



The Merchant and the Menace

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The Seraphim. Beings of power, created to guide the world in times of trouble. They live their lives of near immortality in servitude to a lesser creature, man.

One rebelled. Amird, the Hand of the Creator, bridled at the sovereignty of his lord. In defiance he murdered a brother and was cast into the Mists of Chaos.

Millennia passed as the Deceiver plotted his return. Backed by the might of a seemingly unstoppable army of Ulrog Stone Men and their fire-eyed Malveel Lords, Amird plans to wrest control of the world from the Creator and rain violence on the humans he once served.

All that stands between Amird and his triumphant return are the remnants of battered human armies and the hope that Seraphim, loyal to the Creator, still roam this world.

Kael knows little of this struggle. His quiet village lies deep in the Southlands, unchanged and unchallenged by the wars raging in the frozen North. In fact, the boy longs for a bit of adventure and freedom from the boring routine at his father's inn.

Freedom comes at a cost. Kael's first journey outside his secluded village results in a tragedy so deep it destroys the boy's sheltered world and immerses him in the struggle.

Revelations surface. Kael uncovers a past linking him to legends, grapples with a present that resembles nothing he knows, and confronts a future that demands he tap long dormant power and stake a claim in the defense of the human races.

Kael's first step toward that future lies through the darkness of the Nagur Wood, and rumor has it something prowls the Nagur!

The Merchant and the Menace Details

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From Reader Review The Merchant and the Menace for online ebook

Tarqs says

Was an excellent read though the later books are slightly better. All in all for the entire series I can say it is Epic Fantasy but has a number of characters you come to love and hate rather than the typical epic fantasy with only one or two characters of note.

Cookie Monster says

This book is story setup woven around world building. Many of the backstories are told in flashback and stand alone as interesting narratives. The main story (or current event) is the unveiling of the young man Kael as a new Seraph. The plot moves slowly but this is due to the side journeys into the history of the world and the characters Kael encounters. I found the back stories engaging enough to make up for the slowness of the overall story. In particular, the story of Brelg and Yanwin is a dose of both heroics and romance. Additionally, the story of the fall of the original Seraph, Amird, and the death of his brother, Awoi, is excellent myth and highlights how evil entered this world. I anticipate that the next installment will pick up the pace now that the world is set and the players properly aligned. Looking forward to seeing where this will go.

Tisha says

Not my usual genre, but I read this b/c at the time I found it, it was free :). I'm glad I stepped out of my zone to read it. An adventure/fantasy tale about a world not our own but with strong parallels to our own Judeo-Christian heritage, it is a very good read with plenty of humor, action and drama. Really liked it.

Richie says

I ended up moving this to the top of my "to read" list because the author of it sent me a request to write a review of it. He has been the first person to send such a request and so I ended up reading the whole book in one sitting. My opinion is as follows: the book characters have weird names but eventually you forget about the weirdness. The story line is quite good if you stick with it. I loved the unexpected twists of the main character's life. So many things that at times, they were funny. I feel that the first book lacked action. I understand that this is in order to introduce the mythology and such, still, I would have liked more action sequences. Perhaps the second book is better in this department. Overall, the story was good and the characters likable. I'll give this book four stars since it was a good read.

Julie Shaw says

Great book! I very much enjoyed reading about the beginning of this young man's adventure. I also like that the author takes the time to give the reader several background stories for this world. I have already recommended this book to many of my friends.

Kyle says

The Merchant and the Menace is the first in “The Seraphinium” series. It centers on Kael Brelgson, a young boy who finds out he is a descendant of a deity named Avra, and he is destined to become the next Seraphim. Seraphims are mighty, magical beings, with the ability to influence world events. Since this is an epic fantasy series, there is a lot of time spent world building -- describing the theological system, introducing the various societies, and telling about the past conflicts that brought about the current threat of war.

On the positive side, this is a clean story from a language, graphic violence, and sex standpoint. This may be important for some readers, especially younger audiences. I also found several interesting characters, specifically Kael’s father Brelg, a master Elven spy named Teeg, and a Keltar named Gannu. On the negative side, I found the novel was choppy at times with short sentences often comprised of three to seven words. I think there is a time for this type of sentence to really draw emphasis, but I felt it was overdone in the story. Below is an example,

Many men tried win her favor. Sergeant Brelg never once flirted with her. He remained respectful at all times.

I also found the novel lacked much in the way of action for our young hero to be and his band of companions. There are two minor skirmishes, and one battle that Kael hears about through a secondhand story. A large portion of the book focused on Kael’s education of the world about him, including long theological lectures on Avra, the first two Seraphims, the backstory of Brelg, and the backstory of the Keltaran and Zodrian peoples.

While I think the story arc has some promise, I only rated the book two stars. I didn’t feel like there was enough of a hook to compel me to keep reading the series. The writing was choppy at times, and I really wanted to see more firsthand storytelling rather than learning so much through lectures and stories told to Kael. I applaud the author’s first work, and encourage him to keep trying!

watson387 says

First off I LOVE the history and mythology of the Seraphim's world! The races, allegiances, towns, landscapes and creeds all mesh together quite nicely into an excellent fantasy setting. Kael Brelgson is, unbeknownst to him, destined for greatness. What starts for him as his first trading journey turns into revelation and catastrophe as he learns there is more to the world beyond his little town of Kelky and deals with the sudden death of a loved one. A lot is revealed in this first book, mostly through flashbacks and lessons taught to the boy by his newfound companions. The world and setting is laid out for the reader comprehensibly and Daniel McHugh paints a wonderful picture of character and landscape.

The only problem I have with the book is that while you learn a LOT about the Seraphim's world, the main

storyline suffers for it as the frequent flashbacks and history lessons cause it to move terribly slowly. It seemed like a 442 page introduction rather than a standalone novel. It ends kind of abruptly, but it just made me want to hurry and purchase the next book to find out what happens next (which I'm assuming was Mr. McHugh's intention).

All in all I really enjoyed The Merchant and the Menace and I will definitely be purchasing the rest of the books in the series. Daniel McHugh has written a very good start to a story bound for greatness, and I'm more than happy to follow along for the ride.

Dave Compton says

A pretty good version of a "lord of the rings" knock off. I mean it is a jr varsity, B type of read. Since I got a Kindle, these are the kind of books I have been reading since they are often free or a couple of bucks. I read way to many books to be able to spend the normal \$10 to read the top authors. Gonna have to start going back to the library.

Alex says

Definitely a "setup" book. The story is ambitious and requires a good deal of structure to set the scene. However, the back stories themselves are engaging and nearly complete, so the departures from present tense do not distract from enjoyment of the book. Many characters are introduced in a short timeframe, but their individual stories are easy to follow and draw the reader into the overarching narrative. I don't wish to give away further developments, but book 1 was barely a five for me while book 2 really delivered. Overall the series is a fantastic read, so far.

Fiery says

Excellent read. Dialogs have a few quirks, such as inappropriate usage of words: fool and a**. Still I can't grasp some ideas about relationship between Avra and Chaos. Other than that I liked the book. It resembles some ideas from LOTR, but is unique as well. Recommended.

Tyler McAllister says

Awesome story. It was slow going but I believe that is because this book is setting the foundation for the other ones to come. The characters, story line, and magic of the world is a fresh take. I can't wait to read the rest of this series!

Daniel McHugh says

I am the author of this book, therefore, I think it is a first rate, enjoyable read :) I am heavily influenced by Tolkien, Eddings, Brooks, MacDonald, Lewis, Asimov, Herbert, Card and Dahl. I believe I have a unique take on the epic quest and as the story progresses it takes the genre to places many others do not. Additionally, I have a knack for tying together a far reaching and ambitious storyline and making it cohesive and coherent. The Seraphinium not only follows the journey of one young man, but also the journey of nations and races. Please join me in the Nearing World.

Maria says

I really liked this book. There are a few things I look for in a good book: a good adventure, comedy, and great characters. I found all of them while reading this book. I highly recommend to those who like epic adventures. Make sure you have plenty of time because once you start reading it, you won't be able to put it down.

Emily says

Best new fantasy series out there!

Steve says

Is this author thinking outside the box? No, not really. The story begins as pretty standard fare. However, the world building is solid and the construction of this fantasy universe is great. Good guys, bad guys, gods, angels and demons, alternate worlds. We are taken on a typical quest, but along the way we learn a good deal about each character and their story. The tension begins to build and by the end of this first book we end up hooked. I'm eager to see if all this build up will translate into a strong narrative in the sequel. If this book is the evidence, I don't think I'll be disappointed.
