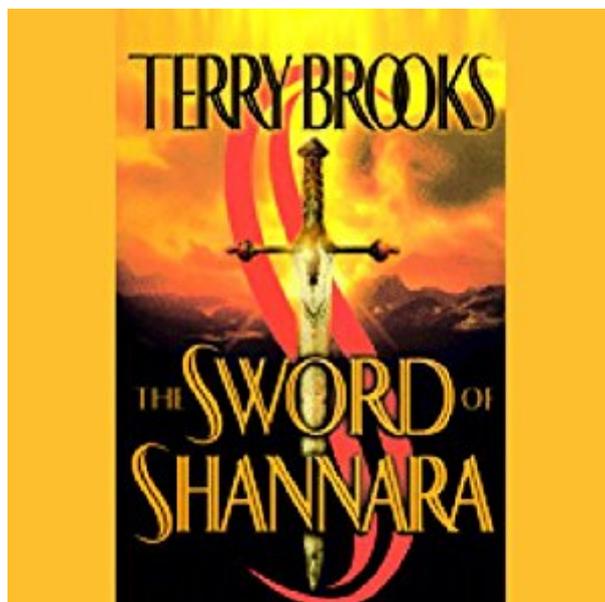


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The Sword Of Shannara: The Shannara Series, Book 1



Synopsis

Living in peaceful Shady Vale, Shea Ohmsford knew little of the troubles that plagued the rest of the world. Then the giant, forbidding Allanon revealed that the supposedly dead Warlock Lord was plotting to destroy the world. The sole weapon against this Power of Darkness was the Sword of Shannara, which could only be used by a true heir of Shannara--Shea being the last of the bloodline, upon whom all hope rested. Soon a Skull Bearer, dread minion of Evil, flew into the Vale, seeking to destroy Shea. To save the Vale, Shea fled, drawing the Skull Bearer after him.... --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

After reading one of the later Shannara books several years ago, and after recently reading Brooks's stale rendering of the new Star Wars movie, I was not expecting to warm up to his first novel. Boy, was I surprised. I couldn't put it down, for all 726 pages. The book is just one adventure after another, all involving the search for a special sword needed to defeat the evil Warlock Lord who seeks to rule the world. The only man capable of using the sword must embark on a quest to find it, with only a few magic stones as protection against the dreaded Skull Bearers who are after him. If you think this doesn't very original, you're right. But there's one interesting twist: this story takes place in the future. At least that's what I understood. My friend, who read the book years ago, disagrees. Sure, it appears to be the standard quasi-medieval setting with its kings, its dungeons, and its primitive technology. But one character describes a time in the distant past when humans

mastered "a science of machines and power" but ended up unleashing technology in a series of wars that altered the planet and destroyed most of the life on it. Doesn't this sound an awful lot like nuclear holocaust? Society was in ruins, but humans eventually reemerged along with other "races" they dubbed as gnomes, trolls, dwarves, elves, and the like, all adapted to different lifestyles. They also discovered magic by harnessing the power of the dead. Other than this curious rationale for a world populated by mythical kinds of creatures, the book rarely strays from the conventions of the genre.

I finally forced myself to finish this book. I purchased the trilogy and, despite grimacing at nearly every turn of the page, here I am. I like Terry Brooks in the present. Terry Brooks in the 70's, when he wrote this, was frightening. I've said it before and I'll say it again, this is rehashed Tolkien by a less skilled hand. In fact, the last time I wrote on this book, I hadn't even finished it yet. The similarities became even more blatant and, yes, pathetic, as I read on. The reason for it being pathetic, of course, is that Brooks tries to cram into 400 pages what Tolkien did in over 1000. Witness Shea, our token Frodo with his Sam, now known as Flick, loyal to a fault. Shea/Frodo is no hero, but he's got strength of character and will see this thing through to the end. Witness Allanon/Gandalf, the wise and ominous figure who knows so much and is a friend to all throughout the lands for he is so wise and blah blah. Witness Aragorn/Balinor, the heroic man of royalty who..suddenly because Faramir/Boromir near the end of the book when we see that his brother, under the influence of the villainous Stenmin/Grima has ventured to take the throne from the king who is slowly being poisoned to death by Stenmin/Grima. Gasp. Never forget Gimli/Hendle and then poor Legolas who gets turned into two generic elves who are utterly and totally pointless to the story in its entirety and serve only to remind you that yes, Elves exist here. And then Menion Leah, who really has no parallel in Tolkien. That must mean he's original, right? Marvel as they journey through the creepy mountain that is not Moria. Witness Allanon fight a Skull Bearer that is not a Balrog, only to smite the beast but have it grab him at the last second and pull him to a fiery doom.

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