



Half a War

Joe Abercrombie

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Words are weapons

Princess Skara has seen all she loved made blood and ashes. She is left with only words. But the right words can be as deadly as any blade. She must conquer her fears and sharpen her wits to a lethal edge if she is to reclaim her birthright.

Only half a war is fought with swords

The deep-cunning Father Yarvi has walked a long road from crippled slave to king's minister. He has made allies of old foes and stitched together an uneasy peace. But now the ruthless Grandmother Wexen has raised the greatest army since the elves made war on God, and put Bright Yilling at its head – a man who worships no god but Death.

Sometimes one must fight evil with evil

Some – like Thorn Bathu and the sword-bearer Raith – are born to fight, perhaps to die. Others – like Brand the smith and Koll the wood-carver – would rather stand in the light. But when Mother War spreads her iron wings, she may cast the whole Shattered Sea into darkness.

Half a War Details

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From Reader Review Half a War for online ebook

Robin (Bridge Four) says

3.5 Only Half a War is Fought with Swords Stars

If you have read books by Joe Abercrombie (JA) before then you know he never wraps everything up at the end with tidy ribbons and bows and Happily Ever Afters. Nope nothing as trite and cliché as that, he gives the reader some hard truths about the characters they have come to love. He makes sure we know the world is not black and white but many shades of gray and most importantly...

“Every hero is someone’s villain.”

It is two years after the events of Half a World and just like in Half a World a good portion of the story revolves around a few new characters. I want to say that I loved them right away but I didn’t. It took some time to appreciate the introduction of Skara and Raith into the story but they do eventually find a place that becomes interesting and make the story better.

JA’s books are more about the characters and their journeys than the actual plots of the story. Skara learning how to be a Queen and use words as weapons and transforming from a scared little girl into a woman sure of her power. Raith was once a stone cold killer and hot head learning to becoming a protector and knowing the difference between the two. Yarvi is much changed from the boy he was in Half a King. He has become a ‘deep cunning’ man that many refer to as the spider now for all the webs he has woven. Thorn is not the same young girl full of anger and no direction she is a powerful woman sure of herself and protector of the Queen. Koll once a little boy saved by Yarvi has become a young man searching for a way to change the world but torn between the promises of greatness Yarvi dangles in front of him or happiness in the arms of a woman he loves.

“When you finally swear your Minister’s Oath, Koll, it will be a loss to wood carving.” Yarvi gave a weighty sigh. “But you cannot change the world with a chisel.”

“You can change it a little,” said Rin, folding her arms as she looked up at the minister. “And for the better.”

“His mother asked me to make him the best man he could be.”

Koll shook his head frantically behind his master’s back, but Rin was not to be shut up.

“Some of us quite like the man he is,” she said.

I cared about most of characters, so much that it hurt when bad things happened to them and it hurt more when they were the ones who did the bad things. Everyone has a breaking point and in a war the lines of right and wrong can become as blurred as chalk painting after a rainstorm. Some characters I wanted redemption for and others I wanted their blood.

I don’t want to spoil anything for anyone. There are a few surprises in store for the readers. I took a few character deaths really hard and the fact a couple characters made it out alive at the end I took even harder. But that is how it goes right? Not everyone in life gets what they deserve. I think that everyone will have their own opinions on what some of the characters really deserved at the end.

This was my least favorite book of the trilogy. A lot of that has to do with the fact that I am more of a

sunshine and rainbows love conquers all ending kind of girl in my reading. JA likes to leave his stories at a place where it isn't really the end but the start of new chapters in most of the characters' lives. He leaves it open for the reader to decide what will happen to them next throughout their lives as they open up new beginnings.

The ending even though I figured out who the traitor was at about the middle mark of the book was still really great. I am conflicted of course but I'm meant to be, that was the point. I was so torn between wanting some sort of redemption for that character or the death I thought they deserved. It is harder when you understand all the motivations of the characters and can see both sides of the situation so clearly, like I said shades of gray.

Quick Rundown

Pros –

- ✓ - Great complex characters. Love all the strong female characters in this book. Blue Jenner was one of my favorite minor characters in this.
- ✓ - Outstanding Twist to the Ending
- ✓ - Unconventional non HEA for everyone ending
- ✓ - Repeatable quote lines like "***Death comes for us all.***"
- ✓ - The Elf City (a little creepy but it was an interesting inclusion into the story)

Cons –

✗- Unconventional non HEA for everyone ending (*Yes I know this is in the Pros but I'm so torn. I love HEAs and seriously I think only 2 people got them out of everyone in the book and a few people haven't got their just desserts YET*)

✗- Some boring time as I was getting used to the new characters. I didn't initially like them in the story.

✗- The destruction of the High King. It sorta fizzled at the end.

Overall a solid trilogy and I could see some other stories being set in this world later.

Mangrii says

La gran guerra anunciada en los anteriores volúmenes ha llegado a el Mar Quebrado, la lucha encarnizada contra Casa Skeken por parte de Gettlandia, Vansterlandia y Trovenlandia está en su punto fatídico. Una joven princesa de Trovenlandia, Skara, tendrá que levantarse de una gran tragedia y convertirse en la nueva reina y vengadora de su tierra, el padre Yarvi clarmara su venganza en torno a su juramento-sol y juramento-luna, el joven Koll se debatirá entre ser alguien importante o el amor y, por último, el guerrero vansterlandes Raith es un sangriento asesino que empieza a dudar de sus principios.

Cargado de emoción, giros inesperados y bastante épica, Abercrombie pone el broche final a la trilogía de El Mar Quebrado con un último volumen no carente de su acostumbrado ritmo, con diálogos y frases lapidarias que resuenan en la mente, con violencia, sexo y sangre por doquier. Como ya demostró en La primera ley, Abercrombie es un as en lo de escribir batallas, recordando a grandes gestas, creando imágenes muy poderosas en la mente, ofreciendo una prosa que poco tiene que envidiar. Al igual que en las dos anteriores

entregas, cambiaremos nuestros puntos de vista, yéndonos ahora a tres nuevos personajes: Skara, la joven princesa de Trovenlandia; Koll, un conocido ya de Medio Mundo que ahora tenemos de primera mano y es el aprendiz de clérigo de Padre Yarvi y Raith, un sangriento guerrero vansterlandes escudo y copero del gran Grom Gil Gorm.

Una vez más, nos pone a lomos de jóvenes personajes en su etapa de maduración que chocan frente a un mundo despiadado y violento. Tengo que reconocer que en esta ocasión no he terminado de conectar con los tres personajes que otorgaban nuestro punto de vista, uno de ellos, Raith, me resultaba bastante repetitivo a lo largo de todo el volumen. Otro, pero por así decirlo, es que los momentos más brillantes de la obra se lo comen los secundarios como Yarvi, aunque tengo mis quejas con el trato de personaje meramente funcional dado a Espina Bathu. Todos estos pequeños peros se compensan con una historia marca de la casa, llena de intrigas y lucha, donde por fin hemos podido confirmar (y no creo que haya que ser muy avisado para ello) alguna de las hipótesis sobre el mundo en que se movía la trilogía, y esa magia élfica tan misteriosa que lo rodeaba todo desde un primer momento.

Este es el volumen en que la guerra prevalece sobre el resto, una guerra cruda y horrible, y que transforma a las personas. Los personajes grises son marca de la casa también, pero reconozco que con alguno me ha llegado a sorprender por lo inesperado de algunas acciones. Nos muestra de primera mano lo que puede ser capaz cualquier persona por llevar a cabo sus objetivos, nos insinúa las consecuencias de sus acciones y nos aporte ese toque de moralidad que tanto nos gusta ver en unos buenos personajes, donde las decisiones que lleguen a tomar durante su transcurso los puedan moldear y transformar, tanto para bien como para mal. Joe cierra la trilogía no sin sorpresas, pero dejando un final ligeramente más optimista que a lo que nos tiene acostumbrados, pero ojo, no todo es color de rosa. Lo mejor de todo es que es que Abercrombie se guarda bien, dejando abierto varias opciones para poder regresar a este impresionante mundo.

Bookdragon Sean says

Now this is how a series should end. Abercrombie has delivered a masterstroke that brings everything together and spits in the face of the previous two books. I love the way with each new book he added different point of view characters, but kept the old ones as side characters. In this final instalment a new protagonist brings all the rest together in a cause that is as bloody as it is tactful.

Revenge can be exacted with words too

Indeed, only half a war is fought with steel. Princess Skara's family has been murdered by the minions of the ruthless High King. She escaped death in the disguise of a slave; she is left almost friendless and completely vulnerable. But, words are weapons too. And she knows the one place she can go to use them: The Shattered Sea. The enemies of the High King need little more reason to go to war, but when a young Princess gives it to them they are more than happy to oblige; they are more than happy to sharpen their swords and set their sails for mother war.

The familiar faces of the series rally to her cause. She convinces them that their former actions boarded upon cowardice; thus, the warriors of The Shattered Sea are eager to prove her wrong, and crush their enemies in the process. However, despite the pretence of a quest that borders upon the heroic and the just, the series ends with you wondering if the good guys really one the day. I think Abercrombie imparts a nice little bit of wisdom in this; he suggests that someone's hero is another's villain and vice-versa. Through this it indicates that only Farther Peace can reign through a combination of lesser evils, but evils nonetheless.

Some good characters, but he has written better

The problem with writing characters that are as memorable as Sand dan Glokta and Logan Ninefingers (*The First Law Trilogy*) is that the reader expects every character written after to be just as good. So, ultimately when these high expectations are not met it results in a let-down. Father Yarvi is a deeply cunning, and a ruthless man, but he would melt under the gaze of Glokta. All the warriors, and their fathers, in the entire Shattered Sea would crumble beneath the wrath of the Bloody Nine. The only character that stands out the most in this series is Thorn Barthu. She is a woman who is as strong as a shield wall and has a temper like a battle axe. She really was forged in the fires of mother war. The characters in this series are good, but that is as far as they could ever go.

I have really enjoyed this series, but Abercrombie's previous books are much better in every sense. I think if you compare this to the brutal revenge plot of *Best Served Cold* then it pales in comparison. If you compare the fantasy elements to the accomplished system in *The First Law Trilogy* then it, too, pales in comparison. Don't get me wrong this is a good book, and the ending really brought it all together, but I know the author can do much better.

The Shattered Sea

1. *Half a King*- An enjoyable three stars
 2. *Half the World*- A fair three stars
 3. *Half a War*- A good warmongering 3.5 stars.
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James Tivendale says

""A warriors place is at Death's side' said Raith as he stood. 'So he can introduce her to his enemies""

Half a War is the conclusive third book in Joe Abercrombie's Shattered Sea saga. It follows on smoothly from the events at the conclusion of Half a World and we find ourselves witness to the politics and events surrounding a very shaky alliance of nations. These nations of once bitter enemies being Vansterland ruled by The Breaker of Swords and neighbouring Gettland whose monarch is The Iron King. (You don't get nicknames like those anymore...) Their association is only held as it is at this time due to the imminent war with The High King with his gathered support of the majority of the world's military.

Although all the colourful character's from the prior two books who we have grown to love, respect, not trust, amongst other emotions are present here, the novel mainly follows two new editions to the narrative. The first of these new players is the young self-doubting Princess Skara from Throvenland who is ill-prepared for the brutality of this world and the war which threatens her homeland. The second is Raith, Vansterland's ruler's swordbearer whose traits are that he is a violence-loving, war hungry, emotionless brute. We closely follow their journeys and the way that they changed and grew during the book's progression, whilst evaluating where their place in this world was and what they aspired to be. It is intriguing to see how their decisions cause ripples throughout the story as they change their, and others ultimate destinies. These two characters do cross each others paths throughout the book and it is really intriguing how they interact yet I will not say anymore regarding that point as I do not wish to spoil the story.

This trilogy is not as complicated as a large amount of modern fantasy. Abercrombie does not feel the tale would be enhanced with advising us about fourteen thousand years of history and in addition, unlike some tales from this genre, the God's and their attributes are easy to follow in the simplistic and self-explanatory

nature of their names. Mother Sun, Father Earth, Mother War etc... These factors make me believe that a younger audience would appreciate what is printed here, moreso than some of the "Swords and Sorcery" books that are out there. Hell, we even have a couple of love stories in the mix for good measure.

One of the main concepts in this story is that only half a war is won with swords. There are a wealth of individuals who support this side of the war spectrum including Bright Yilling and Thorn Bathu. The other side is more focused on what can be achieved and won with the mind as seen by the cunningness of Farther Yarvi and Koll amongst others. It may be that both sides will be just as influential in the unfolding of the events.

There are twists and turns aplenty to look forward to as well which come across with such high impact because we only follow one side of the warring factions point of views and therefore have no idea what the other alliance are plotting or doing at any time apart from rumours, hearsay and the messages delivered from other nations by birds.

We are blessed with everything you could wish for from a fantastic fantasy finale including epic warrior showdowns, betrayals, sieges, love ones lost, battles on the bow of ships etc... The saga is wrapped up nicely and is fulfilling to those who have dedicated numerous hours into this world. It is anything but predictable. It also seems like Abercrombie could return to write future novels in this universe should he wish going forwards.

The only real gripe I had is minor and that is the fact that characters seemed to traverse the landscape of this world ridiculously fast so they appear at the next important plot point conveniently. In previous books, these journeys would have taken much longer than the time that passes on the occasions here.

I think I will pick up *The Blade Itself* next and just see how different the worlds are.

James :) - If you have a spare two minutes then check out my blog @ www.youandibooks.wordpress.com

Robin Hobb says

How did I miss putting up a review of this?

This is book 3 of the Shattered Sea books by Abercrombie. Each book offers several viewpoint characters, but the emphasis is usually on one or two characters at the heart of the action. In my opinion, you can jump into this extended tale in any of the books and read a satisfying story, but I heartily recommend that you begin with *Half a King* and enjoy the whole unfolding of the world.

Things happen in this book. Well, things happen in just about any book, but what I mean is that things happen just as they might happen to you or I in our lives. Plans do not always go as expected. Decisions that seem obvious become questionable as time and pages go by. One of the things I love about Abercrombie's writing is that I cannot predict the ending of any of his books or even of a characters particular thread.

Recommended.

Caveat: I've met Joe and think he is a great person. But I truly do review the books, not my friendships! So I think this is a pretty unbiased review.

Mogsy (MMOGC) says

3.5 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <http://bibliosanctum.com/2015/07/24/b...>

Joe Abercrombie's Young Adult series comes to a close in this final book of The Shattered Sea trilogy. A fine ending if there ever was, though I'm afraid I will sound a lot more negative than I mean to be in this review. It's just that compared to the incredible showing of the two preceding novels, *Half a War* may just trail just a tad behind in awesomeness. Still, you can be sure this third book is not to be missed.

Once again, the torch has been passed on to a group of new point-of-view characters. Koll will be no stranger to readers who have been following the series; the boy with a talent for woodcarving who journeyed with Father Yarvi in *Half the World* is now serving as an apprentice to Gettland's minister. Princess Skara is a new character, the lone royal survivor of Throvenland after a new foe named Bright Yilling came in the night to kill and burn everything she ever loved. Raith is the sword-bearer of the king of Vansterland, who arrived with his lord to a meeting between the three nations to discuss plans to topple the High King and his ruthless advisor, Grandmother Wexen.

The stage is set for a war to end all wars, and Joe Abercrombie does not disappoint. Still, I couldn't help but feel something was missing as I was reading this, and it took me a while, but I think I finally figured out what it was: the characters. Protagonists Koll, Skara and Raith were all great, but they paled in comparison to the personalities that came before them. Yarvi charmed us in *Half a King* while Thorn and Brand won us over in *Half the World*, but they've had their turns as lead characters and are now returning to *Half a War* as supporting cast only. Or, that is how it should have played out.

What actually happened was this: Koll, Skara and Raith may be the three POV characters in this book, but they really don't feel like the stars. Almost all of the major outcomes were shaped by the main protagonists from the previous books, like Yarvi and Thorn. Furthermore, it's the power-players like Father Yarvi, King Uthil, Grom-il-Gorm and Mother Scaer who seem to make all the decisions and influence the course of this story, leaving Koll, Skara and Raith outclassed, outgunned, and outnumbered. Simply put, the three young 'uns feel a bit like interlopers at the adults' table, sitting in as mere guests for the finale of this epic tale.

Though I was initially ecstatic to discover Koll would be a point-of-view character, I wasn't prepared for his limited role in the greater scope of events. Reporting on everything Father Yarvi does seems to be his major purpose, because the author couldn't use Yarvi as a POV character himself. Skara had more initiative, but as a main protagonist, she still felt pretty shallow and unimportant until the very end. Finally, there's Raith, who still feels like a big question mark. Rough, tough, and a fighter to the core, he was like the male version of Thorn's character from *Half the World* but without her complexity.

Three perspective characters also felt like a bit much, compared to the relative simplicity of *Half a King* where we only had Yarvi's POV to follow, and in *Half the World* where the chapters alternated between Thorn and Brand. In *Half a War*, Koll, Skara and Raith felt like they were constantly jostling each other for more page time, and poor Raith typically lost out with very short chapters, which probably explains why he is the least developed of the three. In addition, when the three characters are separated, we bounce around the world a lot, making it very easy to confuse where we're supposed to be, since no time is really taken to establish context. The result is that the book felt a tad rushed, with a couple of the characters' storylines lacking closure. I'm also a little skeptical of the ending, which felt a little *deus ex machina*, and I say this as someone who usually doesn't notice these things.

Still, if you ask me whether or not Half a War is worth reading, my answer would be ABSOLUTELY. It's just hard not to focus on the negatives in this book when the previous two were close to perfection, but that doesn't mean I didn't have a blast with the story. Compared to its predecessors, this book felt a bit rushed with characters that aren't Abercrombie's best, but the overall arc finishes with a bang and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend the trilogy. Half a War might not be my favorite of the series, but it was worth getting to that epic conclusion, so fans of the first two books will definitely want to pick this up. It might just might surprise you in a big way.

Terence says

Mother War's long shadow has once again covered the Shattered Sea. Grandmother Wexen has built an unfathomably enormous army and means to crush all who stand against her.

Half A War was an interesting conclusion to the Shattered Sea trilogy. The story takes place three years or so after the events of Half the World. The uneasy alliance between Gettland and Vansterland still exists, but has been largely toothless as their ally Throvenland could attest to since they were eradicated and their allies did nothing to help.

Once again Joe Abercrombie opted for all new point of view characters and the results were mostly good. The new point of view characters are Princess Skara, Koll, and Raith. Princess Skara is the granddaughter of King Fynn of Throvenland. Skara's words are her weapons and she's forced to wield them to avenge her grandfather and her people. Koll is the energetic young boy from Half the World who has now become Father Yarvi's apprentice. Raith has been raised basically as a wild dog by his master Grom-gil-Gorm. He's also the sword bearer and cupbearer for Gorm.

I have to admit I would've preferred seeing Father Yarvi, Thorn, Brand, King Uthil, Grom-gil-Gorm, Grandmother Wexen, or pretty much any other crucial returning character to have the point of view chapters rather than the new comers. Much of the story is character driven and while Skara and Koll make fine characters I felt as though Raith was a plague nearly every time he appeared. He just felt false and I could hardly believe or relate to anything that happened with him.

Abercrombie takes another stab at love with two separate love stories intermixed and while one of the two was equal to Thorn and Brand's story in Half the World the other felt incredibly forced and fake.

This book left me with a different feeling about some of the returning characters. The Iron King Uthil earned my respect and admiration as a character. Steel is the answer and Uthil brings it every time he appears in the book. Father Yarvi and Grom-gil-Gorm on the other hand became underhanded snakes and I don't mean that in any nice way.

Half A War is a good title for this book because the story started wrapping up about 80 pages too soon. Unfortunately the plot again became rather predictable and I figured out what was going to happen with incredible accuracy. Even though this book is aimed at a young adult audience, the writing is still grim and brutal. I really don't see how this qualifies as young adult other than that it's less grim, brutal, and sexual than Abercrombie's adult novels.

Half A War was an adequate finale to the Shattered Seas trilogy.

Bookwraiths says

Originally reviewed at Bookwraiths.

I'm a completionist at heart, especially when it comes to reading. When I've experienced most of a story, a part of me demands to know how it all ends – even if I have not “loved” the overall series. And this character trait explains why *Half a War* ended up on my reading list after *Half a King* and *Half the World* underwhelmed me.

As this tale begins, three years or so have passed since the events in book two. The Shattered Sea is now ripped apart by war. Gettland and Vansterland staring down the High King. So far though, the alliance between King Util and Grom-gil-Gorm has accomplished little, as their ally Throvenland's fall clearly illustrates. But the deeply cunning (and clearly ruthless) Father Yarvi has schemes within schemes, plots within plots that he has been slowly brewing, waiting patiently to gain his vengeance against Grandmother Wexen, and now the time for true war has come!

This titanic clash between Father Yarvi's rebellion and Grandmother Wexen's loyalist is seen through the eyes of three, new point of view characters: Princess Skara of Throvenland, Koll from *Half the World*, and Raith, sword bearer and cupbearer for Gorm. Very different people who begin this journey with their own unique circumstances, yet quickly find themselves drawn into the swirling vortex surrounding Yarvi. Events playing out around them which they have little to no control over. The hellish toils of war escalating, turning deadly and personal until it builds to a classic Abercrombie ending, where everything and everyone is painted in absolute grey, not a single hero in sight.

Wow, that sounds rather exhilarating, doesn't it? A rousing and bloody conclusion to this grimwhine series, and there are many things to like here.

Action and bloody combat heads my list. All of the warfare realistically portrayed. Abercrombie fully capturing the brutality of regicide and warfare in this post-apocalyptic world. Death, mayhem, and deceit reign supreme. Sacrifices are made. Lies are told. Innocents die needlessly. Betrayals occur. Alliances are forged then broken. Revenge is served: both the hot and cold varieties. All of it drenched in the author's cynical view of people; the philosophy that one person's hero is another person's villain clearly portrayed.

The true origins of the Shattered Sea is also revealed here. Not fully perhaps, but enough that the mysterious “elves” of the ancient past do come more into focus. This advanced civilization's fall is hinted at; their poisonous and creepy ruins examined up close; and their lost technology plays a vital role in the conclusion. Abercrombie finally delivering on the promise of this ancient place.

Even acknowledging these strengths, I rated this book as a two star novel, which means it was merely “okay” in my eyes. Let me explain why.

For the third time in three books, Mr. Abercrombie chose to tell his story with all new point of view characters. That means this is the third time I've been introduced to new people, had to learn to either empathize or hate them, and seen the same overarching plots retold through the eyes of new characters. At the same time as this is taking place, the trilogy has to wrap up: the stories of Yarvi, Wexen, Util, Grom, Thorn, and Brand ending as well as the epic, world changing war concluding. And for all Mr. Abercrombie's

writing skills, he was not able to do all this and still make me feel the same depth of emotional attachment for Skara, Koll, and Raith as I did the stars of *Half a King* or even *Half the World*. Rather, our fresh faced trio turned into the latest faces in the Shattered Sea revolving door.

This lack of fully realized characters did not cause my next complaint, but it certainly did not alleviate it. What I'm referring to is the main protagonists in *Half a War* not being in control or even fully knowledgeable about what is actually going on. Instead of being in the thick of the decision making and plots in this titanic conflict, our trio are always on the outside peaking in like a bunch of kids eavesdropping on the grownups party. Sure, every once in a while the "adults" like Yarvi, Grom, or Thorn will talk to them, pat them on the head, or pass along a tidbit of what is going on inside, but the bulk of the time, Skara, Knoll, and Raith are out of the loop, not in the inner circle, bumbling around in the dark. Their actions having little to do with the outcomes in the story, or if they do, they are merely a puppet whose strings are being pulled by Yarvi or someone else. All of it rendering our new characters little more than distractions from the real story playing out behind the scenes, which left me annoyed and longing for a chapter where the old characters (Yarvi, Uthil, et cetera) would be my point of view yet again.

My third complaint is the "romantic" element here. I have to admit not being a huge fan of Yarvi's love story in *Half a King*, but I could swallow it. When Thorn and Brand got together in book two, I rolled my eyes more than a bit, but I'm not a young adult anymore so I just threw it up to my romantic side being a bit cynical after a lifetime of real life. But in this story, Skara and her significant other never, never felt the least bit moving or even plausible. It felt forced and contrived; all of it a set up so the author could paint yet another character in absolute shades of grey.

But the most disappointing aspect of this novel to me, the most annoying element was the absolute lack of suspense. I'm merely speaking for myself, but the ending, the revelation of people's true actions, and the transformation of characters into traditional grimdark snakes was guessed well in advance and did not deviate from their estimated course. The lack of "Wow!" reveals causing me to skim pages continually.

Now, I know that sounds like I did not enjoy *Half a War* at all, but the fact is it was an okay book, well worth reading to see how Yarvi and the Shattered Sea story ended. What it has cemented in my mind, however, is that – try as I might – I do not enjoy the kind of grimdark Mr. Abercrombie pens. Not sure exactly what it is, but I find his style, his constant philosophical commentary (I grew tired of "*Only half a war is fought with swords*" appearing so frequently in the narrative.), and his grey characters lacking in some essential quality, making me dread picking up his books rather than anxious to do so. I completely understand why many of you love his works (I can see his stellar writing ability clearly on the pages in front of me.), but I have merely accepted that I'm not going to be on the bandwagon no matter how many of his books I read. Don't be sad for me though, because there are more than enough books out there for everyone to love.

Gavin says

My overwhelming emotion upon finishing *Half a War* was disappointment. I felt like *Half a King* was an OK book with a few annoying flaws that kept me from fully enjoying it. To Abercrombie's credit I felt like he eradicated a number of those issues in the second instalment of the series, *Half the World*, and that made that one a far more enjoyable read. Imagine my disappointment to discover that *Half a War* is like a sterilized up version of all the worst parts of the first book!

The story itself was fine. The battle between Father Yarvi and his bickering allies against the High King and Grandmother Wexem finally erupts into open war. As always the battles were fought half with swords and half with wits. We also got a glimpse of a few more Elf relics which was fun.

The story was told from three new POV's in the form of Coll, Princess Skara, and Raith. I felt like the ploy of switching from Yarvi to Brand and Thorn worked well for the second book but it did not prove quite so successful with this one. The new characters themselves were a mixed bunch. I did like Skara. She was a much more likeable version of Yarvi. The flaw in her story was the crappy way it ended. Coll was likeable enough and even had an OK story arc right from start to finish but the big problem with him is that he felt like a needless character. A return to Yarvi's POV would have served the story better in my opinion. Raith was a weird one. I hated him initially but did enjoy his growth as a character over the course of the story. The big issue for him was that it took me ages to warm to him and then just when I did Abercrombie left me disappointed with the conclusion of his story arc.

Abercrombie disappointing me was a constant theme in this one. As well as dealing poorly with the fates of the new POV characters he went on to shit all over the lead characters from the last few books in the series. The less said about what happened to Brand the better. That was dealt with very poorly in my opinion. (view spoiler)

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

Fantasy type books sometimes go over my head. I can't figure out who is who or work up enough energy to care anyways. Joe Abercrombie's Shattered Sea was totally different for me in that aspect. Even though the first book Half a King focused on Yarvi, the second one mostly on Thorn Half the World (my favorite) and then this one seems to be Princess Skara's domain.

Confused yet?

I usually would have been by this point, plus throwing in some new characters each book..just for shits and giggles.

The thing is..they work. Even though this books starts a year after the last one I was able to pick right up where I left off and it had been awhile. So points for not messing with an old lady's brain.

Princess Skara watches her families massacre and swears her revenge. The High King, Grandmother Wexem and Bright Yilling have destroyed her life and she must pick up the pieces of her shattered kingdom. She needs the help of an alliance of the ones that these people have shattered before, including Father Yarvi.

This book is very political and lots of talky-talking goes on. I got bored with some of that and just wanted more Thorn.

Thorn gives me a total lady boner.

Abercrombie does try and throw some romancing into this story. I could have done without it. I kept thinking about one of the male characters being described with his sour-sweat smell and lost the before mentioned lady boner.

Just stick to war Joe Abercrombie! Not all books need any stupid smooching. And you do war pretty dang well.

Now as to the wrap up. Some of it ticked me off and some of it made a bunch of sense. The elf thing? Freaking brilliant. I gave the first two books in this series that rare five stars each. This one is getting a three because of all the talky politics and the weird loving, I still love these books.

Go check out my friend Kaisersoze's review for this book as it makes much more sense than mine and he doesn't tend to ramble on about lady boners as much.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

3.5 stars. *Half a War* is well-written and a fitting end to the Shattered Sea Viking-inspired trilogy. There are some new plot twists that made me see the whole trilogy with new eyes. It's always had a Viking flavor to it, but the *Beowulf* vibes gained an additional intensity in this third book, as a coalition assembles to try to fight against the High King and his oppressive rule over their countries. Once again, a highly dangerous journey is key to the conflict, but in an entirely new and unexpected way.

Father Yarvi, a key character in the prior books, is still a vital presence, but this book is narrated by three relatively new characters: Skara, a 17 year old princess from Throvenland; Raith, the sword-bearer of the brutish king of Vansterland, Grom-Gil-Gorm; and Koll, an ex-slave. It's gripping reading. Father Yarvi, who's already taken several steps toward the morally gray, continues his fascinating manipulation of events around him, but we see those events through others' eyes.

However. Bleak does not even begin to describe what goes on in this book. The prior books were a little on the grim and dark side, but *Half a War* raises it to a whole new level. The violence gets extremely intense for a YA book. Add to that some characters sleeping around and (view spoiler). I wouldn't recommend this for younger or sensitive readers. This one's for mature teens and readers who don't mind a lot of bloody scenes with some dark character arcs, some of those, sadly, without a redemption.

If you want your YA fantasy Norse experience with a little more light and a lot more humor, try Rick Riordan's *The Sword of Summer*.

Ivan says

And thus concludes Shattered sea I overall like the trilogy a lot but..

There are lot of buts here despite high rating I given to each. That is because there this could have been favorite shelf material but..

Let's start from the beginning. When I heard the Lord Grimdark is making YA trilogy I was intrigued. Abrecrombie is someone who likes to use well established tropes and twists them. It's kind of like Glokta before and after Gurkhul dungeons, established tropes get the same treatment when they enter First law books and I couldn't wait to see what will he do with classical YA tropes. There is twisting here but everything seem to be toned down which is to be expected since it's YA series after all.

First book was the best. Classical grimdark can work in YA series and Yarvi is great protagonist and most interesting character in the book. Set of protagonist changes with each book, none of them comes close to Yarvi but they are all interesting in their own way but from writer than created Sand Dan Glokta, Bloody nine, Whirrun of the Bligh, Nicomo Cosca, Black Dow and many others I expected lot more. Characters here, while good for YA standards are league bellow lovable bastards of First law.

Like First law it's low fantasy setting with no evil rising plot but good old human vs human affairs.

Story overall is good and like expected full of twists and expected endings but pacing is bit slow and despite having significantly lower page count than First law books (and fantasy in general) there where parts series seem to drag on, especially in second book.

Overall I give 4 stars to the whole series. could have been higher but...

Manju says

my lowest rating ever for a Abercrombie but this was bad.

Kyriaki says

Η αν?γνωση αυτο? του βιβλ?ου ?ταν.....ουουουφφφ.....αγχωτικ?! Καιρ? ε?χα να διαβ?σω βιβλ?ο που να με αγχ?σει ?τσι! Να με κ?νει να με?νω ?υπνη το βρ?δυ για να το τελει?σω! Να με κ?νει να θ?λω να διαβ?σω παρακ?τω και ταυτ?χρονα ?χι φοβο?μενη τη συν?χεια! Δεν ?ξερα ποιον θα βρω ζωνταν? στην επ?μενη σελ?δα και ποιον ?χι! Δεν ?ξερα τι θα γ?νει στο τ?λος! Δεν ?μουν σ?γουρη καν αν το τ?λος θα ε?ναι ?στω και στο ελ?χιστο καλ?!

Μ?χες, α?μα, θ?νατος, το βιβλ?ο ε?ναι γεμ?το απ? αυτ?! Οι μηχανορραφ?ες δ?νουν και πα?ρνουν (γιατ? “μ?νο ο μισ?ς π?λεμος γ?νεται με σπαθι?”). Προδοσ?ες, δολοπλοκ?ες, πισ?πλατα μαχαιρ?ματα. Και τα περισσ?τερα απ? αυτ? δεν τα πα?ρνεις χαμπ?ρι παρ? μ?νο ?ταν ε?ναι πολ? αργ?!. Η εξ?λιξη των χαρακτ?ρων δε εξαιρετικ?! Απ? τα πιο δυνατ? στοιχε?α αυτ?ς της σειρ?ς! Η Σκ?ρα μου ?ρεσε νομ?ζω. Τη Θορν ?θελα να τη δω λ?γο περισσ?τερο και ο Κολ ?ταν ?νας απ? τους πιο αξιολ?τρευτους και (πραγματικ?) καλο?ς χαρακτ?ρες. Ο Γι?ρβι απ? την ?λη συγκαταλ?γεται στις πιο περ?εργες και ενδιαφ?ρουσες εξελ?ξεις χαρακτ?ρα και μ?λιστα πρωταγωνιστικ?, που ?χω συναντ?σει σε βιβλ?ο! Και μπρ?βο στον Abercrombie γ' αυτ?!

Και για να πω την αλ?θεια, σκ?πενα να του β?λλω 4 γιατ? οι πολλ?ς μ?χες με ψιλοκ?ρασαν....αλλ? οι τελευτ?ες 100 σελ?δες.....δεν ?χω λ?για.....με ενθουσ?ασαν!!! ?να ωραι?τατο 5 λοιπ?ν απ? εμ?να!

Και πραγματικ? μακ?ρι να μπορο?σα να περιγρ?ψω το π?σο μου ?ρεσε και π?σο με ενθουσ?ασε, αλλ? δεν μπορ? και γι αυτ? θα πω μ?νο πως σε ?ποιους αρ?σουν τα dark epic fantasy βιβλ?α ΔΙΑΒΑΣΤΕ ΑΥΤΗ ΤΗ ΣΕΙΡΑ!!!

**η ?ποψη μου για ?λη τη σειρ? εδ?: [https://wordpress64426.wordpress.com/...](https://wordpress64426.wordpress.com/)

Matthew says

Words are weapons

Princess Skara has seen all she loved made blood and ashes. She is left with only words. But the right words can be as deadly as any blade. She must conquer her fears and sharpen her wits to a lethal edge if she is to reclaim her birthright.

Only half a war is fought with swords

The deep-cunning Father Yarvi has walked a long road from crippled slave to king's minister. He has made allies of old foes and stitched together an uneasy peace. But now the ruthless Grandmother Wexen has raised the greatest army since the elves made war on God, and put Bright Yilling at its head – a man who worships no god but Death.

Sometimes one must fight evil with evil

Some – like Thorn Bathu and the sword-bearer Raith – are born to fight, perhaps to die. Others – like Brand the smith and Koll the wood-carver – would rather stand in the light. But when Mother War spreads her iron wings, she may cast the whole Shattered Sea into darkness.

Oh Joe... words escape me! Where do I even begin when reviewing this title?

Perhaps an opening statement?

I LOVED IT! (although I had some minor issues with characterisation... more on that soon).

Half a War is a fitting finale to what has arguably been one of the most interesting and unique set of books I've read in recent times. In true Abercrombie fashion Joe kicks in the door from the first few pages, dazzles us with a smile, and proceeds to render wholesale death, vengeance, and destruction on levels that are best left whispered about in the realms of hell.

In Half a War the Shattered Seas are in chaos. King Uthil and Grom-gil-Gorm are in open rebellion against the High King, and Grandmother Wexen has gathered a huge army to wage war with. It is in this environment that Abercrombie thrusts a raft of new characters, as they attempt to survive and influence (alongside some old favourites in the background) events as they spiral out of control around them.

And therein lies my issue with this book. I may as well get it out of the way early so I can talk about what I loved.

New major characters... in the final book of a trilogy... huh?

Don't get me wrong, Skara, Raith, and Koll (who we know already) all end being fascinating protagonists, but none of them had the massive emotional pull on me that Yarvi, Thorn, and Brand had had in the previous instalments of this series. The problem, I think, is caused by two things in Half a War. Firstly, none of the protagonists seem to wield much power in this book. Major decisions are seemingly made by others (such as Yarvi) in the background, and almost all of the outcomes of the story are shaped by people other than our protagonists. This left me feeling a little underwhelmed, despite the fact that characters such as Skara were incredibly well crafted (she would have been AMAZING if she had had some more agency prior to the ending).

Secondly, Abercrombie didn't leave me enough time to develop any major emotional attachment to these new characters. The secret of Abercrombie's past success has, in my opinion, been his ability to mould characters that we not only love but also secretly hate. Yarvi is the perfect example of this in Half a War. Sometimes he does things that are incredibly harsh and cruel without any iota of remorse or explanation. We collectively gnash out teeth in response, and shake our fists at the sky for five minutes. Inevitably, however, we are swept up again into the tragedy that is playing out before us as. This sort of emotional involvement in a character however takes time to set up, and even a writer as talented as Abercrombie cannot do it properly over the space of one book (especially the final book of a trilogy). As such, Skara, Raith, and Koll were all solid without being amazingly all consuming like Father Yarvi (who kinda sat in the background again in this book) was to me throughout this series.

Now that I've gotten that minor bit of displeasure out of the way I can wax lyrical about what I loved!

The action and adventure in Half a War was (like in all Abercrombie's stories) awesome and bloody. The war to end all wars is depicted brutally, and death and mayhem reigns supreme all throughout this book. Sacrifices are made for the greater good (although good and bad are very subjective terms), and vengeance is taken many times over. I would argue that Abercrombie has reached new heights in Half a War in terms of weaving intricate and fascinating fights and battles. This is high praise when you consider the quality of writing that Abercrombie wielded in books such as The Blade Itself. The stakes were ever present in Half a War, and they got higher and higher as the plot unfolded. I also adored how within these parts of the book Abercrombie incorporated an examination of what it meant to be a hero or villain, and how the idea of the greater good is used to justify evil acts of violence and murder. It was these scenes that kept me enthralled when I found myself not engaging with the protagonists as much as I would have liked.

The world of the Shattered Seas is also revealed more in Half a War. We learn more about the past events that led to the downfall of previous civilisation, as Yarvi delves more and more into the world of Elf Magic (long lost technology). Some people have expressed displeasure with how Abercrombie handled Elf Magic throughout this book, but I found it to be in line with how I imagined a medieval pseudo-Viking society would react to and use technology that they didn't fully comprehend. I adored the inclusion of their weapons in the final battles, and the creepy scenes involving the forbidden city were magnificently described. The pacing itself was also fast and efficient, with no significant moments of inaction or boredom. All of the plot threads that Abercrombie started in the first book of this trilogy are sewn up nicely, and he leaves us with an outstanding twist at the end that left me a little stunned in all honesty.

All in all Half a War, when considered as a part of a series, is a magnificent book that finishes what has been

a scintillating post apocalyptic pseudo-Viking adventure of the highest order. Is it as strong as Half a King (the first book in this trilogy)? No. It has its weaknesses (which I have expressed above) when compared to that brilliant debut, but damn it is still a cracking read that is well worth checking out.

I loved it, despite its flaws.

4 out of 5 stars.

A review copy was provided.

Anne says

4.5 stars

Oh! Oh! I'm all over the place with this ending! Just...

No spoilers, ok? **This review is safe to read.** By the way, that means that it took me *forever* to figure out how to write this without, you know, ruining everyone else's experience.

You're so welcome, random person!

Yarvi, amirite? That's who we all want to finish this journey out with! And while we do get to see how he plays the game, everything is *not* black and white.

Not that Yarvi was ever a *good guy*, but this time he might be crossing a few lines that come back to bite him in the ass. Hard.

Because **Yarvi = Gray.** Um, dark gray.

Don't you worry, I still love you, little buddy!

Thorn & Brand are both big players in this one, but not as central to the plot as they were in the last book. Still. Stuff n Things happen, and it changes the course of this couple's lives.

I will say, Thorn remains the baddest badass that ever did badass stuff, and Brand is the coolest, sweetest husband ever written.

No! *voice breaks*

Anyway. Besides those guys, we get a new player, Princess Skara! And I loved her! She has a bit of a moral compass, which is kinda odd, especially considering the company she keeps.

Plus she's really smart, and has quite the backbone, as well.

A triple threat, and they NEVER see her coming!

Raith is another new guy that I sorta fell in love with, but, like everyone else, he doesn't have it easy. In fact, he got the shit kicked out of him every time he turned around.

Come here, honey. I'll hold you...

So, does anyone get a Happily Ever After in this book?

Well, yes. But I ain't telling you who, and I ain't telling you how.

So, does anyone die in this book?

Well, yes, But I ain't...ok, I'll tell you.

whispers

What does that have to do with anything, Anne?

Actually, nothing. But it was a cool whisper gif, so...whatcha gonna do? Besides, I promised to try not to spoil anything, and I'm honestly running out of things to say.

Ok, ok, ok. It was a great 3d book to a great trilogy, and I thought it ended the way it should have.

I'm definitely coming back for more of this Abercrombie guy's stuff!

Also reviewed for:

Puck says

***"Mother War has arrived, and she will cast the whole Shattered Sea into darkness."* A dark forecast, but sadly enough this series finale is quite a letdown.**

Bleh, what a disappointing end to such an epic series. I loved "Half a King", I thought the second book was great, and I hoped that this tome would deliver an exciting, action-packed, bloody finale. **I was proven wrong. So WRONG!** It was even so bad that reading the last 100 pages became a real struggle because this story let me down on so many levels.

Where do I even start...

Let's begin with making something clear: according to the publication dates, there are apparently only **four months** between the second book and the third one. **FOUR MONTHS: WTF!** That's crazy! That's a recipe for a disastrous book; and that's what this book is because the story feels rushed, it lacks suspense, and it is written without much care for its old & new characters.

Old favorites like Father Yarvi, King Uthil, Grom-gil-Gorm, and warrior-queen Thorn are still there but have to stand aside to let three new characters experience the dangers of the Shattered Sea-War.

This War stands at the center of this story. In the previous two books we build up to this big and final battle, and with the ruthless Father Yarvi as the ringleader, you know any wicked scheme can happen. Therefore this book is filled with mayhem, bloody combat and death, brought by people with a grey moral. Sacrifices are made, friends are stabbed in the back, and revenge is served ice-cold. *"Trust is like glass. Lovely, but only a fool rests lots of weight on it."*

Well spoken words, although Abercrombie never has a problem with writing epic action scenes and cutting lines. Yet I found the battles lacking in energy and suspense. After reading for the 10th time about heads being cut-off and blood soaked battlefields, things lose their edge. I was never surprised by an unconventional strategy and could usually guess how things would end. And Bad Guy Bright Yilling could never compare with Shadikshirram's level of evilness.

But the reason for this 'dull' war is mainly because we experience it through the P.O.V.'s of three characters that I never grew to care for. There is Koll, the wood-carver from *Half a World* who has become Father Yarvi's apprentice. Skara is the young princess of Throvenland who has to make political deals with King Uthil and Gorm to keep her country safe, and the third person is Raith, a cold, brutish man, sword bearer for Gorm and who warily becomes Skara's bodyguard.

Out of these three I only cared for Skara because her character went through some growth and she played the "Game of Thrones" well. Raith and Koll only bored me: both boys aren't fleshed out at all, they never get any character-development, and so they stay stuck in their roles of 'cold-warrior-with-a-kind-heart' and 'good-boy-living-in-an-evil-world.'

Another big complaint I have with these characters is how romance plays such a big role in their storylines. Abercrombie is a good epic-fantasy writer, but he doesn't write love-stories very well. In *Half a World* the cliché romance between Thorn and Brand made me roll my eyes a lot, but those two at least had their priorities straight. But these teens? Come on guys: we don't have time to make-out, there are battles to be fought and people to kill!

I could also go for a while about the giant mess that was the finale (wherein Yarvi becomes a childish asshole and the cunning plots get ridiculous), but I'm done. *Half a War* was an okay book to read and it was nice to see the clash between Father Yarvi and Grandmother Wexen come to an end, but the predictable battles and the lifeless characters sucked out a lot of my reading-joy.

Readers: Stick to the first two books of this series – which are awesome and truly epic - but leave this 500+ pages monster lying on the shelf. You aren't missing out on much.

Read here my other reviews of the *Shattered Sea* trilogy:

#1 Half a King| #2 Half a World

Natalie Monroe says

3.75 stars

Mother Kyre clutched painfully hard at both of Skara's hands. "Whatever happens, you must live. That is your duty now."

My reaction to the ending:

Let's get the bad stuff out of the way first: **What the hell happened to the slavery plot line?** Did it slip through the tangled web of Father Yarvi's deep cunning plans and vanish into an alternate dimension? A dimension where Yarvi doesn't become a total dick, the final battle isn't the equivalent of a cheap action movie, and Isruin actually gets some screentime?

The tattooed horse on Isruin's face shifted as she ground her teeth. "I only did what I had to. Stood with those who stood with me. I tried to do my duty. I tried to keep my word."

That's it. We get admission that her morally grey deeds weren't her fault and see her cackle like a Disney witch before disappearing from the plot altogether. You can't set up a morally complex character, then completely erase her from the board like that. What about her revenge plan? Does she ever change her mind?

This is just one of the many loose threads Half A War left. Sadly, I think what happened is the story got too big for Abercrombie. He was so focused on wrapping up the overarching war between Yarvi and Grandfather Wexen, he neglected the tiny subplots and details that endeared me to this series the first place.

Like I mentioned, Yarvi becomes very, *very* dark here. I'm not sure I want to root for him anymore, not after all the shit he pulled, a dangerous feeling to invoke in your readers. Maybe it's just me. I like antiheroes as much as the next reader, but there's a line.

Right, I've gotten all that off my chest. Let's talk about the good stuff. More specifically, let's talk **Skara**.

A princess thrust into power after her land was ravaged, she's the main narrator of Half A War, like Thorn was for the previous book. There are two others: Raith, Gorm's sword-bearer, and Koll, the little boy who liked climbing and wood carving from Half the World, but Skara is obviously the star.

And what a star she is. She's initially reluctant and scared of her newfound position, but then she fucking *owns* it. For revenge against the ones who killed her grandfather. As a queen, she understands sacrifices have to be made for alliances.

She was sick of coaxing, wheedling, playing one rival off against another. She was tired of her title dangling by a thread. Skara was far from eager to share [spoiler]'s bed. But sharing his power, that was something else.

She's pragmatic and **doesn't let little things like schoolgirl crushes get in her way**.

There was a part of her that would have liked to follow Gudrun's example. To piss on the proper thing and go rolling in the hay with her stable-boy. At least to know what it felt like.

But there was a larger part of her that laughed at that notion. She was no romantic. She could not afford to be. She was a queen.

Her ending surprised me in a pleasant way. (view spoiler)

Overall, I highly recommend this series. It may have started out as a Game of Thrones descendant, but it managed to carve its own niche in the fantasy. Fabulous stuff.

[My review of Half A King](#)

[My review of Half the World](#)

Conor says

A really strong third instalment in this series from Abercrombie. It seems that with each book in this trilogy Abercrombie (in parallel with Yarvi) became darker and more ambitious: from the straightforward YA of the first book, to the epic fantasy adventure of the second and finishing with a brutal continent spanning war in this book in which good and evil are indistinguishable. Abercrombie's ambition was highlighted by his willingness to introduce an entirely new cast of 3 POV characters (only 1 of whom had appeared previously in the series) and he quickly worked his patented magic to establish the characters as well drawn, complex individuals struggling to navigate difficult situations. Overall the conclusion to this trilogy was a strong one, and after a bleak tone for much of the book, surprisingly uplifting.

Abercrombie's decision to introduce 3 new POV characters while relegating the previous POV characters to the background was a bold one but one that he pulled off brilliantly. While it was jarring to have 3 new characters as the main focus I quickly became engrossed in their struggles and personalities.

Skara is now up there with Finree from the Heroes as one of my favourite female Abercrombie POV characters. Her journey from a scared, helpless refugee to a highly capable ruler was brilliantly written and I found her political savvy to be much more convincing and interesting to read about than the superhuman warrior skills Abercrombie gives many of his female POV's (see my complaints about Thorn in the last book for more complaining about this). (view spoiler)

While Raith was not initially a sympathetic character he became more likeable as the story progressed. His quest for redemption arc seemed somewhat forced at times, as well as being derivative of some of Abercrombie's previous characters (especially Shivers in Best Served Cold) but still managed to be engaging and well-written for the most part. (view spoiler)

The only familiar character amongst the POV's Koll had an interesting storyline as he was torn between the woman he loved and his desire to fulfil his mother's wishes and to honour the man who saved his life by

becoming a minister. I appreciated how Abercrombie showed how personal ambition effected Koll's decision-making, something that made him a much more believable character. His interactions with Yarvi were consistently interesting and thought provoking, especially as Yarvi's evil became increasingly apparent.

The rest of the cast of characters in this one was hit and miss. At the start of the book the previous POV characters really fleshed out the cast and had some great scenes, especially Thorn's comforting of Skara and Brand's heart to heart with Koll. However (view spoiler) Father Yarvi's presence in the background was a source of constant tension and menace and his character development was brilliantly drawn throughout most of the book. (view spoiler) Queen Laithlin was also a really cool secondary character who was shown to be both a wise (and often ruthless) ruler as well as a loving mother, wife and friend.

This was a really strong ending that managed to both satisfactorily conclude and expand the scope of this trilogy. With 3 really well developed lead characters, some incredible supporting characters (although some were misused) and an ambitious plot filled with war, treachery and adventure that managed to be both exciting and though provoking this was a really enjoyable read that has left me psyched to see what Abercrombie comes up with next.

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

This review can also be found at Carole's Random Life.

3.5 Stars

I have loved this trilogy and I have to admit that I feel somewhat guilty about the fact that I didn't rate this final book in the trilogy as high as the two prior books. I base my rating strictly on my enjoyment of the story and I just didn't enjoy this book as much as the first two books. These books are the only books by Joe Abercrombie that I have read and I guess I had hoped for an ending that would feel satisfying and a little bit of happily ever after. This final book left me rather depressed and there was no happily ever after to be found.

The book focuses largely on Princess Skara. Princess Skara witnesses the murder of the king, her grandfather before she is whisked away to safety by Blue Jenner. She must now step in to rule the kingdom but first she must ensure its safety. I liked a lot of things about Skara. I liked the fact that she stepped up and proved to be a natural leader. She was able to pick people as her support that may be an unconventional choice but the right one for her. She was also able to win over the staff she was assigned so that they became loyal to her. Princess Skara proved to be a strong leader despite her age and lack of experience.

Even though I liked Princess Skara, I have to admit that I liked the central characters in the first two books more and I was thrilled to see all of the characters that I have grown to love come together in this book. Every character in this trilogy is so unique and colorful and the changes that have occurred with each one of them over the course of the trilogy has been astounding. Some of the characters I have liked more and more with each book while other characters have become harder to like. I really think that the strength of this trilogy is in the characters.

This book was just as exciting as the prior books in the trilogy. There were lots of fighting and action scenes

and at times the story was rather bloody. There was also a lot of war planning and political maneuvering in this book. Princess Skara is in a delicate position to take over her kingdom since she is both young and female. She is forced to make decisions at times that will put herself and her kingdom in the best position.

I enjoyed quite a lot in this book. The section of the book where we finally get to see a little more of the elf city was very interesting. I really liked some of the characters that had an important role in this book. Raith was a fantastic character and I think that Koll and Rin grew a lot in this book. There were also some things that I didn't care for as much in this book. There was one character's death that I didn't see coming that really bothered me. The fact that the death happened outside of the story being told made it worse. If that character had to die, I would have at least liked to have it happen withing the focus of the story. I really wanted to the story to end in a hopeful manner but that wasn't the case. I was left feeling rather depressed when I realized how far some characters had been able to fall.

I would recommend this book to others. This is a trilogy that is really best to be read in order so I would recommend that readers new to the trilogy start with the first book in the series. I will be looking forward to future works by Joe Abercrombie and I am actually hoping that there may be other books set within this world at some point in the not so distant future.

Intial Thoughts

Yes! I just received an email from the library that this book is waiting for me. I can't wait to read this and I am in awe that my library can get a book to me on the day of its release.
