



The Ruby Guardian

Thomas M. Reid

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After enduring family feuds, arranged marriages, deadly secrets, and would-be assassins, Vambran and Emriana suddenly find themselves confronted by a whole new kind of peril, in the the sequel to The Sapphire Crescent. Original.

The Ruby Guardian Details

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From Reader Review The Ruby Guardian for online ebook

Conan Tigard says

Having just completed The Sapphire Crescent, I could not wait to begin reading The Ruby Guardian, the second book in The Scions of Arrabar Trilogy. This book is vastly different from its predecessor in that all of a sudden a lot of magic is used that the user did not know even existed. But that is okay, as I rolled along with the change and accepted it for what it was . . . good story-telling.

Right from the beginning, the pace of this book is fast and furious. It rarely lets up in intensity and at the end of every chapter is a cliff hanger. Unlike the The Sapphire Crescent, The Ruby Guardian ends in a cliff hanger right in the middle of all the action. I was a little shocked at this, but the good news is that The Emerald Scepter, the final book in this trilogy, just came out this month (August 2005).

I really enjoyed The Ruby Guardian and had a hard time putting it down. This book is a real page-turner that will keep you up late into the night. I can't wait to see what happens in the conclusion to this series in The Emerald Scepter.

I rated this book a 9 out of 10.

Travis says

The Ruby Guardian by Thomas M. Reid- This is the second book in The Scions of Arrabar Trilogy. The first book is called The Sapphire Crescent and the third book is called The Emerald Scepter. The Ruby Guardian is set in the Forgotten Realms fantasy setting. Thomas M. Reid's other Forgotten Realms novels include; The Empyrean Odyssey (The Gossamer Plain, The Fractured Sky, and The Crystal Mountain) and one book in R. A. Salvatore's War of the Spider Queen series called Insurrection. His other works include; Truth & Steel, Forged, The Temple of Elemental Evil, and Gridrunner. He has also contributed a number of short stories to various anthologies. The trilogy is currently only available used or from online sellers, as far as I can tell. The Ruby Guardian was released in 2004 by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

The upcoming summary may have spoilers to The Sapphire Crescent.

A few weeks have passed since the events of The Sapphire Crescent, and Vambran Matrell, along with his uncle Kovrim, have been shipped out of Arrabar to deal with problems the distant city of Cimber are having. During the voyage across the sea, the company of the Sapphire Crescent, who is led by Vambran, is waylaid by pirates and destroys the ship. The company manages to escape, do to some handy potions. They land on a beach, which is swarming with mercenaries who are waiting for them, and the groups only chance to escape is through the forest called the Nunwood. Most of the company, along with Kovrim, gets captured, but Vambran and a few others manage to evade capture. Back in Arrabar, the rest of the Matrell family is vacationing in a summer home recovering from the events of The Sapphire Crescent. We learn that Grozier Talricci and his mage Bartimus have escaped from their cell in the church of Waukeen (the goddess of coins and wealth), much to the dismay of the Matrells. Xaphira Matrell, the thought to be missing and presumed dead aunt, is on a mission to discover who Junce Roundface is to stop Grozier from his plans. Xaphira takes Emriana with her to give her a few lessons of how to be 'sneaky', and it all goes terribly wrong. Finally, the

Grand Syndar (the head priest) of the temple of Waukeen is dying and his servant, Pilos finds out something is odd with the Grand Trabber (a high-ranking priest) Lavant. Will Vambran rescue his company and save his uncle? Do Xaphira and Emriana survive the information gathering on Junce? Does Pilos find out what really happened with the Grand Syndar?

Criticisms:

1) Bad Dues Ex Machina. This may spoil something but there is absolutely no way I can work around this. Early in the story, Vambran is being pulled into a kraken's beak when he somehow drives it off. However, Vambran is slowly running out of air and he won't be able to make it to the surface to get some air. But wait! A sea elf comes to his aid. Wait what? A sea elf just suddenly appearing to save him? Not only that but after the sea elf kisses him (transferring some air into Vambran's lungs), it isn't acknowledged at all. It was a huge cop-out. But wait, I'm not done. Emriana gets in a similar situation later in the story and what happens? A sea elf comes and rescues her. To be honest, this isn't as 'cheesy' or simply stupid as Vambran's rescue, but the fact that the same thing (or relatively the same) happens in the story twice painful and lazy. At least Emriana's rescue wasn't as detailed and unintentionally funny as Vambran's, but is still is lazy and makes me yell the question of "Why?"

2) Protagonists. I don't know what it was, but I just didn't care about Vambran, Kovrim, Emriana, or Pilos at all. They weren't bad, but they just weren't as interesting as Vambran and Emriana were in *The Sapphire Crescent*. Vambran and Emriana in this story were shades of who they were in the previous book. That being said, they weren't terrible characters. They seemed to be more of the same and don't develop any further until the last few chapters. With Kovrim, he just seemed useless. Sure he was tied up and unable to do much, but I just didn't think he added much to the overall story except for giving the reader knowledge of what is happening to the captured company. Pilos is just weak. He only appears a few times throughout the story so there isn't much there, but enough to make him one of the main characters. He just seemed to be there to move the story along a little more and to become a love interest for Emriana. Basically, it just seemed that the characters from the previous story just didn't develop any more, and that was a let down.

Praises:

1) Antagonists. I have to say that the villains do carry this book. While in *The Sapphire Crescent*, they were laughable and pathetic. In this part, they are just down right cruel and scary. What makes a good antagonist? Someone who is evil and has little to no morals, right? At least that's one way to make a good villain. Well, that's what these villains are. They are plain evil and it seems they have little to no morals. There were times when I just was plain frightened by them. I can't really get into too much detail, because if I do, I would ruin some great moments. If you compare *The Sapphire Crescent's* villains with *The Ruby Guardian's* it's like night and day. The best way to explain this is if you take a sitcom (let's say *Seinfeld*) and suddenly turn it into something like *The Silence of the Lambs*. Or let's use some characters from *The Sapphire Crescent*. We have Grozier and Bartimus who were a joke in the previous book. Every time they came up in *The Sapphire Crescent*, I couldn't help but laugh. But now, Grozier turned into Patrick Bateman from *American Psycho*. He's that frightening. The sudden change in antagonists was jarring, but in a good way. I'm just plain impressed.

2) Plot. The plot of *The Ruby Guardian* was pretty interesting. Finally we see why Grozier and Lavant wanted to take out the Matrells (or at least 'win' them over) to help fund a war. I didn't really expect the reason to be what it turned out to be and seeing how the antagonists go about what they were doing was interesting. The overall reason is a little 'cheesy', but somehow it worked. The other points concerning the protagonists were interesting as well. I can't really name specifics, but everything just tied nicely together and everything fit.

3) Humanizing Protagonists. Now I did mention that the protagonists weren't all that interesting, but I thought that there still is one major quality about them. They are human and they act like it (mostly). It was nice to see Vambran being unable to do anything outstanding and amazing to save himself and his company.

Then you have Emriana's inability to do anything competently. At first it was frustrating, but as the story progressed it started to make sense. It just was nice to see more human protagonists.

Side Notes:

- 1) Xaphira. Is it me or does she seem to be superhuman? Take her fighting in this book and her acrobatic abilities in *The Sapphire Crescent*. She seemed to be like some Kung Fu movie hero, and I have to say it was annoying.
- 2) Frustrating. I have to say, going right into this book after reading *The Sapphire Crescent* and it's frustrating scenes made me a little frustrated at *The Ruby Guardian* for the first one hundred pages. I'm just glad that the story did get better as it progressed.
- 3) Cover Art. I really like it. It isn't like *The Sapphire Crescent*'s romance novel-esque cover, it actually is interesting. I really like how the color red stands out and it draws your eyes to Emriana. Not to mention that something like that is reflected in the story! That always gets bonus points. To put it simply, I like it.

Overall: 4/5

Final Thoughts:

The Ruby Guardian was an improvement over *The Sapphire Crescent*. The villains weren't a joke and they were frightening scary and sadistic. They made the story entertaining and worth it. The major problem is the horribly bad duels ex sea elf. Seriously, why? I would rather have seen the characters drown, it would have made everything so much better. The protagonists themselves were not that good. There was little to no character development, but I did enjoy seeing how human they were. *The Ruby Guardian* is better, and I'd say it's worth the read.

Kagan Oztarakci says

"Taking a deep breath, she prepared herself to walk, to turn her back on everything that she had grown up with, had loved, for the sake of pride."

Kahshan says

Oh! How I envy the main character! He has a kick-ass aunt!!

This is a wonderful book that contains zombies, dobbelgangers and fireballs (besides sword fights and walking in the air). It's good for people who like these kind of things, a typical sword and sorcery book.

Tim Dunn says

Very good second novel in the series. Characters are very intriguing and really being built up well for the conclusion.
