



Bound By Iron

Edward Bolme

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He was a decorated soldier, thought to have died 20 years ago. However, his body has just washed ashore in Karnath, unkempt, dressed in rags--but alive. Now it's up to a hardened soldier out for cold vengeance and a chronicler who's looking for a story to unravel a dead man's past. Original.

Bound By Iron Details

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Author : Edward Bolme

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Nobbynob Littlun says

This was quite good. Characters (whether central to the story or not) were varied and well-developed, and the plot moved briskly with interesting (albeit unsurprising) twists and turns. Nothing that will blow you away, but enjoyable through and through. It also fleshes out the reality of the fictional world by handling unglamorous issues writers typically overlook, such as how destitution and veterans' issues.

You'll note that this takes place in the Eberron setting (Dungeons and Dragons), but you don't need to know anything about the setting to enjoy the book. I will note though, that it doesn't explain the warforged, which may prove confusing. Here's a quick primer: <http://forgottenrealms.wikia.com/wiki...> What you'd need to know that's specific to Eberron is that the warforged were magically created by House Cannith to serve in the Last War. At the war's ended, they were deemed actual people, and were emancipated from slavery. Given this new freedom, most warforged have absolutely no clue what to do with themselves.

Shannon Clark says

A fun read though the character turns while not unexpected left me wanting more. Alas I don't think the same characters appear in the later books in this specific series. Fun mix of detective and D&D fantasy action with a lot more exploration of warfare and veterans issues than typically found in such novels.

Robert Carlberg says

Really enjoyed reading about Cimozen. Pretty much a paladin in the world of Eberron. Story started with him finding the corpse of a fellow soldier from their fighting group called Iron Band. Takes place over the adventure of him trying to find out how he died. He runs into an elven writer that would like to tell his story. Along the way they pick up a warforged that begins to hang around them. The author did a great job telling the story, and let the warforged have a couple of great lines :)

Yoru says

It breaks my heart to have to rate an Eberron book so low, but given that this was another one written by Edward Bolme, I guess I shouldn't be too shocked. I've often maintained that you get one of two extremes with 90% of Eberron titles: either you have absolutely shoddy editing with an interesting story and well-written characters and dynamics... or you end up with a very nicely edited and polished book but the story is weak and the characters tend to be one-dimensional.

This book definitely wound up among the latter.

I think the concept was rather basic to start with, the characters felt very bland, and the pacing... dear God, the *pacing*. It took roughly over 60% of the book for the pace of the plot to actually *get* somewhere, and by

that point it was like Bolme decided to rush and hastily throw all of the important plot development into the remainder of what he wrote. As was the case with his other Eberron book, *The Orb of Xoriat*, [which I plan to re-read and review in the future,] he seems given to the idea that if he throws a lot of excessively drawn-out fight scenes in the climax of the story it will make up for how slow the plot moves for the first half of the book.

Let me just tell you, it doesn't. He also leaves a lot of loose threads dangling and questions unanswered, the ending is absolute and utter crap, and the most irritating thing (at least for me) happens to be the fact this book is part of the series The Inquisitives, and yet there is no Inquisitive in the entire story. I suppose if you really want to stretch the definition of the role of Inquisitives in the world of Eberron, then the main character of Cimozen could be considered one. [For those unfamiliar with the setting of Eberron, the order of Inquisitives are sort of like private investigators/detectives of a sort, and they often specialize in cases involving missing persons or tracking down people who don't want to be found for some shady reason or other.] However, none of the characters are actually an Inquisitive or ever take on the role of one, and as such, this book feels very out-of-place in this particular sequence of titles set in Eberron.

Truth be told, it was something of a chore to get through this book, and I am always disappointed whenever I have to say this about any Eberron novel. The story felt deeply lacking, the characters were left to be characterized by one trait each, and the mystery just wasn't compelling. I suppose if I can give this book something, I think it could be potentially a gateway Eberron novel for new readers as it doesn't go deep into world-specific concepts and not explain them with the expectation for the reader to just already know (unlike a few other Eberron titles I could name,) but I would still not recommend it even for that. The Heirs of Ash trilogy or The Dragon Below trilogy would be far better to use as a gateway.

All-in-all, I don't really regret reading this book and I can't really regret the money spent on it, as I bought it dirt-cheap. It just wounds my heart to see yet another shoddy novel set in one of my favorite worlds, and written by someone who already penned one shoddy novel for the same world. I'd hoped that Bolme could have cranked out something that was better, more compelling, and didn't utilize the exact same lazy techniques as *The Orb of Xoriat* but I suppose I'll just have to live with my disappointment.

Neala says

It was okay not the best...

Victor Sanchez says

This book was horrible.

And for one, simple reason:

Gnomes. Or more specifically, the Trust.

And the fact that it exists in the world.

I cannot believe that any member of a House would be so outstandingly stupid to put in jeopardy their name (when literally their reputation as a neutral and just force is the reason for their existence and employment) just for a few bucks. Done while betraying every oath they took and in the most evil, sickening way they could find. It literally one step from kicking puppies and making pies with hobby meat.

There is no way that in a world full of spying agencies like the phyalarn, the queen's eyes, the black lanterns, the Trust and supernatural conspiracies embroiled in a cold war for information and backstabbing, could the heads of the house allow such level of corruption, such level of IDIOCY and slopiness that a single soldier, a warforged and one of the worst female characters I had read in years (disloyal, promiscuous, thief, incompetent and downright a miserable waste of feme fatale) managed to unravel in less than a month.

Do you have any idea the sheer level of blackmail this could entail? It could easily bring down one of the greatest mercantile forces as a literal slave to either one of the Kingdoms or another house. It boggles the mind what were they thinking to even consider this enterprise and the sheer smugness of the big bad of the setting about how powerful they were... it's just so stupid. So, so, so stupid. The fact that it ended with his dead in the most pointless way possible literally proves my point

You just don't do that. It doesn't make sense either as a business deal nor as an evil plot.

With that as the foundation for the adventure, the book is tremendously stupid. Yes, Cimozen and 4 are great characters but the plot is shallow, full of plotheoles that enrage you after reading the novel, it breaks many basic premises of the setting just for plot twists and... is honestly a waste of time.

Worse of all, since all the Inquisitives are interlocked along with the Sharl Axe, it means that each story is fundamentally broken and horrible. Mind you, all these novels are somewhat bad (Wren in a very tong-in-cheek, awesome way, at least the first book) and... it just mutilates the original setting, themselves and tries to create this Noir ambience without allowing it to grow from the setting itself, with shallow characters and bland endings.

Shannon Appelcline says

A not-terrible gaming book that also never truly shines.

Dustin says

This was good. I'm normally not a fan of noir style stories, but setting them in one of my favorite fantasy settings and having some decently written characters makes this a decent read.

John Coleman says

Eberron just works for me. I find the setting better than Forgotten Realms because of bits like the discussions between the 2 major characters about the nature of the gods and faith. This particular book also briefly points out the importance of the number 13 (Baker's dozen) in the setting. And it gave me an interesting idea for a bard build. Unlike most RPG based books, I might reread this one.

Jenny says

Great book, well written. It had enough action to keep me interested and a great story. The mystery added to the enjoyment. The book kept the reader engaged by allow the reader to do some of the detective work. The characters were memorable and I can not wait for the second book to come out.

Stefan says

Now this is how you write a paladin, ladies and gentlemen. Cimosjen Hellekanus is proof that paladins are not all one-dimensional goody two-shoes. This book was the perfect blend of mystery and fantasy, and my only qualm is there are no more books featuring Cimosjen, which is a shame because I bet he will not lead a boring life now that the war is over.

I listened to the audio version of this book and Steve West breathed excitement into an already thrilling tale. His range of voices for the differing characters was excellent. He is the narrator for the other three books in the Inquisitives series.

Adam Gottfried says

Love the character interaction and the philosophical conundrums. At times you forget that it is a fantasy and just get lost in the mystery. Great quips and one-liners, FANTASTIC endibg. I want to read more about Cimosjen's adventures!

Steven Wilber says

Bound by Iron is an exciting mix between fantasy and mystery. The book is fast paced and action packed. The characters are solid and well written. The hero is not your cookie-cutter invincible type. Instead, Cimosjen is an interesting mixture of paladin and soldier. What I liked is that in several scenes it is shown that he is not invincible and not infallible. He makes mistakes, he gets injured. This character feels real. I also liked the interaction between the characters.

The plot of the story is also interesting and although predictable in a few spots it was very well written. I thought the ending was very well done. I highly recommend this book.
