much of the past and more about the enemy and how he came to be. We discover more of Karigan's ancestry and on the first rider, Lil. Overall a great sequel, and I look forward to continuing!

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## Mikki says

It's not often that I want to rip the pages out of a book just so I can finally finish the book and be done with it, so I guess that's one thing *First Rider's Call* will forever be notable for. But that's not a good thing. I swear, the damn thing would never end and a great deal of nothing was happening the whole time. My copy was 800 pages, and the only time anything truly started to get moving was around the 700 page mark, and at that point you just want it to be over.

I am particularly disappointed in the story's flagrant use of deus ex machina elements. No one actually accomplishes anything on their own in this book without spiritual or magical entity doing all the work for them. I'm not kidding. During the climactic battle of this book, Karigan was in the backseat of her own body. Everyone would be sitting down navel-gazing if shades of the dead weren't around prodding these slabs of

meat into action.

Karigan had such potential in the first book to come into her own, but she plateaued in this sequel and actually regressed into a character as bland and boring as everyone else. I resisted the common perception that she was a Mary Sue in the first book, but now I have to admit defeat and agree -- she's as Mary Sue as Mary Sue gets. She's special and all the bad guys want to kill her, but this time it's not because she's carrying a deadly message or whatever -- it's because of her blood. And it's not even particularly special blood. Lil Ambriodhe, the first rider, singles her out for no other reason than they share the same brooch, but for some mysterious reason, Karigan can travel back in time. Her inexplicable romances with King Zachary and Alton render dishwater exciting in comparison.

As you might conclude, I'm not picking up the next book. Let Sacoridia go up in flames, I'm having none of it.

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### **Dichotomy Girl says**

I've listened to 2 hours of this on audiobook, and I really don't think I can take another 18 hours. I'm just finding it very "meh".

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### **Kelsey Hanson says**

Actual Rating: 2.5

This is a personal preference of mine, but I hate time-travelling related stories. I think they tend to get very complicated and not in a way that I find especially interesting. This book was a bit of a let down for me. It seems like the writer was trying to make the story much more complex from the first one, but the plot plods along too slowly for it to really pay off. I did like the addition of Lil, but this book had so many slow spots it took me a long time to finish. Hopefully, the next one is better.

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### **Miranda Kalhorn (Smith) says**

Man, I was torn about this book. And when I'm torn, I write a review to try and get it all worked out in my head.

I love fantasy cliches. So this checked a lot of good boxes for me.

But there was also time travel...? Which, I barely like time travel in my sci-fi, let alone fantasy. It's always so messy and inconsistent and unnecessarily confusing. So that's... less good.

And then I got this slight but distinct homophobic feeling throughout, which suuper did not sit well with me. I think I'm the only one that feels that way, based on the fact that no one else seems to have mentioned it, but I feel like it really ought to be mentioned. Granted, this book was written awhile ago, and I probably shouldn't read so much into things, but, oh well, I'm allowed to have opinions.



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## **Férial says**

4.5 stars actually just because I had hard times getting away from the book. That's THE sign. The sign that shows me I love a story and the way it is told.

Completely devastated by Zachary's choice but proud of Karigan's reaction to the gift. I guess there won't be a happy ending for these two. Makes me sad. Really sad. I so much like happy endings.

Anyway, there are still plenty of adventures ahead for Karigan. On my way to book 3

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## **Althea Ann says**

The is a sequel to "The Green Rider," which I read shortly after it came out. It was good enough that I bothered to pick up the sequel - but not so good that I really went out of my way to find it.

"First Rider's Call" continues with more of the same. It's fantasy for those who like long stories with girls, horses, light romance and magic. Adequate, entertaining, but nothing really memorable or remarkable.

Karigan, the young woman who was called to the magical royal messenger service known as the Green Riders in the last book, now finds herself at the center of a problem - something is going wrong with the magic. It's becoming unpredictable, often wrong. Could the elflike people known as Eletians be behind this? Or is there a bigger issue going on? Karigan finds spiritual guidance from the first Green Rider, and seeks to solve this problem, sort out her love life, and gain some maturity.

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## **Jenny says**

I really struggled between giving this book two stars or three, but ultimately had to admit that I liked it. I am a sucker for series, and this book really had some good moments. I found myself drawn in and actually reading the book before bed, where with most books I reserve them only for my commute.

So now for the bad...GOOD LORD is this book a rip off of Lord of the Rings! Just like the first one is! Allow me to list the similarities (of course, some of these are carry-overs from Green Rider, but bear with me). So the main character, Karigan (Frodo?), gets dragged into this quest because she inherited a magic object, which is a golden brooch (ring?). This brooch allows her to become invisible. Ok, so that was last book. To move one to this one, there is an evil being, Mornhaven (Sauron?) which has been asleep for a long time that is now coming to life and spreading evil. He uses ugly, evil creatures called groundmites (ogres, anyone?) to fight battles. He also sends out these wraith-like creatures wearing crowns who used to be his generals(ring-wraiths?) to do his bidding and retrieve Karigan. Complicating the matter is a race of tall, beautiful, and magical people called Eletians (Elves?) who are trying to stay out of worldly affairs but find themselves drawn into the conflict.

You see my point. I'm not trying to rant here, I really think it's funny in a lot of ways. What was not funny was the fact that I came to start groaning out loud every time Britain wrote "angry retorts sprang/entered/jumped into her mind" because I still think Karigan is a little brat and she really needs some new phrasing/material/whatever.

Despite all of this, I enjoyed the book, as I said, and I won't lie...I'll be reading the next one just as soon as the public library gets it back from whatever sucker is reading it at the moment.

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### **Aristea says**

Great continuation of the series.

I found there was more pathos this time, more desperation in the matter, more difficulties to overcome. I just feel invested in this world and in Kerigan's adventures!

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