



A Thunder of War

Steve McHugh

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There's thunder on the horizon, and the lightning of war is about to strike.

After years of struggle, Layla Cassidy has finally mastered the dark powers that threatened to control her and turned them to good. She's ready to fight, but the next battle will be her greatest test yet.

The forces of Avalon are growing ever stronger, reinforcing their dominance with almighty displays of brutality. When Abaddon comes close to crushing Layla and her friends, it's clear that the thunder of war is about to give way to lightning—and that they have no chance of surviving it alone.

The final battle against Abaddon is drawing closer. Now Layla and her friends must fight for themselves—and the future of the world. To win, they will need every power and ally they can muster. But even with all their strength, will it be enough to stand against the impending doom?

A Thunder of War Details

Date : Published November 6th 2018 by 47North

ISBN :

Author : Steve McHugh

Format : Kindle Edition 304 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Magic, Fiction, Mythology, Paranormal

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From Reader Review A Thunder of War for online ebook

Karen Cole says

A Thunder of War is the third and final book in Steve McHugh's Avalon Chronicles trilogy, his second dark urban fantasy series following the Hellequin Chronicles which features many of the same characters. I loved the previous books, A Glimmer of Hope and A Flicker of Steel and would recommend you read those books first if possible because although A Thunder of War could be enjoyed as a standalone, it is part of a series and best experienced that way. Also, the first two books are brilliant reads and I thoroughly recommend them!

A few years have now passed since Layla inadvertently activated an ancient scroll which turned her into a powerful umbra. The normal young woman introduced at the start of the first book has become a fierce and experienced warrior although she is still learning how to truly harness her extraordinary skills. Since Layla became aware that the figures and creatures she once believed to be myths are real, she and her friends have been battling Avalon, led by the evil Abaddon. A Thunder of War opens with Layla on a mission which doesn't go to plan which isn't entirely unexpected given their propensity for carrying out risky or foolhardy plans but as the book progresses things only get worse. There's a very definite sense of foreboding throughout the novel as it becomes worryingly probable that Abaddon's potential for destruction will ultimately be impossible to oppose.

Lyla's unusual friends include necromancers, dwarves werewolves, gods and goddesses and my all-time favourite character (and I suspect I'm not alone here!), Remy, the fox-human hybrid. They are joined by here by a shadow elf, fire giant and a sabre-toothed panther all of whom are welcome additions to the story. I have become so invested in the lives of these characters which meant I spent much of novel desperately fearing for them but there are lighter moments amidst the violence and death too. One of the many things I love about this series is the wisecracking humour which with the pop culture references give a really contemporary feel to the books.

I suspect actually that I've become a little indoctrinated by this strangely loveable bunch of geeks because even before Mordred says, "It's all feeling very much like I'm about to go fight the last boss." I'd been thinking that the story was reminiscent of an RPG with the characters moving between different realms completing challenges and collecting items (or in this case, often additions to their group) before facing the final, terrible battle.

This may be the last of the Avalon Chronicles but I hope it's not the last we see of Layla, she's such a brilliant character and I've really enjoyed reading a series with such a strong female lead. A Thunder of War though is a bloody, violent, emotional and thoroughly entertaining finale to this part of her story. There is obviously still more trouble ahead but I can't wait to read the Rebellion Chronicles, the next instalment of this fabulous world created by Steve McHugh - particularly after the tantalizing epilogue which brings back a familiar character. A Thunder of War has definitely left me desperate for more. Another absolute cracker of a read!

Yvonne says

This is the third in The Avalon Chronicles and yes I would definitely suggest reading these books in order as you get to see the transformation of Layla Cassidy. She is coming to terms with her powers, though not fully accepted all that she can be. The battle against Avalon becomes more brutal as the fighting increases. No one knows if Avalon can be defeated and everything is risked.

With Layla learning more about her powers and her role, she increasingly finds herself and her friends in a relentless situation. Avalon forces are desperate to take over the control of the realms. They have won over some and it is a race to prevent more being lost. Layla and Abaddon have history and again they butt heads as Abaddon becomes a more increasing pain in the rear. With Layla still discovering the full extent of her power, it seems that Abaddon beats her at every turn.

This is a fantasy series that mixes and draws on legend, folklore, mythology from various countries and times. The way the author uses the different realms and also keeping its phrasing and language modern still allowing it to mix in different settings is a real treat. By doing this the author can mix in the odd demi-god, the occasional sorcerer, a few dwarves, were beasts and there's a dragon or two... the dragons made me so happy.

The mix of old and ancient with a modern setting has worked really well for me as I was reading. I often found myself making notes for further reading with regards to some of the more unusual mythology or legendary references. There is such a large scope when it comes to the things that have been included such as; Arthurian legends, Norse Mythology, Roman mythology, and Native American and then there is also mentions of necromancy, elemental magic, and pure magic. These various elements have been well researched and while I wouldn't necessarily have put such a range of different things like this together, I am so glad the author did as it makes such a wonderful read.

The characters are brilliantly described and their storylines and the way they are entwined is wonderful. There are a lot of characters, and again this is where I would reiterate that reading the series in order would help. The author has dropped some brilliant little one-liners that are delivered by certain cast members, and I have a feeling this may possibly be a little bit of the author's personality popping by. You will soon build up a list of those characters that you really like because of their various traits, and then there are those you would quite happily take up a sword and personally chop their heads off.

If you are a fan of fantasy, magic, legend, mythology, and folklore then this is a must read. If you also like elves, dwarves, were beasts and don't forget the dragons, then this is a must read.

A fabulous series, that I think would also work for general fiction readers as well as fantasy, yes it is heavy on the fantasy do to the mix of magic, legend, and mythology but I think it is very accessible with names you can actually pronounce. This is a book and a series I highly recommend.

Jeremiah says

The Avalon Chronicles "trilogy" really seems like one long novel, divided in three for marketing purposes. I really hope as others have suggested that this trilogy was a low-key way for the author to gather himself for the upcoming return of Nate Garrett as our protagonist.

As a "final" book in a trilogy, there is remarkably little that happens. Some favorite characters come and go, but far too much happens off screen for my tastes.

This series is an average urban-fantasy-action series and still more enjoyable than many of the others that I've read over the years. I like the world, but honestly I'd rather be reading about Nate Garrett. Layla is okay, but I never really bought how quickly she went from unsuspecting nobody to super-badass in the blink of an

eye in this trilogy.

JD Burbidge says

Once again.....

This book was fantastic. As always, it's the culmination we've all waited for and the book ties it up nicely.

Excellent characters, and some lines that will never be forgotten!

A final chapter that gives you good bumps and makes you wish you could forget the series so you can start all over and experience Steve's writing from the start again!

Cannot wait for the rebellion chronicles to start!!

Ami says

I feel like I've never really warmed up towards Layla -- unlike I did with Nate in the *Hellequin Chronicles* series; and unfortunately, this final book of her trilogy doesn't improve my impression of her.

Not too mention that, for me, this book is too scattered with SO MANY CHARACTERS at the same time. We already have bunch of them, but there are more new names introduced. I was lost with all the names and the realms, and it wasn't a fun experience. I don't like taking separate notes to keep track, you know.

BUT the last 1/5th of the book is better -- somehow it gets more focused. Plus the final battle is exhilarating, with Mordred making deal with (view spoiler) or the way that Layla finally uses her umbra power to help beat (view spoiler).

I enjoyed Mordred chapters a lot more than Layla's -- maybe because he felt like an 'old friend', coming from the Hellequin books instead of this series. And that epilogue?! MAN, I hope it means what I think it means!! Because, (view spoiler)

Marielle says

Fantastic to read about Layla again, what a badass she is! Loved the book... Bring on The Rebellion Chronicles, I need more...

Sara says

Ahhh I was so happy to get back into this series! I would highly recommend you read the other books as this series is just so fantastic you will want to soak it all up. It's kind of like Guardians of the Galaxy only instead of travelling across galaxies rescuing various aliens our gang of friends travel through magical realms

fighting mythical creatures, Gods, devils, elves, with the help of other Gods, devils and elves.. oh and of course Layla is an Umbra (she has spirits living in her that give her magical Magneto (X-men) powers. You also get the added bonus of a sarcastic fox, Remy, who has some of the best one liners, an eye for explosives and general stabiness!

Did I mention there's a dragon or two? Oh and a massive saber tooth panther OF COURSE THERE IS!

I'm not even going to begin to tell you what happens because one that would spoil the fun and two I wouldn't know when to stop raving, between Hades and Persephone, oh we'll just throw Lucifer in there, some Titans, Griffins, Dwarves, giants (fire giants to be specific) actually it's kind of like Guardians of the Galaxy meets Lord of the Rings.. SEE WHAT I MEAN!

Look what can I say I loved it and I was so sad when I finished reading because I didn't want the adventure to end. I asked Steve if there would be a book 4 but he said no there would be another series to follow on from it, more of which will be announced soon so I'm super stoked about that!

If you enjoy fantasy, adventure, lots of bloody battle with plenty of magic and mythical creatures you should definitely give this series a go.

Sarah Leenart says

A satisfying conclusion to the Avalon Chronicles. I've really enjoyed having Layla at the helm, and especially enjoyed getting Mordred's point of view in there as well. Once you get over how young Layla and her group of friends are compared to those around her, and take into account that no matter their age, skill and person have value too, it all starts to click into place.

The world and it's surrounding realms are really in a mess now that Avalon with all it's corruptions have taken charge and convinced humans that they are the good guys. In fact we don't even get a glimpse of human earth and this book reminded me strongly of Stargate! Not a bad thing and I loved that series, this takes it in a more fantasy direction, hopping through one gate to another and the battles and scenes too on a more epic feel amongst the temporary setting. All in all it was an atmosphere that I enjoyed greatly. I love the way that Steve McHugh has taken on just about every mythology known to us humans and mashed it into his world, incredibly successfully.

With Layla, Tommy, Mordred, Remy and co having the task of taking out some of the major players in the bloody game, I am now ready for Nate to get back on his feet and take over smashing the bad guys. I am pretty sure Arthur needs an enemy equal to him to level the playing field and I am sure Nate will give him a run for this money. Looking forward to whatever comes next.

Melissa says

Non-stop!

Non-stop wild action with a feisty heroine you can't help but cheer. The most *fun* book I've read this year!

Shannon says

This third installment made the whole series worth it! As I was reading the scene of the final battle, I was overwhelmed by how epic it all was, and how it was almost like an homage to J.R.R. Tolkein's *The Hobbit* because there was basically a battle of five armies: (1) Helheim, (2) the Titans, (3) the Dwarves, (4) the Blood Elves, and (5) our misfit band of rebels. And what a misfit band it is - but it works! And I think Mr. Steve McHugh would appreciate the analogy, since he is such a "nerd" when it comes to all things fantasy and sci-fi.

As for our misfits, Layla has really developed into a character all of her own, and though I wasn't a huge fan of hers in the first book, she has grown on me as she developed into a leader and warrior. Remy, as always, completely steals every scene he is in, and has some of the best insults ever. For example, when confronting one of the devils, he tells her to "Just piss off and die already, you hoofwanking cockwomble." I feel like I need to add that to my repertoire.

I will admit, some of the war strategy being talked about did get a bit convoluted for me... I had a hard time picturing exactly what was being discussed and how it would make any difference. Especially when they were talking about realm gates and how to operate them, and how they would change destinations to jump through multiple realms. I almost felt like I needed a map at one point. There was also at least one thread of the story that seemed disconnected: when Layla was captured, she learned information about an elven realm gate under the library. When she was able to rejoin her group, she didn't tell them about the gate, despite knowing it may be beneficial to them (due to previous war strategies discussed). As they are all walking through the tunnels and come to a fork, Zamek - a Dwarf who use to live in the mountain - tells them where the one tunnel leads, but then states "*I assume the other tunnel goes to whatever they found under the library. It certainly wasn't here the last time I was down this far.*" Ok Layla... this is where you would jump in and provide that information you were given! But no... she doesn't. But when they reach the Elven realm, one of the characters calmly stated "*It's the elven realm gate*". As if they all already knew about it and it wasn't a surprise to anyone. How is that possible when just minutes ago the Dwarf told you he had no idea what was down there and Layla never shared her news! While this didn't drastically affect the story as a whole, and I think may have just been an editing oversight, I would preferred more cohesion in the plot when it comes to these types of details.

But that ending... OMG! I feel like the Avalon Chronicles were written that so when Nate Garrett comes back "from the dead", we won't have to worry about a lot of backstory of missing years being put into the novels since we will have already known what's been happening. Two years is a long time to miss, and while I am sure characters will fill Nate in, that doesn't have to happen on the pages - as long as it is explained that's what happened (see pet peeve above). I can't wait for Nate to be back at full power and join the fray of misfits!

Kitvaria Sarene says

Another amazing story by one of my favorite urban fantasy authors!

It took me a bit to get used to a new main character - but that is normal for me. By now I'm quite happy with

it and so I could fully settle on the story again with this one. And what a story it was! So many characters I grew to love, new characters to meet, a lot of magic flung around, new friendships, new adventures, characters growing and changing and some not making it to the end and of course a lot of humor!

And the very, very end of the book.... I'm so excited it's not even real anymore!

I devoured the whole book yet again, and already can't wait for the next one...

Shelley says

Source Publisher

Genre Urban Fantasy

Rating 4.0

Thoughts

A Thunder of War, by author Steve McHugh, is the third and final installment in the authors Avalon Chronicles series. The story picks up right where A Flicker of Steel left off. It has been several years since Layla Cassidy discovered a new world that lives right under the eyes of humanity. She became an umbra (a joining of 3 spirits and a demon), found she had kick ass powers, and joined a group that fights against Avalon, an organization that once stood to protect mankind, but now wants nothing more to push it's agenda on everyone from shifters, to gods, and goddesses, and everyone in between.

Full Review @ Gizmos Reviews

<https://gizmosreviews.blogspot.com/20...>

Caroline Morris says

Well, when I first started reading this 3rd book in the series, I was a little confused with the start - but that's probably more to do with the time between reading this and the previous book.

The characters are brilliant, coming to terms with their abilities and their friendships and relationships to make a huge family. I love the additional characters who come into the story and make the 'family' even bigger. Mordred and Remy are probably my 2 favourite people in these books (all of the McHugh Hellequin and Avalon series), mainly because of the way they bounce beautifully off each other.

Thankfully, it's obvious that the whole story is not finished, we have more to come. I hope that when the next series starts Layla and her friends will be part of the continuation, even though they are off on their own adventures at the moment (oh look, more tales....)

Mr McHugh, I love your stories, can't wait for the next one.

Mark says

OK. I love Steve McHugh enough to give him some leeway. But after this book, and its predecessor, I'm left with the thought that this "Avalon Chronicles" series is just a way for him to recharge his creative batteries and to bridge the gap between the Hellequin series (awesome!) and the to-come Nate Garrett series (for which I still have high hopes).

In this chapter, we still have all the great characters and the excellent world. We have Layla coming into the fullness of her powers. We have Avalon massing an army to conquer the Tree of Life, thereby gaining control of all the portals so they could kill everyone.

I think my problem here is that there's just so much going on that it's really hard to dive into any piece of it without this becoming a 1000-page tome. To his credit, McHugh keeps us locked into two POV characters - Layla and Mordred (whom I've come to enjoy very much), but I still don't feel like I lived it. I feel more like I read it, watched it from afar. I was not as emotionally invested in these stories as I was in the Hellequin stories.

If you've read the first two, you'll want to finish the series and bridge into the next one. And with the ending to this one, I'm eagerly anticipating the Nate Garrett series.

Jonathan Wilson says

4.5 Stars
