



Lord of Snow and Shadows

Sarah Ash

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Combining the best of fantasy traditions with her own unique vision, Sarah Ash brings to dazzling life a new saga filled with epic adventure and unforgettable characters. Far-reaching in scope and imagination, Lord of Snow and Shadows embarks on a journey like no other—into a shape-shifting world teeming with political intrigue, astonishing magic, and passions both dark and light.

Raised by his protective mother in the sunny clime of the south, Gavril Andar knows nothing of his father—or the ominous legacy that awaits him. But his innocence is about to be shattered. The man who ruled the wintry kingdom of Azhkendir, a man infused with the burning blood of the dragon-warrior known as Drakhaoul, has been murdered by his enemies. It is his fiery, chameleonlike blood that pulses through Gavril's veins. The news is Gavril's first taste of death—but it will not be his last. For blood is the liquid that seals his fate.

Expected by clan warriors from the north to avenge his father's murder—and still his unquiet ghost—Gavril is kidnapped. He soon learns that becoming Drakhaon means not only ascending to the throne of Azhkendir but changing, in subtle ways at first, into a being of extraordinary power and might. A being that must be replenished with the blood of innocents in order to survive. Ensnared in Kastel Drakhaon with no means of escape from the icebound kingdom, and carefully watched by neighboring rulers waiting to move against him, the untested Gavril must fight to retain his human heart and soul in the face of impending war—and the dark instincts that threaten to overpower him.

Man and beast, spymaster and insurgent, nature and the netherworld--all collide in phenomenal twists and turns. A masterwork of adventure fantasy, Lord of Snow and Shadows will leave you stunned—and longing for more.

Lord of Snow and Shadows Details

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Author : Sarah Ash

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From Reader Review Lord of Snow and Shadows for online ebook

Sarah Mac says

Disappointing. :/

I've had this forever -- it survived multiple cullings with the best of intentions -- but something about it isn't working, because I really don't care. The setting is great; I like the modified historical aspect of the trappings therein, & the concept is a good one. But the writing is so...blah. And the characters are so...blah. Not to mention the way these protags sound like they stepped off a cheesy YA fic. Dude, you're 20 years old & YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW THE GIRL! Man the hell up. Stop pining & harping on Astasia's perfection like a tween fantasy-hero. And Kiukiu, you're 18? Odd, that, because your sudden onset of power is Sew OMG~~ & the cringing doormat routine is that of a bullied gradeschooler. As for Astasia, she's just like any other self-insert rebellious daughter of rich folks wanting to chart her own life path. Yawn.

Despite the 'adult fantasy' publisher & threats of violence, this feels like modified YA. The pacing sucks (reader is dropped into the middle of a pivotal moment in a multi-book saga without bothering to build credible characters) & the dialogue is set to Endless Whine on a repeat playlist. The past plot involving Gavril's mother & father sounded more interesting, but clearly that's not the focus of the story. Yawn. Again. Say what you will about George RR Martin -- I'm not going to excuse his faults, which are many -- but even so, the characterization & plotting in early ASOIAF novels put this to shame.

DNF @ roughly 20%.

2 stars for the concept only.

Servius Heiner says

Not only are the characters flat, their flimsy flat. I keep trying to understand their motives for their actions and it just doesn't happen. Clan (a) attacks clan (b) breaking into the castle and killing woman and children. Clan (b) repels clan (a) and counter attacks wiping out all but one of the clan (a) blood line. But clan (b) is portrayed as the "bad" guys. The head of clan (b) see's himself as the bad Guy because of his father's actions in eliminating the threat to the family...

Then there are friendships that just appear; out of enemies. No rhyme or reason, just simply "Hey, you killed my father, and our clans are in a blood feud but eh, lets be friends."

If one were to correct the poor character development and poor use of tiered plot devices then the story would be pretty good. As it stands I am sad to say I don't have anything else to read at the moment so I am going to force myself to read the next two books... Somebody hold my hand.

Heather says

A wonderful, inventive start to Sarah Ash's "The Tears of Artamon" trilogy. She has created a rich world of

varied cultures and a diverse and sympathetic cast of characters. I particularly enjoyed the character development and look forward to seeing them evolve further in the next two books. I highly recommend this book.

Tracey says

Abandoned at about halfway point: repetitive, uninspired writing, uninteresting characters, weird juxtaposition of fantasy with reality, and altogether pretty predictable. And, as I recall, a level of sadism and torture porn that should have come with a warning label. Nope.

Crazy Uncle Ryan says

I was in the library looking for a book to read and came across this series. I had never heard of it but it had a cool enough looking cover so I got it. I wasn't disappointed. I really enjoyed this book. It had a lot of really interesting and likable characters and a very clever and exciting storyline. I did get a little confused at some points and found that certain parts weren't very well explained but other than that it was really an enjoyable book. I really liked the way it ended and look forward to starting the next book.

Karolinde (Kari) says

It's a bad sign when you get to the end of the first book in a series and you really don't care what happens next.

Rosu Aquabutts says

I am too lazy to write a legit review for this right now which I know I'll regret later when I want to come back to read my thoughts on it but WHATEVER.

This book is excellent. It's extremely unique and when you've read as much fantasy as I have, unique counts for a lot. The setting is 18th/19th century Russia inspired, based around Slavic mythology and the Russian revolution. The primary political factors in the book revolve around the rise of potential communism in the nation of Muscobar and the prince who wants to bring the sundered nation of Rossiya back to its former united glory. The primary magical one involves the main character, Gavril Nagarian, having been possessed by the "Drakhaoul," a spirit-monster that turns him into a creature part demon, part dragon, and part vampire.

There's a whole lot of fantasy potential untapped in Slavic roots. The Dracula-esque Drakhaon was unique and interesting, while the political unrest framed a great background. I loved the Guslyars, an extremely unique order of magician that's part bard, part shaman, and part necromancer. Sarah Ash focuses more on the wonder of magic than the rules that govern it, something that I appreciate now more than even in this post-Mistborn age. I love and respect and appreciate complex, tightly woven magic systems ... but I prefer my magic to be incorporeal and strange and dark.

I really liked all the characters, major and minor both. Ash was just comfortable enough killing characters that I feared for everybody the entire time. I really appreciated the different mix of characters. There's no prevalent archetype here, and the nature of this story let us have all sorts of different character types. I didn't find either the barbaric Azhkendi or the more civilized southerners were intended to be seen as more "right" than the other, which is something I ALWAYS really appreciate. I prefer my fantasy balanced, yo.

The writing is also BEAUTIFUL. While there are a few problems picturing the scene -- she leaves out key transitions and I need to adjust my mental picture when I realize we've moved further than I thought -- she turns a beautiful phrase, especially the descriptions of the Drakhaoul's magic and of the ways beyond.

My one complaint about this book is one that I'm not sure is really a complaint, but damn. The pacing in this thing is bizarre and strange. Conflicts arise and are resolved so quickly and seemingly irrelevantly that it made my head spin a few times. I mean, almost 300 pages dedicated to the ghost of Volkh, and the solution was so anticlimatic? Or what about the werewolves? Or the revolution in Muscobar? It's not a bad thing, necessarily, but it was ... odd. There was also the problem that some things developed a little more quickly than they seemed they should. Namely, the relationships between Kiukiu, Gavril, and Jaromir. I think there was a large chunk of time at the abbey that I would have liked to have actually seen onscreen, exciting or not, because I felt it hard to really believe that Jaro and Gavril had become as close as the book told me they had.

So since this is a lazy review I don't need to come up with a nice conclusion for it. I loved this book and I'm definitely getting the next one asap.

Cay Evergreen says

People read different books for different reasons, and they look for different things. A lot of people read for plot and character, which is why most of the reviews are rather low. I don't dispute their claims.

But I read with one criterion in mind, and one criterion only: style. If Sarah Ash has nothing else, it is style. Her description is beautiful and concise, and her settings are wonderful. It's delightful to see non-Western-based worlds once in awhile, and her world is much more realistic and varied than your generic sword and sorcery.

I do wish she'd come up with something other than Drakhaoul, though. Anything else, and the vampire overtones would have been significantly less noticeable.

Amarilli Settantatre says

da www.sognipensieriparole.com

Lords of Snow and Shadows è un fantasy avvincente, con regni in lotta, casati distrutti e eredi sopravvissuti, amori tra membri di famiglie nemiche, monaci guaritori e stregoni nascosti sotto le spoglie di scienziati, e persino incantatori di magia oscura, capaci di chiamare indietro le anime dei morti. C'è un po' di tutto, però quel tutto è stato oculatamente dosato, confezionando un buon prodotto, con capitoli brevi, continui cambi di scene, e con un ritmo sempre sostenuto (tanto che le seicento pagine scorrono via velocissime).

Rispetto ai fantasy a cui sono abituata, l'autrice ha preferito una chiave più magica e sfumata, rifuggendo da tocchi troppo sanguinari o sentimenti marcati (c'è solo un accenno ad un amore "proibito", con un bacio fugace che sembra quasi sfuggito per sbaglio), però ammetto che mi sono ugualmente appassionata.

Alcuni personaggi sono meno approfonditi di altri, mentre almeno un paio di figure, sempre a mio parere, avrebbero meritato maggiore attenzione (penso ad esempio a Kiukiu, la cui evoluzione è forse delineata in modo troppo veloce per permettere di apprezzarla appieno, e al principale antagonista, su cui riponevo grandi aspettative, e che viene liquidato sbrigativamente), tuttavia vi è anche da dire che – essendo il primo volume di una trilogia – la Ash ha probabilmente preferito mettere parecchia carne sul fuoco per poi cuocere (e sviluppare) il tutto con calma.

E in effetti il finale - apertissimo – tiene parecchio in sospeso.

Nick T. Borrelli says

I love Sarah Ash. Now before you take that the wrong way, let me explain. Sarah has this rare ability to create this amazing story in her head and then actually succeed in pulling it off when she transmits that story to paper (or laptop screen if you will). Many authors can do one or the other but there are very few who can do both well. I'm happy to say that Sarah is one of them. The tears of Artamon series is set in an icy desolate Russia-like setting where dragons exist and can even manifest themselves in human form. It's definitely an original take on the usual template of tropey fantasy. Quite refreshing to say the least. The setting is also perfect for a winter read while the prose is excellent and what I come to expect from Ms. Ash. I thoroughly enjoyed this first book and I plan on picking up the second one very very soon. If you are looking for a "different" type of fantasy series, this one fits the bill. Check it out.

Zayne says

This book was such a new face to fantasy. I believe it's the only fantasy novel I've ever read that had gunpowder in it. The book was very imaginative and fresh. It did not contain the cliché elements found so much in fantasy these days (although I really do love those clichés). The beginning of the book was amazing. It had me pulled in when Astasia was introduced. I wanted to know what would happen to her and Gavril. The descriptions were vivid. Sadly I had to give it only 3 stars because as the story progressed, the writing got a little worse. I sometimes felt like the characters' feelings were artificial, and some didn't act their age. And the only unimaginative part of the story was the names of some of the countries: Francia, Russia (Sound familiar?). Not all like that, but the resemblance was good enough to make me scratch my head, confused. She had such an imagination. Why settle for names like that? But anyways, overall it was a good book. I look forward to reading the sequel.

Katie says

Some aspects of this book could have been redeeming (some really good action scenes), but on the whole, I didn't like this novel. The characters were all too one-dimensional, and it's hard to become invested in their stories because they are thrown into the plot as quickly as the reader is. And it's very disorienting and only serves to make the reader feel dispassionate toward the characters.

I'd anticipated reading this novel for awhile, but I think other authors do a better job with some of the same concepts.

Amanda says

Gavril has no idea what he's up against. In one day, he goes from being a talented, but commonly born peasant with little knowledge of his parentage painting (and falling in love with) the local nobleman's daughter, to being kidnapped and told his father's not only the king of a foreign country, but that he's dead and Gavril's the heir to a monstrous legacy. Not exactly a good day, but it gets worse from there.

Lord of Snow and Shadows is really a book about being a victim of fate; not only being a victim, either, but railing against fate and trying to make the choices that aren't easy, even when other people would give in considering the odds against them. It's not only Gavril that faces these incredible circumstances, but also his mother, the nobleman's daughter, and even a serving girl in Gavril's castle. Most of these people live up to that challenge and come out the other side stronger and better people for it, despite the fact that easy exits are provided for them along the way and they are provided with every motivation to quit.

I was really looking forward to this book for a couple of really foolish reasons – but every girl can be a little foolish once in a while without hurting anything. I really liked this cover. From the standpoint of looking at this cover, it just looked like an amazing book, and I was excited about it.

The second reason is that this book is billed as epic fantasy, and honestly, I really don't feel like it lives up to this standard; epic fantasy tends to have elaborate plots and sweeping story arcs, but this book was far too straightforward to fit into that category. I really think it was unfair to class this as epic fantasy. If it had been categorized as regular fantasy, just a normal story, I wouldn't have had such a sour taste in my mouth at the end of it. I also feel like the plot was a little neglected at times, considering that it could have been so much better, in favor of rushing off to do one thing or another. Considering that I also think that the characters were neglected, I sort of want to blame an overzealous editor who wanted to keep the book small. This could have been done in a much better way.

This is not to say that the book isn't interesting. Having it in a Tsarist Russian setting was unique and gave it a flavor not unlike Paula Volsky's *A Wolf in Winter*, a book I very much did enjoy and does indeed deserve to be categorized as epic fantasy, but with a writing style that is much more like Mercedes Lackey and Robin Hobb.

All in all, I'm slightly disappointed. It was a good read and I enjoyed it for that, and I definitely enjoyed Ash's approach toward her characters and their methods of dealing with the hands they were dealt, but I wouldn't feel like I'd broken my heart if I sold the book to a used bookstore. I will definitely not be reading the follow-up novels.

Althea Ann says

I bought this book just 'cause of the pretty cover art. I wasn't familiar with the author at all. About half way through the book, I ordered the two sequels, and just today I bought another book from the author. So - she's won me over!

This is very enjoyable epic fantasy. I very much liked the semi-Russian feel to the culture, and the interplay/conflict between magic and technology/science. Yes, the characterizations and politics are a bit simplistic - but I thought it worked, in the context of a fable.

I enjoyed both the two main plot threads - first, the story of Gavril - a young artist whose mother has shielded him from knowledge of his father's heritage: possession by a dragon-like spirit which gives great power, but only at the cost of one's humanity. Second - the story of Kiukiu, a girl who, similarly has had her heritage hidden. Her father was a magician who, through music, could cross the boundaries of life and death, and she also has unknowingly inherited powers.

Recommended for fans of Robin Hobb, Carol Berg, etc.

Rebecka (is hilarious, shut up) says

DNF at 89%

Book: Oh, look at his blonde hair and blue, soulful eyes! Such earnestness! Such beautiful artist hands! Don't your heart just bleed for him?

...Did I mention his hair is blonde? It is very blonde!

Me: Yeah, yeah, fine. But didn't you say that he would turn into a kind of half-dragon? That sounds awesome and original! When are we getting to that part?

Book: Soon, soon. Patience is a virtue, you know. First, let's spend some hundred pages on angst and an astonishing lack of character growth! Oh, and why not throw in some women he can fall in love with!

Me: "Fall in love with"? It seems more like infatuation to me. And that random friendship with his sworn enemy was so out of the blue.

Come on, book!

Book: But look at his blonde hair! Such terrible fate he is doomed to *sighs* *dabs at tears*

Me: Stop! When is the character growth coming? People are dying! He is a ruler now, for Christ's sake! Stop moping around!

Book: Hold on! You don't want to miss these three boring chapters about his mother!

Me: Ugh. Please stop.

Book: He is trying to find a cure, his life is terrible, his hair is blonde and the mysteries gather like thick fog, like breath on cold morning air, like--

Me: BAM! Shut the fuck up!

Book: B-but what are you doing? Don't you want to know how this epic battle against evil ends?

Me: NO.

Book: But--

Me: I said no. Leave me the fuck alone. The end.
