



Witch Wraith

Terry Brooks

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For centuries the Four Lands enjoyed freedom from its demon-haunted past, protected by magic-enhanced borders from the dark dimension known as the Forbidding and the profound evil imprisoned there. But now the unthinkable is happening: The ancient wards securing the barrier between order and mayhem have begun to erode—and generations of bloodthirsty, monstrous creatures, fueled by a rage thousands of years in the making, are poised to spill forth, seeking revenge for what was done to them.

Young Elf Arling Elesedil possesses the enchanted means to close the breach and once more seal the denizens of the Forbidding in their prison. But when she falls into the hands of the powerful Federation's diabolical Prime Minister, her efforts may be doomed. Only her determined sister, Aphen, who bears the Elfstones and commands their magic, has any hope of saving Arling from the hideous fate her captor has in store.

Meanwhile, Railing Ohmsford—desperate to save his imprisoned brother—seeks to discover if his famed but ill-fated ancestor Grianne is still alive and willing to help him save the world . . . no matter the odds or the consequences.

Witch Wraith Details

Date : Published July 17th 2013 by Del Rey

ISBN :

Author : Terry Brooks

Format : Hardcover 432 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Epic Fantasy

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Lighthearted says

Centuries ago, the Elves used magic to banish demons and their like to a harsh land called The Forbidding. The health of the Ellcrys tree maintains a wall between the Forbidding and the Four Lands; while the Ellcrys, a product of magic herself, is long-lived, unfortunately she is not immortal. The demons resent their banishment and are constantly testing her defenses — and there's evidence everywhere that the Ellcrys is weakening.

As much as I love Terry Brooks, I have to admit, I was disappointed this time. A diehard Shannara-fan, I stayed up until 2 am to finish this book. I had hoped that more details from the darkling boy/elven girl storyline would be revealed as the quest reached its resolution. The letter didn't work for me — by itself, it felt too convenient. I had wondered if Tael Riverine might be the darkling boy or a relative of the darkling boy — that could have been interesting and we could have learned something directly from him. Or maybe, a little more storytelling from Tesla Dart would have fleshed the story out a bit — she knew about the stones, it's reasonable to think she'd know something about the boy. Something. The romance between the darkling boy and the elven girl and the questions it raised about profiling was something new to the Shannara world and I'd hoped to see it explored. Brooks hinted at the whole “is any race wholly good or evil?” question again as Redden considered Tesla and what life had been like for the Jarka Ruus, but again it was just a blip. And by the way, how did other creatures like the Grimpond get to remain in the Four Lands? If the elves were intent on locking away all evil creatures of Faerie, they certainly missed a few. How does the magic of the Ellcrys snatch away Tesla but leave the Grimpond?

And the elfstones . . . grrr! I expect a future book will reveal more but I feel cheated. Now if the letter had been some sort of elvish list of precautions, that might have worked for me. Maybe. With a quest series, I expect more than a glimpse of the item sought.

I hated the resolution of the Redden/Railing/Mirai storyline — it was too easy. I suppose it doesn't help that I wasn't all that fond of either Redden or Railing.

I also hated the Grianne storyline but in a good way. It did take things up a notch. It made sense in that even heroes make mistakes, sometimes tragic ones. It definitely leads to another spinoff series, and a potentially intriguing one at that. I just felt for her and I really disliked Railing. And can't someone vow to go after poor Tesla??? Railing still has few threads on his ring . . .

What else? Edinja — eh. I felt like she kind of fell flat towards the end.

Despite my disappointment with this installment, I do love the world of Shannara and I'm already looking forward to the next journey. At 25+ titles, however, I'd like to see a few new twists introduced to the series. I'm okay with the fact that we can always look forward to a quest involving the Ohmsfords, the Leahs, and the Ellesedils. I'd just like to see new quests, or new complications. Okay, we did have Arling — she KNEW what she would have to give up and that was definitely a new and interesting complication. And Grianne's new role is definitely an interesting complication. It's just that much of the rest of the journey was a little too familiar.

Drew says

The action is, as it always is, terrific. Terry is still a reliably engaging writer - but it is becoming increasingly honest that he's running out (if he hasn't already) of steam on Shannara stories. Which is a shame, all things considered. Why not strike out to expand the map? Send us somewhere new with completely new things and teach us more about the world. Don't include an Ohmsford. Give us something new next - because I can only get behind "reliably engaging" so many more times before I'll want something that at least makes me say "oh, that's new!" once or twice.

Full review at RB: <http://wp.me/pGVzJ-P4>

R says

I've enjoyed Brooks' Shannara series for almost 30 years, but sadly, this book was lacking. Anyone familiar with the works of Brooks knows he follows the same basic formula with each of his books. I am not saying that is a bad thing, it just makes for some predictable reads.

To me, this trilogy was a rehash of older material. Same story, different day. There was not really anything new except in the cruel way he brought back Grianne Ohmsford.

The introduction of new disposable characters did not help. It prolonged the story in order to give more details on the siege of a city that did not seem crucial to the story.

Then there was the romance between two characters that did not add to the story. At times, it was a serious drag to the plot.

Of course, this trilogy started with a quest. The quest for the lost elfstones. It was tragic to see how many people gave their lives to recover these artifacts. It left me questioning if the quest was worth the price paid.

Before the book was over, I was remembering when I first read Brooks almost 30 years ago. I read "The Sword of Shannara" right after having read the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy for the first time. It was obvious how heavily influenced Brooks was by Tolkien. Reading this series, it was readily apparent that Martin has had a profound impact on Brooks. I kept thinking of the twitter joke: "Why isn't George R. R. Martin on Twitter? Because he killed all 140 characters!"

I like Brooks works. I am sure I will read his future Shannara tales, but I hope he decides to shake up his formula to create a more engaging read as he moves forward.

Gareth Otton says

Aaarrgghh, this is hard review to write. Ever since I first started reading fantasy I have been a die hard Terry Brooks fan, especially being a fan of his Shannarah series. I have read them all and rated even the weaker books highly for I simply love the series so much. Therein lies the problem.

I really wanted to give this book a higher star rating, even now I am hovering over the next star wanting to at

least give it a four but I simply can't. Even though I read the book in one sitting I have put it down and I am very unsatisfied feeling as though I need at least another hundred pages to properly polish off this series. It seemed that I kept flicking over the pages hoping that the story would somehow rise from the ashes like the proverbial phoenix, that Mr Brooks would somehow spin his usual magic and bring about a brilliant and hugely satisfying ending but alas that was not to be.

The story starts with Railing's search for the Grianne Ohmsford. This is in spite of a warning from the King of the Silver River not to find her, that he won't like what he gets. Then he is warned again by the Grimpond and he knows that it is not the right thing to do but for some reason he does it anyway. And what happens... well it wasn't the right thing to do, what a shock. The creature he rescues is not Grianne Ohmsford but an even darker and more twisted version of the Ilse Witch, a witch wraith reminiscent of the warlock lord.

On top of this there is the ongoing awkward romance between Railing and Mirai that just gets in the way of the plot to the point where you are begging to go to another character arc.

So then we do go through the other character arcs. First to Apehnglow and her story arc, then to Redding for a while, then to Edinja Orle, then Aborlorn then to a new character called Keenton until finally there were just so many things going on that we never get to stick to one story line long enough to really get into it.

The long and short of it is that in spite of all of their troubles the Ellcrys gets renewed (just like in Elfstones of Shannara), Redden escapes from the forbidding with the magic to save the day (just like the High Druid of Shannara series) but the treasure is eventually lost and the initial quest was for nothing (just like the Voyage of the Jerle Shannara series) and everything eventually goes back to almost normal.

Obviously there is more to it than that but really the ending did seem quite rushed and quite familiar which is sad when I have always been proud to be a fan of Terry Brooks because he is usually good at producing something which is, if not entirely, then at least has an element of new. He is still the only author I know who has taken his fantasy world through thousands of years and allowed that world to evolve with the passing of centuries which has worked out so well for this series that it is sad to see nothing new come of this.

One thing that has changed with Mr Brooks writing for the better I think was his ruthlessness with his characters. In the style of George R R Martin his characters were put through a great deal in this series and their fates were rarely happy ones and often surprising. Probably about seventy percent of the main characters don't make it through to the final pages, or at least they don't in one piece and that is fine with me. It adds a level of tension to the writing when you can't rely on that happy ending.

That is not to say that a happy ending isn't what we want for a few characters and it is sad what the author did to Grianne Ohmsford in this book. Her story was a tragic one right from the beginning. The murder of her family, the molding into the Isle Witch by the Margawr and then eventually the constant hatred that was directed at her when she tried to atone for her sins all add up to a tragedy that needs a happy ending. Her happy ending came at the end of the High Druid of Shannara series when she joins the Tanequil and for the first time finds peace. It was a satisfying end to her story and being as the part she played in this series it was really sad to see what the author put her through. It felt as though she had been resurrected just to be tortured and tormented some more, or maybe even to be used as another villain in a future series.

This book has by no means put me off Terry Brooks, I am as much a fan of his as I have ever been before. That said I look forward to him getting back on form as I don't think he has been producing his best work since he masterfully joined the Word and the Void Series with the Shannara series in the The Genesis of

Shannara, the last book of which came out five years ago.

Fingers crossed now and bring on the next series.

Tpmac21 says

I'm a Terry Brooks fan and have read, and in fact, own every Shannara and Word and the Void Book. I enjoyed certain aspects of this book that have enhanced our knowledge of the four lands and their history. In the dark legacy series, I particularly enjoyed the background that we get on the history of the forbidding and the missing elfstones.

Having said this, Terry is no Tolkien, and I think this has become painfully obvious with the more recent series. The characters lack depth and follow the basic formula of Ohmsford boy who has no faith in himself, cocky elven girl (usually an Ellessedil), gruff but loveable Dwarf tracker, and enigmatic Druids that go in search of an old world magic or to defeat an ancient evil. Along the way, everybody learns a valuable lesson about themselves, atleast one of said characters usually dies, and everyone learns to respect magic as the consequences of it's use are not expected. Unfortunately, the Ohmsford family forgets these lessons for every new book series!

It is still a highly enjoyable read, and I really liked some of the new twists regarding the Witch Wraith and the elfstones. There were characters that shined as complex people, particularly Mirai Leah in this one. However, I think that you need a certain amount of background from previous books to enjoy this one. I saw some other reviews that stated they did not read the first two Dark Legacy Books. REALLY? This book picks up in the middle of the story where certain important plot points had already happened. You wouldn't even know about the death of Khyber, the search for the lost elfstones, etc. Who reads only the last book in a series?

This brings me to my last topic ... the series books. My favorite books are still the Elfstones of Shannara, The Sword of Shannara, and the Wishsong of Shannara. Each one of these is a stand alone book and lengthy at 500+, 1000+, and 500+ pages respectivel. If you want to start with a Shannara book, start with one of these ... Any of these. Don't start with the new series. I'm sure that it is easier (and more lucrative) to write the series books that break up the stories. I find this somewhat annoying as a fan, these last two books (Bloodfire Quest and Witch Wraith) were maybe 4 months apart, and I still had a hard time remembering what the storyline was in between them.

Anyway, If you have read the first two Dark Legacy book,s this is an enjoyable, if somewhat unsatisfying conclusion. If you want to start reading this series, I suggest starting with the Elfstones then reading the Dark Legacy series. I anxiously await new arrivals from Terry to continue the stories that I have come to love!

Syahira Sharif says

NOTE: Fine, now thats cleared up, but the star sticks. As a reviewing reader, I still find its disgusting for a writer to flame his own readers merely over a critisizing feedback. They aren't for you. They are for the readers.

Witch Wraith is the final installment of the trilogy that put a closure on the Dark Legacy series while continuing the spirit of Shannara stories. However, as much as I was looking forward to this book, I found myself disappointed by Terry Brooks style of writing and despite the length of the book, it took only half end of the book to make it worthwhile. Terry Brooks's Dark Legacy is like combining Tolkienism and G.R.R. Martin's character killing psychopathy into one book series.

The majority of the book is quite predictable at this point. Although I enjoyed *The Bloodfire Quest*, I found *Witch Wraith* goes out of the way of the original motivation of the series and then only later the plot converge before throwing the readers off the loop again. As much as I try to gain some optimism of the story, I do find Terry Brooks perfecting the art of creating another form of sexual frustration. It started when it began with a lengthy detail of Railing Ohmsford's storyline and his journey to find Grianne Ohmsford so that she would help him to bargain for Redden's life. He was then taunted with potential quest failure while having some problem with his love, Mirai. At this point, I was convinced that Terry Brooks was trying his hand on Young Adult drama. It took a long time before the narrating came back to Aphenglow Ellessendil who had lost his sister Arling to the Federation and found herself and Cymrian toward Arishaig. Then the narrating changed to Arling who found herself face-to-face with Edinja Orle. And then the narrating change again to Oriantha who was still in the Forbidding and was trying to save Redden Ohmsford. And then it change to Redden, Seersha and then some guy named Keeton who had a role in Arishaig's siege and the story goes from then.

But therein lies the problem of the story, the plot structure. There were multiple of short plots that are not connecting to one another and multiple characters that are so interchangeable that Brooks seems to recycle the exposition and the rising action without providing a climax to each of the plot until later end of the book. There were time when I wonder if the author is just playing with me so that he could write about airship and dragon battles.

I lost interest in Keeton when I realize that the author simply using him to write long meaningless siege scenes at Arishaig. Even Oriantha subplot are used so that one could read the same marching to war scenes or shapeshifting fighting scenes and Railing's repetitive plot was completely used to add teenage angst into the story while diverting the reader from the main objective of the whole thing – saving Shannara and find the lost Elfstones. For those who had followed the whole series and are familiar with *Isle Witch*, the book provide some resolution to the Starken Lord plot.

There were a wealth of information that can be expanded but I think the book seem to milk out the Shannara series. Although there were a lot of things resolved in this book, there were a bunch of plot holes that the characters suddenly find themselves realizing its paradox or something. By the ending, I already anticipate another Terry Brook's mini Shannara series that centered particularly on the surviving characters and to resolve the continuation problems that remained unresolved in this series.

Although the book itself is filled with multitude of action plots that made the book satisfying to average fantasy readers. For me, the problem was with the uneven plot structure itself that made the book a disappointing end to what would have been a grand series.

The ARC is provided by the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Alantie says

sighs

A disappointing end to a rather disappointing series. This is going down as my least favorite installment of the Shannara series so far. It's even booting the Black Staff books higher up, and that's saying something.

Ok. So. First what was good? Glad to finally see the missing Elfstones. . . only to lose them again. GRAH. Anyway. It was good to finally get those, though we still have no idea what the others do. And I'm puzzled that there are white ones- I thought the Loden was white? Or am I being too picky here? Er- anyway. The good. The best part of this was actually getting a little bit of a better description of how the Bloodfire and the seed thing happens to make a new Ellcrys. I sort of figured it happened that way, but it's nice to have it confirmed.

So er. That's not a lot of good. To the bad. First of all, there's some things going on that are completely unnecessary. The Enjia plot was worthless. Absolutely meaningless. Can I just say, I'm sick to death of the Federation and their utter fail as a government? Why are people not revolting? It's one corrupt leader after another. And no one seems to care anymore. I think in WoF a character reacts with total disinterest to hear about a new Prime Minister. Basically just an 'Oh. Nice. We'll get another in a month or so.' Why are humans the only ones with a completely defunct government in this universe? The dwarves, elves, and others have their moments of having bad leaders, but the humans just have this endless string of crappy leaders. But back to Enjia, she's just the latest in the string, and frankly her involvement in the book adds nothing besides an unnecessary complication in an already thin spread plot.

That's another problem- the plot is so thinly spread. We bounce from Arling and Aphen to Railing and then to Redden, then to the dwarf druid, then a random Federation soldier. . . it's ALL over the place. There's too many threads, too much bouncing around. It would have been better to have two focuses only and cut out some of this unnecessary dragging. The pacing was dreadful- things did not start picking up until near the very end of the book and then they were done too quickly to offer any satisfaction.

Railing and Redden. I can't say I care much about them as characters. While other Ohmsfords have demonstrated unusual wisdom and courage these two just don't stand out in the long run. They both have use of the wishsong but neither really do anything with it, exception being Redden at the end using it against the Witch. I mean, what's the point of having wishsong users who don't use it or use it effectively? We could have just as easily had only one with use of it, or neither and I suspect the story could have survived just fine. The Elfstones become somewhat meaningless and they're kind of thrown in at the last, and it's just aggravating. Even the Elven girl and Darkling story was left in a very unsatisfying way, and with me feeling extremely frustrated that suddenly Terry thinks he needs to bring a shade of gray to the whole issue of the Forbidding. I don't like this sudden 'not all the creatures shut into the Forbidding deserved to be there' nonsense. It's ridiculous. Let's stick to the traditional 'demons are evil in this series', ok? They've been villains for ages, and I hate that the sudden gray shades are being thrown in. There are plenty of other characters to add gray shades without suddenly trying to make us feel sympathy for the demons.

Then there's Aphen. *takes a deep breath* The girl's had it rough- apparently Terry decided it wasn't effective anymore to have one lover die, apparently the new trend is to kill one lover and then the one that comes after. That sucked. I felt for her. However, I lost a lot of respect for her in the last few pages at the ending. Ok. Completely understand where she's coming from in not wanting to abandon her sister. I get it. However, I'm kind of irked by the way she handles it, because Wil certainly loved Amberle as much as she loves Arling, but Wil knew well enough to know Amberle wouldn't want him to linger and waste his life, whereas Aphen has pretty much left her duties as a druid in the dust. Niiice. I'm suspecting that this will play into the future books, but I hate feeling that this entire series was just a set up for the next. Stones found

but lost again, druid order in shambles but one who could move in to take the mantle, and. . .

This brings me to my biggest hate, and that's the fate of Grianne Ohmsford. I wasn't particularly happy with the way things ended at the end of the High Druid series, but at least I could find some comfort in knowing that Grianne was at peace and happy in the life she chose. So needless to say, this series was a huge slap in the face. Not only is Grianne torn from her chosen life against her will, she's brought back as the incarnation of evil she fought so hard not to be, again, not by her choice. This seriously infuriates me because its not only a tragic waste of a character but essentially makes the VotJS and HS meaningless. Quests to save Grianne and for what? So she can become evil and rule the demons. Niiice. Apparently Grianne hasn't been tortured enough. And neither have we.

I don't know that I'll be able to read any more books in the series unless a miracle occurs. And honestly, that breaks my heart. Elfstones is still one of my favorite books ever, and that a Shannara series has disappointed me so is crushing. :/

vaderbird says

I have to admit I am very disappointed with the series. The plot and story has been predictable. Part of me wants to have an epilogue where you can see 6 months later where people are. There are characters you care about, but there is only enough closure for another series to be made about 2 generations later.

The growth in the writing style, is that people do die including people you do like, and druids are not as infallible as they were in the original trilogy. Which is important considering the increase number of them.

(view spoiler)

I am sorry to say I continue to read the books, I believe that it goes back to the nostalgia of the original trilogy and the quality there.

Eoghann Irving says

Witch Wraith concludes _The Dark Legacy of Shannara_ the latest Shannara trilogy by Terry Brooks. The first Shannara book came out in 1977 so Brooks has been writing about this world for a long time.

And there are certain things you expect to see in a Shannara book (at least the main books). There are going to be Ohmsfords, at least one Leah, an Elesedil and Elf Stones. Dark Legacy takes that up a notch though and it's almost a Shannara greatest hits with the return of demons, Grianne Ohmsford, The Straken Lord and more.

Now all that familiarity does have it's good points. Brooks knows this world, he's spent long enough developing it from it's fairly crude Tolkien inspired origins to something a bit more distinctive. He's also got a solid grasp on how to tell an entertaining and well paced story with characters that are easy to relate to. Witch Wraith wasn't a challenging read in any sense but it was an entertaining one.

But in this case it just felt like a bit too much of a re-tread for me. The sections set in behind the Forbidding

were a bit too much like the High Druid of Shannara books and the demon war just too similar to Elf Stones of Shannara.

It's also pretty obvious that Brooks was putting things in place for further books as a number of elements weren't just unresolved but blatantly signalled as unresolved. And Indeed there's another book scheduled for 2014. I know some people like that soap opera style but I tend to like my stories to wrap themselves up, rather than set up something else.

So if you're a Shannara fan I think you'll be pretty happy with this. It's not really breaking new ground but it has the elements you enjoy and it's solidly written. More of what you like basically.

Darth says

Another Brooks trilogy yawns its way to the finish line.

It's not that I can say the writing is bad, it seems about the same as always.

But so does the story to be honest.

Still have the next set on my shelf, but it may set a good long while.

Maybe it's just me.

Markus says

After having read twenty-five books in the Shannara world over the last few years, I think it is time for a rather long break.

The Dark Legacy of Shannara trilogy is not bad. It's not as interesting as the Genesis and High Druid sub-series, and it mostly recycles old plotlines and character archetypes, but it is still a compelling read.

However, it adds so little of value, and does not reach the levels of beauty and innovative storytelling of previous books in the series, that I just wanted to put it down at times.

The absolutely perfect ending for my favourite character in the series did much to save it, but in the end, this trilogy was not an inch above average.

Terry Brooks remains a master of the craft of fantasy, but his creative mind may not be as sharp as it's been before.

Squire says

[By the end of this book, the bloodlines of the Ohmsfords and the Leahs have

Nikolina says

The Elfstones of Shannara meet the High Druid of Shannara trilogy in *The Dark Legacy of Shannara* series,

especially in the last two books of this trilogy (Bloodfire Quest and Witch Wraith). This series was in overall a nice story but there was too much repetition of the old story, the characters and the situations they were facing (not only from The Elfstones of Shannara and the High Druid of Shannara trilogy but from other works of Terry Brooks for the Shannara world as well). The new characters were not enough to give a new edge to this trilogy and it just ended up being a retelling of the old stories. Railing's love story was totally unnecessary and it added nothing to the plot and I hated the way Gianne's story went. Bringing her back as the Ilse Witch was interesting enough but what's the point when there isn't any big confrontation between her and the Straken Lord? Their fight was not impressive at all and it ended way too soon. And I'd like for her to get her happy ending even within the Forbidding so I'm expecting a new book or trilogy based on her, hoping she'll find her way back to her old self as the Ard Rhys. Also considering that the missing elfstones were the reason behind the druids quest I was expecting to at least find out what they do. Redden's use of the crimson elfstone and the affects that it might have on him (which I expect to find out on the next book) was interesting enough but what about the rest of them? Will we ever find out?

Rebecca Lovatt says

Witch Wraith by Terry Brooks - book three of The Dark Legacy of Shannara, and the 30th installation to the Shannara series is an enthralling and captivating read — a thoroughly satisfying conclusion to the trilogy.

As a whole, there were instances in the series, and throughout Witch Wraith where it seemed as if there was simply too much going on, and too much left for it to all wrap up neatly. This left me worried that the conclusion would be rushed, and not at all satisfying. However, I'm glad to say that my suspicions were incorrect. The pacing of this book was probably among the best out of the other concluding books to his trilogies.

As well — one of my other main concerns with this novel is that it would feel a bit repetitive; the quest of Arlingfant mirroring that as Amberle, and at times, it did, and added a fair amount of predictability to that storyline.

Otherwise though, I did really love this novel. Brooks has a wonderful way with description, and creating interesting and dynamic characters. Without giving anything away, there were some scenes in here that were among my favourite in all of his novels. As well — with the events that take place throughout this novel, the entirety of The Four Lands will be changed. I, for one, am looking forward to reading just how that plays out in the future.

Witch Wraith, and the entirety of The Dark Legacy of Shannara series effectively wraps up plotlines that began in the earlier series – The Voyage of Jerle Shannara and the High Druid of Shannara. Fans of fantasy, and of Terry Brooks will not be disappointed with this latest installation.

Treruttan says

I read through it in a couple days as I wanted to finish the trilogy. Gave it a 3 because I felt it wasn't the strongest of his books even in this trilogy. It left me wanting more from the same characters. It tied up some things in the end. It didn't really surprise or give me that "holy crap!!!" moment that the first two books did at least once. I liked the book and it gave some closure yet left things open for the characters (that were left

alive) to show up in one of his next trilogies. I hope he keeps going forward and not back to the prequels right away. The Shannara books have much life left in them and Terry Brooks remains my favourite author.

Beth says

Book Blurb:

For centuries the Four Lands enjoyed freedom from its demon-haunted past, protected by magic-enhanced borders from the dark dimension known as the Forbidding and the profound evil imprisoned there. But now the unthinkable is happening: The ancient wards securing the barrier between order and mayhem have begun to erode—and generations of bloodthirsty, monstrous creatures, fueled by a rage thousands of years in the making, are poised to spill forth, seeking revenge for what was done to them.

Young Elf Arling Elesedil possesses the enchanted means to close the breach and once more seal the denizens of the Forbidding in their prison. But when she falls into the hands of the powerful Federation's diabolical Prime Minister, her efforts may be doomed. Only her determined sister, Aphen, who bears the Elfstones and commands their magic, has any hope of saving Arling from the hideous fate her captor has in store.

Meanwhile, Railing Ohmsford—desperate to save his imprisoned brother—seeks to discover if his famed but ill-fated ancestor Grianne is still alive and willing to help him save the world . . . no matter the odds or the consequences.

My review

Railing Ohmsford wants to save his brother who is being held captive. Misleading his crew by half truths, Railing quests to find Grianne. Warned off by many, Railing has chosen his course, which may end in the destruction of all he holds dear.

Elsewhere, the ancient barriers between the realms are disintegrating. The evil trapped is breaking free and the monsters held captive for thousands of years are raging back through the magical barriers.

An elf named Arling can closed the gap and refortify the magical walls but she is captured by the power hungry Prime Minister of the Federation. Her sister, Aphen, is the only with any hope to save her because she carries the Elfstones...but the Prime Minister wants to possess them as well. Can Aphen save her sister without falling into the Prime Minister's trap?

Vividly depicted, we are ushered into this fabulously created world of Terry Brooks' imagination. Enthralling and captivating, you can't help but be sucked into *Witch Wraith*. This book is a marvelous read for the avid fantasy lover.

I received this ARC of *Witch Wraith* from Random House Publishing Group - Del Rey Spectra in exchange for a honest review. This book is set for publication July 16, 2013.

Written by: Terry Brooks

Series: The Dark Legacy of Shannara

Sequence in Series: 3

Hardcover: 432 pages

Publisher: Del Rey

Publication Date: July 16, 2013

ISBN-10: 0345523539

ISBN-13: 978-0345523532

Rating: 4

Genre: Epic Fantasy

Author's Website

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Sam Charlton says

Well - I've finished the series... For me, this trilogy started off weakly, improved a little in the middle and ended disappointingly. The third book really seemed like a rehash of the Elfstones - but without the sense of wonder, excitement and adventure that I loved about Brooks' earlier work. If this book hadn't been written by one of my favourite authors, I may have given it only one star, but in this case I just couldn't bring myself to!

Warning, there might be one or two spoilers ahead...

The Witch Wraith effectively ties up a epic, sprawling plot and brings the various characters back together for the grand finale. I didn't enjoy any of the plot-lines (there are 3 main story-lines with one or two subplots) - all of them reworked old stories, and unlike the originals didn't bring the setting, or the quests to life. The Ohmnsford twins were the most irritating protagonists so far - veering between catatonic, self-pitying and selfish. Redding's love story with Mirai Leah didn't convince either; one moment she's not remotely interested in him, the next she's confessing her love - it was if Brooks changed his mind half-way through the trilogy. I do like a bit of well-written love-interest in fantasy, but I don't think Brooks does it well. He writes it a bit flat - Aphen's romantic interest didn't convince me either; there's no spark, no subtlety - and the dialogue is a bit lame between the characters.

There were two aspects of the writing in this book which disappointed me - both aspects that I never noticed in Brooks' earlier works. The first is his characters' constant inner dialogue: Am I doing the right thing? Can I complete this quest? Am I worthy? Again and again, the reader has to wade through a mire of self-pitying, and repetitive rumination. I got a bit tired of it towards the end. The second aspect was Brooks' inability to bring his settings to life. Examples of this were Stridegate, Spire's Reach and the Forbidding - these were classic, unforgettable settings in previous works, but in this book they verged upon being boring.

Was there anything I liked about Witch Wraith? Yes. Grianne's character - the actual Witch Wraith - was interesting and chilling. I didn't expect that she would return to the world so ravaged and evil, but it was one of the book's more original moments. I enjoyed her showdown with Tael Riverine and can see how she might come back in future books. The siege of Ashraig was well written, although Brooks kept introducing characters I couldn't care less about before we never hear from them again. Obviously, the died in the attack.

Please Terry, if you continue to write more novels set in this world - give us unique original plots and characters we can truly care about. I have read your books since I was a teenager. Your novels transported me to another world and inspired me to write my own epic fantasy. Give us some of that old magic!

Artemas says

*Quickie review for the whole *Dark Legacy of Shannara* trilogy.

Longtime fans of Terry Brooks won't be surprised when I say that this trilogy is pretty much a resurrection of things we've read about before--reminding me of a hybrid of *The Elfstones Of Shannara* and *Straken*.

That being said, there was enough going on, and presented in a slightly different way, to make the trilogy enjoyable. Once again Terry Brooks inundates the reader with fantastic names for characters and places. This is just my opinion of course, but all you fantasy fans know the importance of awesome names.

The third book of the series was packed with action and multiple plotlines that weaved together nicely. Personally, I would have preferred for this book to have about 100 extra pages so some of these plotlines could have been fleshed out a bit more. I was a little puzzled by one thing regarding the distance traveled by a certain group who managed to move from a deep southern city all the way to Arborlon in just 4 days, and yes they were travelling by foot. I remembered the Four Lands as being larger than that.

Fun series as a whole but I'd recommend going in with the knowledge that familiar themes will be thrown at you from the get go.

PS- As with any Terry Brooks book, assume that all unnamed Elven Hunters, Troll Guards, and Rovers will meet a most unpleasant end.

MC says

I really tried to like this final book of the *Dark Legacy of Shannara* trilogy, I really did, but I can't find the ability to enjoy this grimdark waste of paper. The previous two books were dark, but still hopeful, and then *Witch Wraith* went off the deep end.

One thing that Terry Brooks seemed unable to understand as he wrote this is that "bittersweet" means that the ending is still a good one, albeit with some poignant examples of sorrow. But these sadder elements are not supposed to threaten to *eclipse* the happy ending, as they do so here.

Suffice it to say that, with the exception of the Ellcrys being restored and the Ohmsford boys returning safely, almost nothing else turns out well. The whole books is one exercise in death and suffering. I can already hear the objection now, though. "Brooks always kills off some folks," some will be wont to say. So what? Even though that is true, he has always preserved a reasonably happy ending. Not so here. Here the "happy ending" is that the world is saved, but the main and secondary characters' lives are in shambles. Wow! Isn't that just what I want to read?! Maybe I'll crack open a history book and read about the famine in the Ukraine while I'm on it. It would be the same level of optimism and enjoyment.

I know some might be put-off by my snark here, and I am sorry for any offense given, but this is just too much for me. Instead of the man who wrote epic fantasy and provided you battles of good triumphing over evil, we have good in a crapsack living hell of a world, never seeming to really come out on top.

What was done to a long-time character, the violence, bloodshed, not to mention the ridiculous sexual domination scenes in the previous book and this one, make this all just too much for me. I mean, what is this? Fantasy? Or *Fifty Shades of Shannara*?

I hope that future books go away from this latest trend in darker and edgier crap and towards a more hopeful time in earlier books. Until that happens, I won't read any newly published novels in this franchise, just the older ones. I recommend anyone else not read these either, and, for the time being, stop with some of the previous books, as the darkness here ruins the entire trilogy.

Ionia says

I come back to Terry Brooks again and again for reliable storytelling, strong characters you can forge a bond with and his manner of making you forget everything else in your life whilst reading his novels. This book is no exception to that rule and I was thrilled to see that the series continued to stay strong and interesting throughout.

First of all, if you have not had the pleasure of reading the Shannara novels, you should, in my opinion. Brooks creates they type of world where anything is possible and you never quite know what to expect next. The characters were not predictable even when I thought I had the story all figured out. I like it when that happens.

There is enough back story in this book and recapping of earlier events to make you comfortable if it has been a while since you read the prior novels, but it does not get in the way of this being a new story. There were a few parts of this I thought were slightly reminiscent of other novels by the same author, but also a lot of new material and some twists that I was unprepared for.

If you are a fan of fantasy, then you probably already know this author well. I have been a dedicated fantasy reader for a long time and it is rather difficult at this point to please me, but this book did. There is a particularly nice flow to this story. The passing of time from one book to the next was handled smoothly and this story tied up the loose ends from the former books.

In the end, this was a series I was very happy to have the opportunity to read and I would definitely recommend to others. If you have been awaiting the release of this book, you were right to do so.

This review is based on a digital ARC provided by the publisher in cooperation with NetGalley.
