



Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf

R.A. Salvatore

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Bloody war rages across the Forgotten Realms world in the third book of the Companions Codex, the latest series in R.A. Salvatore's New York Times best-selling saga of dark elf Drizzt Do'Urden.

In the evolving world of the Forgotten Realms setting, the Sundering has given way to months of cloud-cloaked darkness, and war rages under that oppressive sky. The orcs have broken a hard-fought treaty that's held, however tentatively, for a hundred years, and the time to settle old scores has devolved into an all-out brawl for control of the ancient realms of the North.

Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf Details

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From Reader Review Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf for online ebook

Artemas says

Well this one was slightly better than *Rise of the King*, but not by much.

One thing I'll note is that it seems apparent that Salvatore has a different editor than whoever he used for the last book, and that is certainly a positive.

Will the story of Drizzt ever end?

keith trowbridge says

Love it

I have read all of Salvatore books and love all of them. If you love adventure you will love this book.

Merric Blackman says

Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf is the third and final book of the Companions' Codex trilogy, and the 27th part of the Legend of Drizzt, that is, the 27th novel about the extremely popular dark elf ranger by Bob Salvatore. It is also, I'm saddened to say, an awful book. I really wanted to like it, but I couldn't.

Salvatore is certainly able to write well; I loved *The Companions*, the book where he resurrected his original characters and told their new origin tales, but the warmth and joy of that book is a long way from the soulless slog that formed the Companions' Codex. The book covers events in the years 1484 and 1485 by the Dale Reckoning of the Forgotten Realms, in which towns of the Silver Marches are under siege by a great horde of orcs, who have been manipulated into their attacks by the drow. The book begins with the Companions scattered: Wulfgar and Regis lost in the Underdark, and the others trapped in one of the dwarven fortresses. Mithril Hall, I think.

By the end of the book, Wulfgar and Regis have rejoined the others, the orcs have been defeated, and the drow are planning another scheme.

Unfortunately, the bulk of the book is filled with meaningless battles, dull characters, and very little interesting interaction. It is almost certain that there are too many characters in the book, as it's rare that we get to spend enough time with any of them to form attachments to them, and the plot – if there is one – is murky. Those looking for great acts of heroism are going to be disappointed. As far as I could tell, the orc sieges ended because the drow got sick of their manipulations and went home; it's not because of anything any of the so-called heroes did. The drow Gromph and Jarlaxle provide rare points of colour, and there are other characters that are potentially interesting but are wasted due to not enough attention being paid to their activities. Instead, we get a lot of negative-charisma dwarves, mostly laughing madly.

Bwahahahah!

There is a craft to telling the story of a war that is almost entirely absent here. Tolkien had it. When there's a battle in the Lord of the Rings, you know exactly what it signifies, how important it is, and you care about the characters involved. There's a remarkable sequence in Erickson's Malazan Book of the Fallen – the Chain of Dogs (occurring in book 2, Deadhouse Gates) – where the entirety of the suffering of a retreat from a lost battle is covered, and stands as the most intense and moving descriptions of fantasy warfare I've ever read. Those are the work of authors at the top of their game. With Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf, one wonders if Salvatore knows what the game is! The book reads as battle after battle after battle until suddenly there are no more battles. How each battle shapes the war? No idea.

To make things worse, I don't even find the battles interestingly described. There are a few times when I'm surprised by a few good details, but for the most part they're mind-numbingly dull. You can get an idea as to how much I struggled with this book when I tell you it took me most of a month to read. Perhaps a little more, mainly because it didn't draw me back to read the next chapter. (During this period, Queen of Shadows by Sarah J. Maas came out, and I read that in under a day. That's because it was compelling and kept me entertained throughout).

I've now got Archmage sitting on my virtual shelf, book 28 of the Legend of Drizzt. I really hope it reads better than the last three books. I'm interested in what happens in the Forgotten Realms, but I really wish I liked Salvatore's books better. Plenty of people do, but whatever charms they have seem to have passed me by.

Ithil says

[I received a copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.]

Reseña completa en: <http://laestanteriadeithil.blogspot.c...>

Opinión personal: Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf continua la cruda guerra entre orcos, gigantes y enanos donde la dejamos en el libro anterior. A pesar de tener esta como trama principal, un montón de subtramas de politiqueo e influencias del mundo drow se irán abriendo junto a tramas de personajes secundarios. No obstante, la trama principal me ha resultado tan repetitiva, poco original y pesada que ni los personajes ni el resto de subtramas han conseguido despertar mi interés por el libro que me ha aburrido sobremanera. Se me ha hecho muy largo, no he disfrutado para nada la lectura y creo que es un buen momento para tomarme un respiro de los Reinos Olvidados.

English review: Ok... so, this is going to be a tough one.

Just to be clear, I love Drizzt, I love the character, the saga, the world, the idea. I have been reading these books for years now and it is part of my life, those kind of books that defines you. And it is always a hard time when it comes a moment where you think about what you have read and come to the conclusion that you do not like the book.

It continues with the same plot that started in these series, the war between orcs, guided by drows, against dwarves, elves and pretty much everyone else in the world. I felt this plot so old fashion, so used, so common and developed in a way so simple that it simply does not attract me in the least. I did not manage to get interested by the story at all. And when you are reading something that you could not care less... Well, it is bad.

So it is not that I did not like it. It was just felt like I have already read that and it was the same again. If you

are going for a re-read, you know what is gonna be, but if you find a re-read in a new book. I was struggling to finish it and I was literary bored.

It is not all like that, though. I did love some plots, just not the main ones and therefore did not have enough pages of it so it was like reading very every now and then some really good parts in between (like all the drow plots, especially Jarlaxle). Sadly, not enough.

So, with this in mind I think I will have a break from Forgotten Realms. It is not that I don't like them anymore, but this is the second book that I do not enjoy. And reading without pleasure it's stupid. I need to gain perspective, read other things, and back refreshed when I feel like it.

KostasAt says

6.5/10

After really liking the first two of the series, this book was a bit of disappointment for me, because I expected that Salvatore will give a big finale to the war between the Drow and the Dwarfs, but it seems that we will have to wait until the next series for that.

The story, in general, has too many characters in for me, which I found that there is not enough time for each of them to hold my interest after a few pages. But that, unfortunately, goes also for plot, because until the end there's too much going on, that after a while it gets a little tiring to follow. The only thing I can say that "saves" the book a little is Jarlaxle and Gromph's machinations where they too play their own role in the war.

Overall though, the book is unfortunately mediocre in series that seemed to going really well.

Kevin Xu says

I probably am the biggest fan of Drizzt I know. Drizzt has changed my life as how I looked at the power of words can do, but just like with anything Salvatore has jumped the shark. This began with him bring the Companions back then revising the past in this trilogy because it is something he, Drizzt, and all the fans wanted, but I did not. But on the other hand, the road of Darkness that Drizzt was traveling down before this in 4th edition, was not Drizzt. As he has always taught me no matter what happens, you have to be true to yourself, and pretend to someone you are truly not, but still that was not enough for me.

This trilogy for me was okay at best. This happens to everyone if you have been writing about a character for over 30 years. No matter how bad his books gets for me, I will still read them because Salvatore is my favorite author because Drizzt changed my life. I discovered myself through Drizzt. Till I met Drizzt I had no idea the impact books can have on a person's life, but will not buy them anymore if they are bad.

Sean Gibson says

Standard R.A. Salvatore Biased Review Caveat: Bob Salvatore is one of my favorite authors and has been for 20 years; he's also, amongst the writers I've had the good fortune to meet and/or interview, one of the nicest and most generous with his time. So, any book that has his name on the cover gets an extra bump up the review scale compared to if the same book had been written by someone not named Bob Salvatore.

(Also, this review assumes you've read previous books in the series...if you haven't, none of this will make any sense; if you have, it might make some semblance of sense, but not much. Not enough sleep, too much coffee. It also has SOME MINOR SPOILERS.)

With that in mind, then, this is a 4-star Bob book (might have gone 3.5 otherwise). I've managed to get over my initial misgivings about the return to life of the Companions of the Hall and have embraced them wholeheartedly and with all due nostalgia. One thing I've found interesting, however, is that, over the course of this series, I've found myself more engaged when the story shifts to Menzoberranzan, or at least to the denizens of Menzoberranzan opposing our heroes on the surface world. Salvatore has always had a knack for double-dealing drow intrigue, and Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf is no exception.

Without getting too spoilery, the Companions have grown almost too powerful, and though the odds are long against them, there's never much doubt that they're going to win (I mean, to be fair, that's pretty much the case in any D&D-based book, but there's rarely even the pretense of the possibility that Drizzt/Bruenor/Catti-Brie/Wulfgar/Regis won't be able to call on some absurdly powerful spell/weapon/innate ability to deal with any given situation). And Afranfrere might be more powerful than any of them...I know Bob loves himself some monks, but, jeez.

Then, of course, there's Jarlaxle Ex Machina, as I've come to think of him in recent books, dropping in to help the heroes out of impossible situations and keep the wheels turning of the larger plot turning. Our heroes are outnumbered twenty-to-one by snarling, death-dealing goblin and storm giants? No problem—Jarlaxle's banging twin dragon sisters, so he'll just compel them to help out (how good do you have to be betwixt the sheets to pull that off, incidentally? I think we all know now where Jarlaxle sheathes his most effective blade).

For all that, though...this is still rip-roaringly entertaining. Salvatore's fight scenes are as kinetic as ever, Drizzt is less gloomy, Wulfgar's turning into David Lee Roth circa 1984, Bruenor and the dwarves are doing dwarven things, the drow are insidiously and evilly entertaining, and there's a decent dose of Gromph (never a bad thing). The war with Hartusk is a bit too easily and neatly resolved, as though Bob were eager to get through it and get our heroes onto the next task, but given what that task is, I can't blame him. The next book should prove just as fun, even if it doesn't quite reach the heights of the original Dark Elf Trilogy or the Legacy/Starless Night/Passage to Dawn triptych.

Sarah Jaeger says

I do like the Drizzt series. I do enjoy reading the books in it. I did have a good time reading this latest installment, and I feel that it's a stronger book than the previous one. Big events that transpire are more cohesive, thus feeling more relevant and interesting. The overarching picture finally comes together after an entire book of nothing but creating isolated pieces that have little to do with each other. In Vengeance of the

Iron Dwarf, there are fun little details interspersed in between major battle scenes that allow the reader to experience the particulars of how the characters live and die. Through specifics like Aleina and her old comrade-in-arms giggling together as they admire an unaware Wulfgar from a distance to exactly how Tos'un's body is shattered in the demise of the younger white dragon, this book offers readers micro views of an otherwise broadly-spanning macroscopic event. While Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf would still not be very approachable to a new reader just entering the series, it is able to stand on its own better than its predecessor and is overall a better book.

That being said, I have a lot of issues with Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf. Starting from the most minor of them, I'm not sure if Salvatore's editor doesn't pay enough attention or if the author himself doesn't understand the proper usage of, for instance, "site" versus "sight". The number of instances that word misuse and just blatant typos occur is staggering, especially when considering how well-known and successful Salvatore is, compared to other authors in the Forgotten Realms franchise. Mistakes like these are just lazy.

An increasing issue I'm having with Salvatore's writing is that his style is rather static. I had no problems with it when I was younger, heck I didn't even notice it. However, I'm astonished that after almost thirty books later and a quarter century of professional writing, that his writing hasn't much improved. Yes, there is noticeable improvement between Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf and The Crystal Shard, where it all began, but the change is along the order of five years and not twenty-five. While I'm glad that he didn't use "six hundred pounds of panther" even once this time around, let's face it, as "killing teeth", "killing blow", "killing strike", etc etc demonstrates, "killing" is just not that good of an adjective to describe a deadly force, especially not when used as much as he does. In addition, Salvatore uses, "How [subject] [action]!" entirely too much, and it is yet another sentence structure that conveys very little as to the extremity that something is happening, especially when used in as much abundance as he does. Furthermore, it takes away from the whole because EVERYTHING is, "How something transpired!!!" Overall, rather than describing to the reader what is happening through the use of elements of the environment, Salvatore tells the readers what is happening by stating a play-by-play of events. This is not evocative or engaging writing.

Salvatore has always had issues with consistency, ones that span multiple books sometimes and ones that occur within a singular book. Both sorts of inconsistencies exist in Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf, and in ways that make me confused about how exactly to take things. Again, to start off with a minor example, early on, Regis is said to have been struck with a spear in the chest, and Wulfgar breaks off the shaft to leave the spearhead in his chest. Later on, the spearhead has inexplicably relocated to his shoulder. Fundamentally, the nature of Regis' injury doesn't matter all that much, as with a bit of healing magic and careful extraction it's no longer relevant to the plot. However, Saribel's personality in the later part of the book seems to have taken a complete 180 from what she has been described to be like in the previous books. Before, Saribel was the lesser of the Xorlarrin priestesses, with her older sister Berellip being more brutal, more loud-spoken, more physically imposing and more intelligent. In fact, Saribel is stated on numerous occasions to be more than a little dimwitted. Tiago even notes that despite Saribel's marked inferiority, he still prefers her to her sister because of sexual reasons. However, in Vengeance, Saribel not only displays cleverness, she does so to such an extent as to be able to impress the likes of Jarlaxle. And that's not all -- she not only impressed Jarlaxle with her "quick wit and lightning mental reflexes", but apparently it is something that she does "as usual" (chapter 17). Granted, I may be misunderstanding what that "as usual" is modifying, for perhaps it is modifying the "demanded", and it certainly wouldn't be unreasonable for a priestess of Lolth to be a regular at making demands. However, the inconsistency still exists in that Saribel has been presented as a slow-witted waif and now suddenly has undergone a transformation on the order of Quenthal's after being imbued with the brains of Yvonne Baenre. Saribel's level of intellect matters more than Regis' temporary injury because she is drow, and intricately involved in the entire drow ploy in the Silver Marches. Perhaps she'll become increasingly unimportant, but how is a reader supposed to surmise or even believe in the degree of

intrigue that Salvatore and the Realms assert to be inherent to the drow when we can't even have the basic facts straight? I suppose I'll just have to settle for waiting to be spoon-fed the explanations of an elaborate scheme, mysterious only because its details are so inconsistent, sometimes completely unstated, that it's as impossible to solve as a puzzle from pieces of a different set and missing pieces from its own set.

I can understand the need to write epic encounters in fantasy, for awesome things like dragon battles are why we love fantasy. However, while Salvatore has always suffered from overpowered characters, things are just getting more than a little Mary Sue, especially in the case of Catti-brie. While I commend him for bringing back Catti-brie's old garment, I winced when it just conveniently turned out to be a Robe of the Archmagi. But that's still not enough power for Catti-brie. Despite having a history of being terrible at divination magic, all of a sudden, standard divination techniques aren't good enough for her. Not only does she use a completely new means of divination that's arguably the exact opposite of the standard (fire instead of water), it's a significantly more powerful method and suddenly, this not even a fledgling diviner can divine on the order of dedicated practitioners of clairvoyance. Along the same lines as the sudden identification of Robes of the Archmagi, I shake my head as I wonder what new and unbelievably powers her fire ring and spellscars may conveniently manifest in the future.

On the subject of Catti-brie, and related to my earlier point about inconsistencies, while I thought that Bruenor's conclusions from Drizzt and Catti-brie's dance to be quite beautiful, I can't help but balk at the extreme to which Salvatore portrays their love compared to his early stance on their relationship. At one point, Salvatore vehemently stated that Catti-brie and Drizzt wouldn't ever be a couple, and now we get a scene where they're moving so compatibly that, "No two creatures in Faerun were more attuned to the movements of each other." (Prologue) I get that people change their minds and that's fine that Salvatore did, but what also bothers me about such a definitive statement like that is that it disregards, almost insults, the intellectual property of other authors in the Realm, as well as presenting inconsistencies and issues within itself. In Salvatore's own writing, the impression of synchronicity was a lot stronger in Tarathiel and Innovindil's fighting style, at least for me. In that case, it was also more believable, because both were elves, both had similar fighting styles and both had lived for a very long time. Heck, that fluid compatibility is felt even more strongly when Artemis Entreri and Drizzt fought back to back, and again that made sense because from the getgo we were given the impression that the two are mirrors of each other. Yes, we know that Drizzt and Catti-brie trained together, and we are led to believe that the pair are eternal soulmates, but their fighting styles have always been different enough and the gap between their skill levels big enough that what Salvatore describes in their dance is simply impossible, especially compared to all the other creatures of Faerun. Furthermore, while Catti-brie kept her mind through her reincarnation, that doesn't magically imbue her body with the muscle-memory of her previous life, and unless she's all of a sudden MORE skilled as a fighter than she was (for surely she'd need to be to be so physically compatible with Drizzt in that dance) in addition to suddenly being a super powerful mage, I really don't know how more Mary Sue she could get.

I'm not sure what's supposed to be going on with Bruenor. There hasn't been any indication or explanation of his sudden increased connection with the dwarven gods. He's sat on the throne of Gauntlgrym a couple of times, but other than that, why is he suddenly able to summon divine power when he needs it? Is Salvatore implying that he's a chosen of the three dwarven gods? It doesn't matter if he is, because even Chosens can't routinely perform the feats that he can. It just feels like Salvatore is taking the lazy route in marking someone as heroic. We know that Bruenor is a great fighter because we see cheesy Mortal Kombat-esque scenes in which time slows down and he's frozen in the air slowly delivering a roundhouse chop straight to face of the big baddies, but that's not how fights work. When I was reading that scene, I strongly got the impression that Salvatore was thinking of those movie stop-action scenes for inspiration. That doesn't work, Mr. Salvatore. Please leave the movie mechanics for the motion pictures. So much ridiculous things happen along those lines that I was actually surprised that the dispelling of the darkening was a ploy by Gromph. Drizzt's corny

ascension fit in perfectly with all of the other contrived details that have occurred.

I really don't think I can get into Salvatore's portrayal of female characters at this time, but suffice to say, I wasn't at all surprised at the appearance of a super hot Knight Commander of the Knights in Silver. Women do not need to look like Victoria's Secret models with make-up on naturally to be compelling characters. Women below that impossible standard should not be immediately recognizable as doomed for death (i.e. Delly Curtie).

In conclusion, I wouldn't have wrote this long review if I didn't care. I like the Drizzt series and I care a lot about it. It is not my intent to disparage Salvatore as an author. He has a process down, and kudos to him that it's clearly a successful and profitable process. But, I feel and fear that he's complacent with it, to the point that he doesn't care about his writing enough to improve it. I haven't discussed the redundancy of the plotline since other reviewers have commented on it, but based on indications that he's given, it seems that the future will just bring the same sorts of things as before. Yes, there's the saying that history repeats so the repetition can be claimed as valid, and heck, I LOVE the Sellswords adventures, but I don't want to see rehashing of the Companions saving the world and Entreri/Jarlaxle shenanigans until the end of time. Part of what made the Neverwinter tetralogy so compelling for me is that they clearly moved Salvatore and Drizzt out of their comfort zones. Now both are back in their old comfortable habits, and things are returning to the same beaten path. I worry about the future direction of this series. I don't want to outgrow it, because it has really meant a lot to me, but its future makes me trepidacious.

Tony says

The novelty of the Companions reborn has lost its luster in Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf. Salvatore brings the reader through another war between the orcs and the dwarves; this time with spellcasting dragons, a dwarf who embodies three gods every time he enters battle, and a halfling who conveniently has a potion for every situation.

Drizzt's diary entries become redundant to readers of the series and can be summed up in one question - "To kill an orc or not to kill an orc?" This question that has been haunting us since The Orc King was addressed not too long ago when Cattie-Brie (the warrior now turned wizard/elementalist reborn) stated that orcs were monsters and they need to be exterminated and that's all there is to it. I literally cheered in my seat when she acknowledged that! But alas, poor Drizzt still doesn't get it.

This is fantasy to it's fullest. Magic that doesn't seem to follow any structure; dragons cast spells, dark elves traverse time and space instantaneously, and a limitless supply of powerful magical items. There is simply no tension because all of the protagonists have multiple "get out of jail free" cards. (view spoiler)

The Darkening, the most powerful spell ever cast by a dark elf, virtually served no purpose. The dark elves cast their ultimate spell and then abandon the war they started at it's peak. Also, while it's fun to watch Jarlaxle manipulate everybody, his motivations are unsure, even to himself.

Salvatore is a great writer, and The Companions sets a new standard for his Legend of Drizzt saga. Unfortunately with this novel he treads on the same ground over and over. One can only chew the same piece of gum for so long.

Paul says

This is another great read by Salvatore. The Companions of the Hall must face nearly impossible forces with the combined might of Goblins, Orcs, Ogres, Giants, Drow, and Dragons! They must rally the forces of the goodly races before it is too late.

Full of action and a conclusion to the battle for the North. Leaves open many possibilities for the future books and some intrigue to see what will happen next. Very solid, fun, and quick book to read. Highly recommended!

Kelly says

There are nearly thirty books in the Legend of Drizzt and a number of side ventures. When you get this far into a series, spoilers are inevitable. So if you're not familiar with the legend, much of the content of *Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf* will confound, and perhaps ruin you for everything that comes before.

For those who have journeyed this far, vengeance is sweet.

At the end of *Rise of the King*, the hundred year peace between the orcs and the dwarves had shattered. Nesme had fallen and the dwarves were besieged. The surface elves had yet to decide how the conflict affected them and the drow elves were so busy stabbing one another in the back, it was a wonder any of them survived until the end of the book. Toss in Jarlaxle's fiddling and it was a very long wait for the next instalment in the Companion Codex.

In *Vengeance Of The Iron Dwarf*, party lines shift and align – as they have to. The orcs outnumber every other army combined, so breaking the siege isn't simply a matter of killing the enemy. The dwarves have to fight smarter. They have to fight together. The elves and humans can bolster their efforts, but everyone has to stop thinking about what's in it for them. Of course, the drow contingent thinks only of what's in it for them and I spent a good portion of *Vengeance* wondering what was in it for Jarlaxle. His help is often the dubious sort, but over the last century or so (Toril-time), he's become a little more predictable and he definitely has a soft spot for Drizzt.

I enjoyed reading about Team A – the Companions of the Hall – and Team B – the remnants of Drizzt's new crew who work together here. Personality clashes were inevitable, but so were the spell combinations, to borrow an RPG term. Having everyone on the board also fostered the feeling that grew throughout this book, that the fate of the dwarves didn't matter only to the dwarves. The shining moment, for me, came when Bruenor revealed his plan. He's no longer the king of Mithral Hall and knows well he can't wear that crown a third time. But he cannot watch all he strived for fall into confusion. I also delighted in reading Wulfgar and Regis working together. They are such an unlikely, yet compatible pair.

There are several side bets won and lost as the dwarves attempt to break the siege, providing a few story threads that will complicate future tales. But aside from a couple of interesting revelations, the plot here isn't twisty. *Vengeance Of The Iron Dwarf* is a straightforward book of tactics, where Salvatore pits two forces against one another and crunches the numbers back and forth. Any trickery is reserved for combat and it's all well fought.

Where to go from here? Bruenor has a throne to claim and hold, so it will be back to Gauntlgrym to kick some drow backside, once and for all. Hopefully!

Written for SFCrowsnest.

Chris Robinson says

How can a story that includes so many novels over so many years still be growing so much? The companions talents grow through this tale of battle and war, questions of morality are asked and the survival of the silver marches is at stake. Characters everyone knows and love each play their part in this story that may be the on the largest scale of any novel Salvatore has written. Bruenor continues to seek answers in the words of his gods and oh boy does he get answers. Cattie Brie continues to come into her own as a mage and we begin to see her talents emerge. Wulfgar is Wulfgar, he will fight and even die if necessary for his friends and with aegis fang in hand you know he will go down fighting if it comes to that. Regis, once so frightened by battle, leaves the way with rapier in hand and his alchemy before hand. What is Jarlaxle goal? Who knows but copper dragons come to his call and they don't seem to like white dragons nor orcs. Just what is Gromphs plan? Afrenfrere has Kane in his head. wow. New players come to light, Tiago fanatically seeks drizzt, and so much more. There is more in this novel then I could put into a review regardless of length and my sheer excitement over what comes next has me typing away but alas I must be cautious in what I say so I'll leave it with this. This novel is one of Salvatores best, anyone who loves action and adventure needs to read this novel. The Companions are better than ever and the drow are as mysterious and gleefully evil as ever. Fans of the realms must read this as it weighs heavily on the future of an entire region. I can recall no Drizzt novel the has so many repercussions depending on the outcome of the choices made and battles fought.

Vanessa says

I love R.A. Salvatore's Drizzt's books, but this one could have gone so much further in my opinion. Throughout the entire trilogy, Drizzt questioned the motives behind attacking the orcs, the morality of assuming that all orcs are evil, and his role in this war. However, here at the end of this saga, Drizzt did not address any of those concerns. He happily follows the dwarves to war, even making a flippant comment to Cattie-brie about their victory being "a good day."

I was so disappointed. Yes, the orcs attacked first, and it was brutal. However, there was nothing to address Drizzt's ethical dilemma, even when the dwarven army marches out after the fleeing army. It rang hollow to me - just gratuitous fight scenes, with no tie back to any of the previous backstory of the situation.

That being said, I still enjoyed the book immensely. Drizzt fighting while riding a dragon was amazing, and the overall scope of the war and the Companions' role in it was breathtaking. Jarlaxle was pulling all the strings as usual, but his involvement was particularly enjoyable in this book.

My hope is that the moral quandaries are addressed in upcoming books, and that we get a chance to see more of the impact of Obould's treaty on Faerun. I also really hope Regis gets a chance to revisit his second life's backstory, and find his love...but that will be for another day.

Online Eccentric Librarian says

More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>

The 'culmination' of the latest trilogy follows the same worn path as we had with the original Obould war, with more characters and our rebooted heroes. Having read all these at various times I have to admit having a hard time remembering which events took place in this trilogy and which in the previous. The antics of the drow become less and less interesting and sadly illogical, taking away from the clever and devious race of the past. The orcs, goblins and giants are fodder and the side of good contains few interesting characters - we have so many of them that each is given only a small part to play.

The story is simple and completes the war that began in book two. The various subplots that have been going around for a while are either largely ignored or are still left open which is extremely disappointing. It is becoming hard to care about some of them as they seem to drag on forever in a manner that is starting to feel like a daytime soap.

The writing is still the same style as always, in both good and bad. The script flows smoothly but I do get the feeling that perhaps Mr. Salvatore could do with a new editor, one that would be able to tell him when to cut - I am beginning to glaze over the descriptions of battle. At moments the view of the war tactics reads well and you get a feel of the overall situation with troop movements and supply lines. But this is unfortunately brief and feels pointless when in the end good wins by what can only be described as *deus ex machina*.

Admittedly, this third book is a disappointment, especially after the high hopes I had from what I thought would be a fresh start in book 1. I hate to say this, but it feels that Salvatore is in the air on skis and there is a shark beneath him. Reviewed from an advance reviewer copy.

Ben Nicholson says

I've just finished my copy (from Netgalley); here are some (non-spoiler) thoughts:

As billed, Vengeance of the Iron Dwarf is jam-packed with battles, both huge & one-on-one, in a wide variety of places - Silvermoon & Everlund, outside the gates of the dwarven fortresses, in the elven Glimmerwood, thousands of feet up in the air, and hundreds of feet underground in the Upper Underdark. RAS is particularly good at describing battles, both from an eagle's eye point of view of the movements & assaults of thousands of warriors, to the detail of precise feints, parries, slashes & thrusts of individual duels.

Things I liked:

- The tension in the relationship of the reborn Bruenor with the dwarves of Mithril Hall. In particular, Bruenor's meeting with his mother was full of pathos.
- The wheels-within-wheels scheming of the drow, particularly Gromph & Jarlaxle and their 'elven' friends. The other drow (Saribel etc) seem almost hapless.
- The fleshing-out of Doum'wielle's character, her mental battle with her cursed sword Khazid'hea, and her uncertainty of her position in the world, regarding the drow of her father on the one hand, and her mother's elven clan on the other.

Things I was 'meh' about:

- I thought most of the Companions were pretty flat & lifeless. OK, we have the regular soliloquy from Drizzt at the beginning of some chapters, but his character is not particularly developed further in this book IMHO. The same goes for the others. Maybe its because I've become too familiar with them in so many books; if this is so, I'm glad about the introduction of new characters such as Doum'wielle.
- I like the deadly competence of the reincarnated Regis (vs. his stereotype halfling bumbling incompetence of his earlier life), but I think he's verging on becoming a munchkin, IMHO.
- I thought the last part of the book was a bit rushed; was this due to editing demands?

For fans of the Forgotten Realms, and of Drizzt & friends in particular, this is a 'must-read' book; I'll buy the Kindle edition as soon as its available.. It brings satisfying closure to several dramatic threads from previous books, and sets up continuing adventure & heroics for future ones. I can't wait!

Phil says

Dragon fights. Nuff said.

Alissa says

Slightly underwhelming conclusion to an otherwise interesting trilogy.

Salvatore is an experienced writer and he can weave a solid story with ease, his writing flows wonderfully smoothly. The Companions Codex should appeal to any Drizzt fan and, starting with the Companions, to any reader interested in a very good copybook swashbuckling adventure. But if you are looking for that wow factor which turned a renegade drow into one of the most famous characters of the sword and sorcery genre, there are only traces here.

Drizzt has always been a questioning hero, as I expected his philosophical musings are as interesting and fitting as ever and he kicks ass marvellously well. However, this is the problem: this trilogy has all the elements I could love, such as battles, Jarlaxle, detailed skirmishes, internal struggles, the heroes of old, Jarlaxle, strategies, tactics and the convoluted plans of a long-lived race, Jarlaxle, a fast-paced rhythm...but my enjoyment mostly stems from the fact the story played with my old-time reader's sensibilities. I was happy, but everything is overused, the ending is too rushed & convenient and I miss the truly harrowing straits Drizzt & Co. used to face in the past; here there is intensity but no real tension.

I've always been partial to Drizzt and the Companions of the Hall, it's not even nostalgia for the olden days since I've read all the books in the last decade, but after The Hunter's Blades trilogy I constantly missed that "spark" of excitement I associated with Salvatore's books; the only thing that kept me going through a dragging story was the miraculous reappearance of Artemis Entreri, a personal favourite who, unsurprisingly, ended up heralding a group comeback.

Lately I was reading more by force of habit than due to any real interest. So, the literary choice of the Companions promised well and I was eager to try the new setting. In the end I was both thrilled and disappointed because the result was an improvement but not as good as it could have been.

Some bite wouldn't have hurt.

I realize that I have read one book too many and, at the same time, that I'll probably keep on reading until Drizzt breathes his last, BUT if I could go back I'd leave it at The Two Swords.

A thing I've often resented in longer series is the presence of filler books or when the story starts sagging in quality. I should be more coherent. Anyway, I've survived the Transitions and the Neverwinter quartet: the events of The Sundering and of this trilogy are surely turning things in a direction of my liking and I really hope the drows and the powerful Companions will have some surprises in store for me.

Off to Archmage.

"A feint within a feint within a feint, if ever I've seen one."

Brandi Kosiner (Brandi Breathes Books) says

(Manly) bio: Allan is my husband, and will be an occasional guest reviewer on my blog. He's in his 30z and a nerd who loves (mostly) adult science fiction, namely space operas.

This book was a difficult one for me. It was very hard to get into at the start, and there were multiple occasions where I considered putting it down and writing this review as a "Did Not Finish." The only thing that really kept me going through those parts was the fact that I've been following the adventures of Drizzt Do'Urden since 1999, and I couldn't give up on him now. Good choice. An old friend returned. And an old enemy showed an entirely new side of himself, and brought with him the promise of intrigue and chaos that has me eagerly waiting to find out what happens next.

Allan's review: 3.75 out of 5

Salvatore has always been excellent at allowing readers inside Drizzt's inner monologue, allowing more than just glimpses into what Drizzt hopes for, fears, and has trouble wrapping his mind, heart, and conscience around. This book is no exception. In fact, in this book it seems to go even deeper than usual, with Drizzt seeing even less in black and white than he usually does. The inner turmoil within Drizzt has always been a fascinating contrast to his unshakable warrior exterior, and in this book you get to delve a little deeper into the mind of an already complex character.

The typical Salvatore storytelling is fully present and accounted for. Readers get an appropriate level of world-building that doesn't distract from the story at hand, and you spend just as much time as ever laughing at the dwarves in their ale-fueled bluster, cringing at the pure evil that is the Drow, and wondering as always, what chaos the return of the old friend is going to unleash upon the world.

Although I'm normally a big fan of Salvatore's fight scenes, they left me a little underwhelmed this time around. I'm used to Drizzt's elven speed and reflexes, and the superhuman strength of both Wulfgar and Bruenor, but I felt like the descriptions of Brother Afafrenfere's hand and foot fighting was just over the top. This was the one real negative for me that I can point at.

Overall, this book was both entertaining and enlightening to read, even if it wasn't the best or fastest paced book in Drizzt's universe. The plot twist at the very end of the book is enough, all by itself, to make me want to read the next book to find out just how far upside down the world of Faerun is about to turn.

Zayne says

*3.5 I'd say.

I'm sad to say that this book was a bit of a disappointment. It had the potential to be an amazing book, too! There was a bunch of scheming drow, a whole lot of battles, and unlikely return of some old characters. So What was wrong with it?

What bothered me most was how rushed it felt. Between the scheming drow and all the battles (and there were a lot of battles!), this could have easily been expanded into two books instead of the one. The beginning was not so bad, but near the end with so many battles going on, R.A. Salvatore was more summarizing the epic battle scenes than actually putting the reader inside of them. It's not because Salvatore can't do battle scenes, because he sure as hell can. It was that there was so much scheming and pov switching that he had to do to try to tell the whole story, but there just was not enough pages in the book to fit it all in. I wish he had split this into two books instead. And really, the stuff that went on in here could have easily been its own trilogy.

Spoiler for those who haven't read The Companions: (view spoiler)

But it wasn't all bad, there were some funny and epic moments, and it's always great seeing Drizzt kicking ass. Also, the dwarves were as awesome as usual. They always were my favorite parts of the Drizzt books.

Can't wait for the next installment! I hope it doesn't feel rushed like this one was.

Gary says

I was very unhappy with the last book in this series because it seemed like the super-heroics that the characters had routinely displayed had been toned down and the effect was jarring. The crazy action sequences are the hallmark of this series and this book delivers them. A fun read.
