



A Shout For The Dead

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In 'The Cry of the Newborn' we were introduced to four teenagers each of whom had nature at their command. They became the pawns in the struggle of the Estorean empire to survive. Now ten years have passed and Estorea is consumed by war and the four ascendants have chosen different sides in the conflict.

A Shout For The Dead Details

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Robo Pete says

So yes, finally finished and what a tale! Along with Cry of the Newborn, the two Ascendants of Estorea novels tell an absolutely perfect story. Shout for the Dead is definitely more pacey than Cry... with less of the world building and intrigue of that first novel (although the complex themes of acceptance, religion, power and idealism are all still present) but from the outset it was just so enjoyable to be back in Estorea with characters I'd grown to love over the preceding book's eight hundred or so pages. Although the epic battle scenes are again present the tempo and nature of them is changed from Cry... so that the fight for the Conquord is more of a desperate slog than last time and I was glad to feel that I wasn't just reading "more of the same." The scenes at sea with the Ocetanas, Illiev and Squad Seven alone were worth the price of admission. As things drew to a close and the remaining pages grew fewer, I began to feel that perhaps the ending would leave me unsatisfied but I can gladly say that Barclay finished things off nicely. After almost 1500 pages of such a living, breathing world it would have been nigh impossible to bring down the curtain leaving everything neatly in place but what we got was a satisfying closure on this chapter of Estorea's history. There wasn't a finality to the ending and it cheers me to think of these characters living on; creating new beginnings and forging new lives for themselves. Whether or not James Barclay decides to revisit Estorea and the Ascendants again is something only he will know but regardless, the futures of the Conquord, Sirraine and Tsard will be very interesting indeed.

Mridupawan Podder says

Definitely more fast paced than book 1. Anti-climatic ending although we knew where we were headed. This is what power does to you. Nicely written

Brian says

Not as good as the first book, and a bit slow to start, but a very good book nonetheless. I'd give it three and a half stars if I could. Almost four.

Aoife says

Woah...I don't know where to start. Perhaps with the cover...I'm usually not somebody who gets overly excited about covers, but I simply love this one. It looks as if it was done by the same artist who did the Raven-covers, or at least it is made in a very similar style: also only two colours (OK, three: the red is fading to orange), but it says so much, and there just couldn't be a more fitting image for the book than the remains of a battlefield with the setting sun in the background.

I could never really understand people who read the last pages or the last chapter of a book I never had the idea of doing that myself, and was quite stunned when I learned that there are people who would do something like this...but with *Shout for the Dead* I had to fight the urge to skip to the last chapter very very

hard. Because I just wanted to know if everything would turn out somehow not too bad in the end (yeah, after about 100 pages you could already be quite sure that there was probably no 'turning out good' at the end), because I had grown so attached to some of the characters that I really wanted to know if they'd survive it, and wasn't sure if I could wait the whole 628 pages to find out.

In the end I resisted, and got rewarded with a very emotional reading-experience. Gorian is now officially my most hated literary character ever. I spent every single scene with him, wishing he would suffer a very very slow and very very painful, agonizing death (did I mention slow? and painful...oh right I did). For many other characters, I just felt the need to yell at them 'Noooo, don't do that!'...well at least for the first half of the book, after that basically everybody had managed to land in a situation where it didn't really matter what he or she did, or didn't do, everything would simply get worse.

I also think the book deserves special praise for the way religion is treated there. Many fantasy-novels are set in a world somehow resembling our own in the middle-ages, and often the author certainly did very much research about living, fighting and everything in the middle-ages, but religion gets either not mentioned at all or there are just some vague references to gods...very unlike the middle-ages. Here it is *very* different, Estor has a very strong and influencial church, and it is vital to the plot (and makes things worse...a lot. But everybody does that).

After so much prase some complaints: towards the end I thought that the story got dragged out a bit. From about page 400 there are perhaps 100-150 pages where I felt that there wasn't much happening, except more villages getting raided by Gorian's soldiers and various people telling each other that thing are looking really bad now. Thank you but I got that before. I think all that could have probably been told in half as much pages. But as that still leaves over 400 pages of awesome I couldn't deduct a whole star for it. This book rates about 4.5.

And one last complaint: unrealistic ages. For once that does not mean that 14 year olds are leading armies but rather the opposite: Jhered is in his 60is, Herine over 80 and Hester even in her 90is . Yes I'm all for Fantasy-novels where the average age of the main characters is over 25, but you would expect that they feel there age at some point, but Jhered cheerfully travels through the country without resting very much, Herine does complain about her age at one point but then continues to kick ass for another 350 pages (and when she stops it's not so much to do with her age than with a variety of other things) and Hester is quite ageless and could also be only in her 40is.

Jennifer Hughes says

A good sequel but the ending was a bit of a disappointment, I think. It was very open and left me with loads of questions. I just want to know where everything is going next, at least it leaves it upto your imagination.

Adrian Collier says

Zombies and magic and epic battles! What more could you want?

Kate says

Do you know the empty feeling when you finish reading a book, and you know that the story did not really finish? It's just that you will never know what happened next. If you ever felt that, it can only mean that you have found one of the real Books!

And the 'The Ascendants of Estorea' are one of them. It is an amazing history, that you almost live in, every chapter gets you deeper and deeper. You can feel the emotions of each character and imagine all the world created by writer. the story is not the happy ever after one, it has a bitter-sweet ending that keeps away the boredom.

I will definitely come back to this writer!

Rui Mateus says

The first chapters of this book made a very nice start, with a reunion with the characters I already loved. But things got scary and I spent half the book afraid my favorite characters would die. And four of them did. But this was even better than the first book and I felt happiness, sadness, rage and loss. Generally speaking, this duology would make the most amazing TV series.

Chris Harvey says

A good read and really shows how Barclay's writing has come on.....however I had a few concerns, this was set 10 years after Cry of the Newborn and therefore felt much like a sequel rather than a continuation of the story.....where as the first book flowed well, despite having a lot of tactical debates, this one felt a little stop start and the narrative was rather confusing at times with characters disappearing and certain scenarios not really being chased up....that aside the premise was great and there were some memorable, if not gruesome, moments.....the end felt a little laboured though....this book was 200 pages shorter than the first and in many ways could have done with that extra space to really explain what was happening.....all in all a great read but a bit lacking when compared to the first book in the series, that's why I have given it a 3 rather than a 4
