



The World Raven

A.J. Smith

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The dead god is waking. His power-mad priestess has deployed a mass of men and beasts onto the plains of Ro Weir. Faced with this black swarm, the last remnants of a nation crumbles and falls. This is the final battle for the mortal lands of Ro.

Far to the north, the ice men of Rowanoco muster their Exemplars against the witch's assassins. In the blistering southern deserts, a squire with no master walks unscathed through a poisoned city. And, in the halls beyond the world, a thrice-born man dares to tread the path of Giants...

All that was dead will rise. All that now lives will fall...

This is the final epic battle for the Lands of Ro.

What people are saying about THE WORLD RAVEN:

'A **brilliantly engrossing** series, full of action, great stories, a captivating set of characters, now a fitting conclusion'

'All round **a cracking end**'

'It ties up loose ends and provides a **fast paced and well written fantasy novel** in doing so'

'**Wonderful storytelling skills**, something to lose yourself in'

The World Raven Details

Date : Published August 11th 2016 by Head of Zeus

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Author : A.J. Smith

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Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Dark Fantasy

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From Reader Review The World Raven for online ebook

Rudi Opperman says

Great series with all of components that makes you want to read more fantasy.

Sjoerd says

What a great series and I want to read so much more of this. I liked the ending, but I have to say that I had hoped for one that wasn't as open. Of course, this does leave open the possibility for a continued series... ;)

The Tattooed Book Geek (Drew). says

4.5 stars!

As always you can also find this review on my own humble blog: TheTattooedBookGeek.wordpress.com

I received a free copy of this book courtesy of the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

The World Raven is the final book in A. J. Smith's The Long War series with The Black Guard, The Dark Blood and The Red Prince being the three previous instalments.

The World Raven follows on directly from the climactic conclusion of The Red Prince continuing the varying character story-arcs and plots that we have been following from the start of the series, building through to this final volume in The Long War.

I have followed this series from the very beginning, starting way back many many pages ago with The Black Guard and have thoroughly enjoyed it. With the lands of Ro, A. J. Smith has excelled with world building, crafted a richly detailed huge world full of religion, magic, history and lore with various different areas all with their own unique geography creating a rich tapestry in which to weave his tales of The Long War, ranging from the stark, cold ice lands of Fjorlan, to the sun soaked desert lands of Karesia, the large forest of The Fell, Ro Canarn, the area of Tor Funweir with it's cities Ro Tiris, Ro Haran, Ro Arnon and Ro Weir all the way to the edge of the world with Oron Kaa. And, all are populated with interesting and intriguing creatures and characters.

Along side the high quality world building Smith also has great in-depth and detailed characterisation giving you the reader fully fleshed characters that you like and dislike in equal measure, heroes, villains, the grey area in-between where anti-heroes are placed. These are a set of characters that you care about, you feel for their fates and predicaments, hoping that they survive and for the villain's, well, you hope that they get there comeuppance.

Being the final book in the series, it's hard to go into characterisation as those characters that have made it this far have all already shown great development growing into their roles throughout the three previous books. But Smith does not disappoint, fleshing out the characters we already know even more, developing

others who have only played very small roles, with even a few surprises thrown in along the way. Anyone that's read the previous books will know that some characters and soldiers in The Long War have fallen along the way, but is the death of mortal flesh truly the end? That my fellow bookish peeps is the question, and the only way to find the answer out is by reading this book!

When you get to the final book in a series it's not just a book any more and the characters you're reading about aren't just people on a page. Yes, there's something to be said for the first book in a series and learning about a new world and meeting new characters for the first time, forming that relationship between you as the reader and the characters you are reading about. But, when you read a final book in a series, it transcends that as you've already developed that bond between you and the characters, you have your favourites, you have those you despise and you have mourned those along the way who haven't made it this far. It's a journey that you have taken and as the page count dwindles down to those final few pages you start to realise that your journey to is at an end.

It's really hard to review a final book in a series without giving away spoilers as to what has transpired previously in the three books before and as I avoid spoilers I can't really go into much detail about the story taking place in The World Raven. I'm a firm believer that reading should be a journey, I hate spoilers that give away the plot and I don't want to spoil anything for you by telling you about story-arc's, plot twists and deaths and thus spoil that journey for you should you so choose to read this series.

Instead I will write that Smith has crafted an epic conclusion to his The Long War series, with The World Raven he weaves together some of the separate story-arcs and threads bringing certain characters together in epic settings and battles and leaves other characters to their own devices and stories possibly with fleeting overlaps with other arc's. Every character and story-arc throughout the book is given plenty of page time and none come across as more important than any other giving you a sense that every battle in The Long War is just as important as the next and every characters fate matters.

The conclusion isn't all neat and tidy with every lose end tied up but that's what you expect from a fantasy series. If you think of Steven Erikson's epic Malazan series, one of the best ever and it has an open ended conclusion after ten books. Does it detract from the story? No, it doesn't. It's the same with Smith's The Long War, the open ended conclusion of The World Raven for some characters is the perfect ending and a more than fitting climax, leaving the door open for future books to revisit The Long War and the lands of Ro.

Smith's writing is just as good as ever, he has a fast paced and descriptive style that really pulls you in giving you what feels like just the right amount of history, characterisation, quiet moments, story progression and action. Added with humour, occasionally sarcastic from some characters – big bonus points for that from me as I enjoy my sarcasm and swearing (not to much that it's over the top but what I found to be just the right amount and the Fjorlanders and their cursing are a highlight always bringing a smile to my face). All this together gives you a great fast-paced read. There are a lot of POV's (points of view) in the series but Smith has always managed to maintain your focus as a reader and his focus as an author and while you will have your favourite POV characters – one of mine has been Randall the young squire, his has been a fun journey, you're never bored with the others and can always find something interesting to pull you into their stories and plots.

I've mentioned both the deep characterisation and detailed world building that Smith incorporates into his books and along with that the action scenes demand a mention to. He really has an eye for combat and gives you plenty of action throughout the book and while it's visceral in places it's never over the top like some authors seem to write, more gore doesn't always make better action, there needs to be a balance between the bloodshed and the action taking place and Smith has it on point giving you some great action in The World

Raven.

From what I have seen not to many people seem to have read this series compared to others out-there and I feel that that truly is a shame as Smith deserves to be one of the top current fantasy authors. And, now that it's finished I really feel like I can say that The Long War warrants being recognised as one of the top fantasy series. For me, Smith is a must read author and I will look forward to his future books.

If just one person who reads this decides to give The Long War a read – you need to start with The Black Guard as it's the first book.

Lplus says

An improvement on the previous books - The author finally got over his obsession with people puffing their cheeks out and gave the reader a considered and appropriate ending. It would get 3.5 stars if that was an option.

Vaelin says

A superb final installment in one of the best series I have read in recent times. I'm a bit sad that the series is over but also very keen to see what Mr Smith has in store for us next. Thankfully, we will likely not to have wait as long for his next works unlike Patrick "Lord of the Buffet" Rothfuss.

Recommended all fans of dark fantasy.

Zack Parsons says

The World Raven concludes a series that in the beginning I thought would just be slightly above average. Well this book and the previous entry proved me wrong. The ending felt like a classic. It was not an ending where one event or one character was more important than any other. The series didn't end with every little loose end tied up neatly, but it wasn't to its detriment, it felt natural and true. Masterfully done by A.J. Smith, I look forward to seeing what is next from him.

Cal says

In the Chronicles of the Long War, a battle has been won; however, the war continues.

Will be interesting to see how (if) the author goes forward with this series.

For the Fantasy enthusiast, this series belongs on your bookshelf.

Some truly unforgettable characters.

Adam says

I honestly believe that this series is one of the best I have read. I bought the black guard on a whim in a sale and was glad I saw it to the end. I praise the author and look forward to the next books he writes

Tim says

[dragon (hide spoiler)]

Chris C says

Overall I enjoyed this series, yet struggled at times with this book. Don't get me wrong, it ties everything up well enough but didn't wow me, possibly me, didn't have a great reading session, more fits and starts here and there. Whether that's the book or not enough time devoted to it I couldn't say.

I must admit I found it hard to connect with the characters this time round, again not sure why, some dying in the previous book may of thrown me off somewhat.

All in all, an enjoyable series and one I've recommended to others, give it a try.

Derek Slattery says

A master storyteller

Wow what a series each book building up to fitting climax and a stepping stone to further tales . I just can't wait to see what the future holds

Dcn. Jedidiah Tritle says

Smith wraps up his debut series by tying up loose ends while keeping the story open-ended enough for future installments. The greatest aspect of the series, in my opinion, is the deep lore. The Giants, the Jekkan, the Dokkalfar--all really cool. I would have liked to see a bit more about the Great Race, but they played their mysterious part throughout the series. The series pays respectful homage to H.P. Lovecraft in the character of the Dead God and its followers, while also maintaining a very traditional fantasy scope reminiscent of Lord of the Rings or The Faithful and the Fallen. While the character exposition apparent in the first novel was somewhat criticized for bogging down the pace, I would say that the exposition built up the characters that

would play vital rolls throughout the rest of the series. For instance: Torian's initial chapters were seemingly extraneous; but, if those chapters hadn't been there, certain characters in the last couple novels wouldn't have made much sense--especially when the Shades get involved in the picture. Overall, a great book, and I'd highly recommend the series to those who love getting deep into a world and its lore.

Kunal says

Well, finally at the end of this series and I'm a bit disappointed with the ending, there was so much promise through books 2 and 3 but I felt this final book features far too much magic, this essentially introduced a large element of 'deus ex machina' in a story that didn't otherwise need anything but light touch magic.

The magic really was a bothering point for me in spite of the fact that there were chapters with satisfying battles that pushed this up to a 3 star for me but the reliance of magic and some strange dimension which made very little sense ruined the ending.

I also feel that a lot of characters has unsatisfying endings (not in terms of what happened but how quickly this happened) I'm not a fan of books dragging but this does seem like it needed an extra 250 pages or even another book to tie things out without feeling like everything was rushed and characters that we've followed for four books deserving a more conclusive ending.

Still a good series overall and interesting, I just think this is an example of where a little less magic and a better defined system of magic would have worked far better.

Jaya says

What a fantastic end to the series! I loved every chapter, every character and every plot twist in this book. The first half, especially, appealed to my adventurous and mischievous side. The second half, the culmination of all the story lines in all the previous books, was a mixture of the surprising and the predictable.

I think it would have been better as two separate books though, as there were a lot of action packed events back to back. I also sometimes found the switch between story lines a little difficult- in the previous books, the pace and intensity of various storylines were different and switching helped savor the plot twists. In this book however, all the different threads were ramping up and were equally intense so switching meant actually taking a break from the book to think.

On a different note, I loved descriptions of oron kaa, the guardian, the queen in red, the system of tyrants and the void. I also enjoyed the fact that not all story lines were neatly tied up - things in life generally aren't anyway. There weren't as many one on one combats in this book, mainly big battles. Several characters did however have confrontations which were more psychological in nature - a feature that I very much liked about this book. Ultimately, several characters overcame challenges using their mental strength, convictions, ideas, discipline and determination rather than depending on brawn and numbers. I found several aspects of this book rather philosophical and whimsical, especially the cycle and source of divine power.

All in all, I definitely (and have already!) and highly recommend this series to anyone who enjoys dark epic

fantasy. I look forward to the next series from this author and hope to read about some of my favorite characters again.

Gary Mountford says

An amazing end to an amazing series. Someone please make this into a TV series.
