

RULE BY THE SWORD...



Prince of Thorns

Mark Lawrence

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When he was nine, he watched as his mother and brother were killed before him. At thirteen, he led a band of bloodthirsty thugs. By fifteen, he intends to be king...

It's time for Prince Honorous Jorg Ancrath to return to the castle he turned his back on, to take what's rightfully his. Since the day he hung pinned on the thorns of a briar patch and watched Count Renar's men slaughter his mother and young brother, Jorg has been driven to vent his rage. Life and death are no more than a game to him—and he has nothing left to lose. But treachery awaits him in his father's castle. Treachery and dark magic. No matter how fierce his will, can one young man conquer enemies with power beyond his imagining?

Prince of Thorns Details

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Author : Mark Lawrence

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From Reader Review Prince of Thorns for online ebook

Carol. says

Here's Cliff Notes to my review: The Blade Itself Lite, with significantly less character development, a typical revenge plot and little redemption.

Feels suspiciously like watching a dog-fight video from ASPCA. Violent, powerful with a lack of finesse, subtlety or characterization, and the only redeeming aspect might occur at the end. The main character resists personal growth and opportunities for redemption, and commits violence after violence. We open as he watches a man die with his belly ripped open, while some of his men loot corpses, rape women and set buildings on fire, and another comes through and chops off heads. Ostensibly it is in pursuit of a larger goal, but what it translates to is a path of casual violence, both intimate and large. I get that that's what the author means to show, but I felt sort of sick and uncomfortable reading it. The most interesting parts were the "four years ago" flashbacks that begin to flesh out how our lead became the dysfunctional person he is. The tragedy looms large and awful, but the story lacks the sense of spiraling into rage that would help us understand how he transformed the killing and its aftermath into the path he did.

An interesting angle is the sort of post-apocalyptic connection that is at first hinted at with literary references, and then becomes more obvious. Forgive me, but it reminds me strongly of the trend later Shannara books took, with mysterious ruins, mutated populations and nuclear waste leaks. In this first book, there is little that is unique except (view spoiler)

Character building is a fatal flaw in Prince of Thorns. The band of twisted merry men are each little more than a significantly defining characteristic. Furthermore, the only two positively influential people in the prince's life are created out of the simplistic racial stereotypes of the "Magical Negro," and the "wise Asian teacher" who has the child's best interest in mind despite being a slave/indentured servant. The prince himself is more than a wee bit overqualified, like a master video game assassin; an expert tactician, skilled in hand-to-hand combat, decent blade work, physically fast, good horsemanship, able to use a crossbow, and all despite being only fifteen.

While I've dabbled in gaming, I've always stayed away from the flat-out warfare/shooter video games (excepting Bioshock and its lovely period inspired weirdness). I feel like I'm seeing a trend in modern fantasy towards books inspired by that kind of video-game based storyline that focuses on the imagery of violence and quest-driven action with minimal characterization. Personally, I like my people and worlds more fully developed, but I can see where this book might appeal to that population.

One uncharacterized star

Cross posted at <http://clsiewert.wordpress.com/2012/1...>

Michael says

I had heard so many good things about this book and although I'm not a fan of the gritty dark fantasy I think this was done exceedingly well. Mark's prose is very well written and I found myself noting a number of particularly well done sentences, which is unusual for me to notice.

From time to time, fans of my series ask me to do a prequel on my character Royce and how he was when in the Black Diamond Thieves Guild and before the calming influences of Gwen and Hadrian started to shape him. From now on I will tell them if you want to see "that kind of book" they should look to Prince of Thorns. Mark does an exceptional job writing the anti-hero. He is in fact what I would imagine Royce would be like so there is reason to write such a book as it would pale in comparison.

I do have just a few little complaints (authors never can read anything without analyzing a work). I had a bit of a problem with a fourteen-year-old boy accomplishing some of the things he does. Most women I know would be able to hold their own against someone this age so I had to suspend my belief with regard to his ability to rape. Also I don't think a band of surly men would really follow someone of Jorg's age.

As the book progressed and it was determined to be a post-apocalyptic earth I found that a bit hard to wrap my head around. Mixing keypad/computer technology with the fantasy setting was "different" and I'm interested to see what significance the setting will have as the series played out.

All in all a quality book by a bold new author. I think this is an exceptional book which I highly recommend to anyone who enjoys dark and gritty fantasy. I wish Mark well in his future endeavors and expect to see great things from him.

Anne says

I'm purposely using cat gifs to try and soften this review up a bit. I don't think it will help, but I just couldn't bring myself to search for anything bloody by the time I finished this book.

See that little boy on the cover, in all of his 14 year old glory?

By the fifth page, I hated his guts. He repulsed me. Repulsed! And I'm not talking about just *disliking* his personality.

Oh, no! Full-on skeeved out.

The kid is an unrepentant murderer and rapist!

So why 4 stars, huh?

Weeeeell, he's just insane enough to be interesting. And to be quite honest, I kept hoping little Jorg would somehow redeem himself. In *some* way. Just a little bit!

But the little bastard just kept on slicing throats, throwing people off cliffs, and shooting arrows through the hearts of anyone he really cares about.

To be fair, Jorg has Batman syndrome. He watched the slaughter of his mother and little brother when he was only 10 years old.

He has some unresolved issues...

Except instead of taking the Bruce Wayne approach to things (*I will SAVE Gotham!*), he's gone all dark and demonic on the inside. Hate will do that to you. It's ok to get angry, you just have to channel it the right way. Hate? Not so much. That shit will just eat you up.

And then who's gonna want to adopt you from the shelter?

So, Jorg started out an angry 10 year old, and when he finds out the King (*who just happens to be his father*) won't attack the man responsible for his mother & brother's death, he loses it. He hates the king who attacked his family, and he hates his father for letting it slide. In a rather spectacular show of lunacy, he runs away from home and takes up with a group of killers, eventually becoming their leader.

Hate, amirite?

What comes after hate?

EVIL, that's what! Pure evil! The kind of evil who thinks it's funny to taunt the farmer you just gutted by telling him you just found his daughters. Mmmmm. Yummy!

It's a slippery slope, people! If you let yourself go down that road, you'll find yourself sucked in deeper and deeper...with no way out.

And that scene, with the dying farmer, is where we start the journey with Jorg. He's a few days shy of 14, and already the leader of his motley band of *Brothers*. You would think it would be impossible for a kid to have somehow taken the leadership role, especially among a group of hardened murderers.

In my mind, this is how his takeover would have gone:

But Jorg is a fearless, scary little shit. And he's not the type to back down. Ever. To anyone. I kinda had to respect that about him, you know?

At any rate, the kid is ruthless enough to scare these guys into submission.

Besides, the vast majority of his crew were not the brightest bulbs on the Christmas tree. They were good at raping & pillaging, but that was as far as their mental capacities took them. In other words, they may have been scum, but they weren't very hard to manipulate.

However, along the road, he runs into his father's priest. In a cage. No, seriously. Jorg (*naturally*) wants to kill him but decides to use him to herald his return back to his kingdom.

But not before he stares down an army of the undead, and sends them running for the hills.

Yeah, I know! I told you this little fucker was scary!

Alright, once he makes his grand entrance back at the castle, that's when this show really gets going.

Jorg finally gets to face-off with his father!

Except, it's not as cool as Jorg imagined it in his head. In fact, it's pretty much the opposite of cool.

Turns out, his father has remarried, and the new wife is preggers with Jorg 2.0. Unfortunately, dear old Dad doesn't exactly want his asshole, runaway son taking the throne away from his new spawn. Naturally, Jorg's first thought is how he's going to kill the pregnant bitch.

Because he's sweet like that...

But before he can even begin to start plotting ways to push his stepmother down a flight of stairs, he runs into her sister...his new *aunt*.

Aunt Hot Babe!

And now he's conflicted. I mean, he likes her so much he doesn't even want to rape her!

WTF, Jorg?! Are you losing your edge over a girl?!

Ehhh. Not really. He debates whether or not to kill her, just so he doesn't have to worry about getting too attached. Luckily for her, it doesn't matter for long. Because Papa King is sending him on a ~~suicide~~ mission to take out one of the enemy kingdoms. If he returns victorious, it will prove his loyalty and restore him as the heir.

Hahahahahaha! Yeah, Jorg isn't falling for it, either.

But there's not much he can do but play along. His father has a powerful magician with some scary powers. This dude can get inside your head, read your thoughts, and control your body.

And Jorg, surprisingly, has managed to get on his bad side.

Although to be fair, this guy has managed to get on *Jorg's* bad side, as well.

For the record, my money was always on the psychotic tween...

Ok, the rest of the story is full of exciting adventure! Mutants, necromancers, and radioactive waste are waiting for our intrepid band of ~~don't even remotely resemble~~ heroes. But the good thing is, you really don't care when any of them bites it. Well, except for that one guy...

There are plenty of Big Secrets that come to light by the time this story was over. But towards the end, there was one thing the king did that I really didn't see coming!

And then there was that other thing that made me think Jorg *might* be redeemable. ***Ish***. See, there is a bit of a hole in the kid's memory. Not much, mind you. Just a teeny tiny chunk.

But it turns out to be quite a doozy!

Alright, so is Jorg the kind of character that I think most people will like? No.

He's just about as rotten and unsympathetic as they come.

However, by the end of this book, he had learned one very important lesson that I think will resonate with everyone.

Sexytimes with a willing hooker is much more pleasant than going the old forcible rape route.

Awwww. He's really growing as a person, don't you think?

My point is, this is **DEFINITELY** not a book for everyone. I liked it, but that was only because I knew what I was getting into beforehand. If I could find a Trigger Warning cat gif, I would put it up in a heartbeat! However, because I can't, I'm just going to close the door and let you decide for yourself whether or not you want to read this one...

Also reviewed for:

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

Pretty much everyone in this book is a damn bastard! **And a big thank you to Mark Lawrence, a cool as hell author who steered me away from things I wouldn't be able to handle. Authors like that rock in my world! Kudos**

Jorge and his crew are the people you love to hate. I know Jorg went through hell as a child (well he's still a child to me at 14) But that doesn't mean you have to grow up being a dick. Sure, kill all of the people that were involved in your family's killing but not innocence. And no raping. I mean seeing all of that can scar a mind in ways we don't know for a young kid but damn people.

Anyway, I snuck and read this from the library because it was one I didn't think I would be able to handle for a couple of years now.

I'm so glad I decided to read it! I plan on getting those pretty little grey copies of the trilogy and the prequel from BD at the end of the month. There will be a reread and more in depth review. I'm excited!

Yeah, being excited for a book of bastards is funny as hell ???. But I can't explain it

Happy Reading!

Mel ♥?

Elspeth says

I can't get behind a book that has the main character raping girls in the first few pages.

No thanks, I am good.

I have read a lot of books with rape in them, but I have to say they were mostly with a female protagonist. One of my favorite fantasy series, *The Deed of Paksenarrion*, Pak's lets herself be tortured for five days and nights, and rape isn't the only thing that she has to suffer.

I understood why the character did this, I also understood why the author wrote the story the way she did. I can see why an author will do this to their female leads, it can make them stronger, give them motivation to become the best they can be to fight evil in whatever form it comes in.

There are a couple of reasons I have issues with the main character being rapist, the first being the obvious. I cannot empathize with a rapist, there isn't a good enough reason in the world for me to like a person that commits such a crime. I can't think of another author that has had their main character act in the way Jorg has.

This leads into my second reason for disliking the course of actions of this book. It's an easy out, a cheap shot in making the main character be evil, and he is evil, this is not the actions of an anti-hero. I like a good anti-hero, I enjoy the show *Dexter*, and Richard Kadrey writes a mean one with his *Sandman Slim* series. I like books where the author takes time to build the story so the reader and the character get to know each other and settle their differences.

In this book there isn't time, the author just jumped right in with this disgusting display to portray what a horrible man Jorg is.

This is why I will not be reading this book, it's not all the reasons, but it's the top two.

EDIT: Here is the rape scene that people are saying never happened.

(view spoiler)

Rick Riordan says

I've heard of dark fantasy and anti-heroes, but this is the darkest fantasy with the anti-est anti-hero I've ever encountered. Our protagonist Jorg is only thirteen, but do not mistake this for a kids' book! Jorg is already the leader of a cutthroat gang of marauders, and has killed more men than most seasoned warriors -- including innocent civilians and a few of his own followers. Despite all this, I found myself rooting for Jorg, especially as more of his past is revealed, and we learn why he has become such a hardened, unrepentant killer. He lives in a broken empire where minor lords are constantly squabbling, but who is really pulling the strings of power? Jorg intends to find out. He aims to become king by the time he is fifteen, and once you meet you, you won't be betting against him! If you've ever wanted to read a first-person book about a hero who is also the darkest of villains, try this out. It's not like anything I've ever read before.

Petros Triantafyllou says

For more than a year I had only written 1 review for The Broken Empire trilogy. A terrible mistake, and one I regret deeply, considering it's my favorite story, and Lawrence my favorite author respectively. Each installment deserves a separate review, so i'm here to deliver.

Lawrence's debut is a milestone in modern fantasy. Solid writing and well-crafted characters, witty humor and sentimental elements, controversial circumstances and teeth-grinding situations, all skilfully combined in creating a novel that will redefine the term grimdark.

The world building is well structured and ever-expanding, with elements closely resembling that of an alternate universe in medieval times. It comes the (easy to understand yet complex to define) magic system, that combined with the aforementioned world building gives you the impression of a random, and usually seen in fantasy, fantastical world. Pleasantly shocking revelations prove you otherwise.

"I think maybe we die every day. Maybe we're born new each dawn, a little changed, a little further on our own road. When enough days stand between you and the person you were, you're strangers. Maybe that's what growing up is. Maybe I have grown up."

The Protagonist, Jorg of Ancrath (pronounced like it's spelled, not "Yorg"), is one of the most controversial characters in modern fantasy. He begins his journey as a crystal-clear villain, and proceeds into carving his path as a beloved Anti-Hero, creating a lot of debates in fantasy fiction cycles, for whether he should be despised or praised, loved or hated. The answer is none of them. He should simply be enjoyed. You don't have to like a character in order to enjoy his story. And, considering the realism (and humanism) that characterizes Mark's world (as seen with the moral and theological issues raised, as well as the inner struggles of the characters), that's a story one doesn't usually find in fantasy (or in fiction in general), and surely doesn't simply dismiss.

All in all, i find The Broken Empire to be the greatest fantasy fiction story of the decade, belonging to the top of your TBR list, unless you are one of those little sisses who can't stand the realism on Mark's books. It's a medieval story for fuck's sake, of course they will rape, kill & pillage (and not necessarily in that order).

You can find more of my reviews over at <http://BookNest.eu/>

Terry Brooks says

This month I am recommending both PRINCE OF THORNS and KING OF THORNS by Mark Lawrence. They are two of three, with the third not yet published. I have read the first and am halfway through the second. As a fantasy tale, Prince Jorg Ancraft's story is quite extraordinary. It begins when he is 13 and already a stone cold killer with a horrific past. This is a dangerous and risky protagonist for any author to put forth, but Lawrence does it with verve and confidence. It is like a train wreck from which you cannot look away. This is a story that you cannot put down. Every time I said to myself - and it was often - "Oh, he's not going to go there" or "he's not really going to do that," he did. A hard-edge tale of survival and conquest in a brutal medieval world well told and very compelling, it is different than anything I have ever read.

Alienor ✕ French Frowner ✕ says

(04/09) What can I say that I haven't already written ?

✓ **Warnings and other insights** : Rereading Prince of Thorns after completing the series, I realize now how many details hint what will happen in Jorg's future, and this is brilliant. Indeed it gives the plot so much more depth!

✓ **Jorg is still my favorite anti-hero of all times** : I could say so many things about him without never shedding light on his personality.

~~He is evil.~~

~~He is an asshole.~~

He is complex. He has layers. **He is a PSYCHOPATH.**

✓ **Am I a good person?** See, I could say that "*even thought I hated him, I loved the book, blablablablablabla.*" But it would be a **lie**. OF COURSE I don't condone his actions - who would? The guy is a sick sociopath for crying out loud! - but in the end, I love his character. Here's the story of a real villain, and you'll either hate or love it (and I can understand both, really). I'm in the loving wagon. **Join me?**

Original review : February 2015

♣ Special thanks to my awesome Rat Queens Kat and Chelsea to share this Dark Valentine with me for my Birthday Read. ♣ *click to read their reviews*

» Book 2 : King of Thorns ★★★★★

» Book 3 : Emperor of Thorns ★★★★★

Why, hello, anti-hero! I'm going to tell it right away : I loved the guy. That sick little Evil. Sue me.

? Sick little evil... Hmm... Tell me more ?

"There is no evil, Makin,' I said. 'There's the love of things, power, comfort, sex, and there's what men are willing to do to satisfy those lusts."

♣ **There's no need telling that Jorg is infuriating, sarcastic, selfish, smart-ass, ruthless, nope.** Of course all these words could define him but the only thing you need to know is that you're going to have to brace yourself because **we have a real villain as a hero here**. And damn, I loved that. Since the murder of his mother and brother, Jorg's decided to run away from the castle where he'd been raised - yes, because he's a prince, duh - and started to ... *well* ... is kill people with a bunch of mercenaries good enough of a

description? Yeah? He kills without an afterthought, he rapes, respects NOTHING (and **I mean it. Literally nothing.**) and can sacrifice everyone of his fellows, his so-called *Brothers*, who follow him everywhere and all share a spark of devil.

"You know how to break the cycle of hatred?" I asked.

"Love," said Gomst, all quiet-like.

"The way to break the cycle is to kill every single one of the bastards that fucked you over", I said."

» Yeah, this is a really violent journey you're about to start. *whisper* Now, I laughed a lot, you know. *Are you scared of me?* I am scared of me.

"That silence almost beat me. It's the silence that scares me. It's the blank page on which I can write my own fears. The spirits of the dead have nothing on it. The dead one tried to show me hell, but it was a pale imitation of the horror I can paint on the darkness in a quiet moment."

No but seriously. SERIOUSLY. I'm a tad worried because I never could bring myself to hate him, even though each and every one of his actions, what am I saying, of his *thoughts* yelled HATE ME!! JUST DO IT ALREADY!

But you know what?

♣ If I take an unflinching look at what I feel about him and if I compare with what made me loathe characters that a lot of people loved, I know how I could manage to accept him : **That's because he's plain evil and AT NO POINT during the book, someone is telling us that he is good. NEVER. I can accept, even LOVE to follow a fucking twisted bastard if I'm not feeling urged to drool over him, like other male leads we meet in a lot of romance for example.** There's no point in seeking redemption out for Jorg, there's none. That makes this journey in his sick head all kind of fascinating.

"It's what I am, and if you want excuses, come and take them."

? Did I appreciate the writing? Of course I did. ?

♣ There's no brilliant way to explain it, no similes everywhere, but **a flow that made me eat the book way faster than I thought I would.** Now, I don't know if that's because I loved being in Jorg's head so much, but his inner monologues pleased me to no end and I was never bored. I trade any of my YA female leads for Jorg's monologues on any day. Indeed **the irreverent tone of his humor drew me in** and it seemed that I never could get enough of it. Even if the guy is always on the verge of stabbing someone. No one is perfect right?

? Oh, and I guess I'm supposed to talk about the plot? Let's do this. ?

♣ Saying that I was captivated wouldn't do justice to the book - no. Because from the first line to the last, I

stayed wide-eyed and eager to learn more. **One piece of advice** : keep your heart still, because the path Jorg takes is ruthless. Violent. We're spared **nothing**, so before starting this book, keep in mind that you're going to be sick sometimes, shocked, uncomfortable - in a word, **you'll have to grit your teeth several times**. You've been warned.

"Cowards make the best torturers. Cowards understand fear and they can use it. Heroes on the other hand, they make terrible torturers. They don't see what motivates a normal man. They misunderstand everything. They can't think of anything worse than besmirching your honour. A coward on the other hand ; he'll tie you to a chair and light a slow fire under you. I'm not a hero or a coward, but I work with what I've got."

? To conclude, what made this book stand out from the rest in my opinion is the fact that the dark personality of Jorg leads to a complete and oh so amazing uncertainty. **Yes, because you're all kind of unpredictable when your conscience never bothers you.** We might oppose that there's too much luck in it, and that would be true, there's no denying it. Plus the word-building is a little messy at times (apparently, a medieval setting in an odd Europe after a near apocalypse, so in the future. No?). What can I say? I don't care.

I fucking loved this book. That's all.

For more of my reviews, please visit:

Petrik says

Buddy read with Jorg's fangirl, Anna

Here it is, I finally got around to this famous Grimsdark novel. Let it be known first that Prince of Thorns is not my first Mark Lawrence's book, the first was Red Sister, his newest and what the majority of his fans considered as his best work so far. Though I can't say the same for the series yet, Prince of Thorns, the first book in the Broken Empire trilogy, one of the most famous Grimsdark fantasy in the market and Mark Lawrence's debut novel is inferior compared to Red Sister but hey, I'm not here to do a step-by-step comparison.

PoT as a whole is still more of an okay to good read for me since there's nothing special yet as of now other than the unique main character. I have problems with almost every aspect of the book excluding the MC and prose. One thing for sure, reading this book while you're having one of those bad day and felt like

obliterating all things in sight proved to be quite satisfactory.

The entire book follow only one POV in 1st person perspective and this may be off putting for a lot of people especially since the main character, Jorg Ancrath, the Prince of Thorns who's "**broken**" by a traumatic event in his past is an asshole, insane, and sociopath say the least. He's pretty much Batman/Bruce Wayne (*gasp**Bruce Wayne is Batman!?*) who goes down the road of Joker.

Personally, I find people's reactions towards the violence in this book to be overblown, there are tons of other books more violent and gritty than this, a single 2 page torture scene by Glokta in The First Law trilogy made me grit my teeth more than this whole book. Yes, there is violence and yes Jorg is a rapist and murderer but the rape scene happened off-screen, in one short paragraph that when I read the part, I was like "**wait, this is the scene?"** and have to reread it to know that it was actually talking about rape. **This doesn't mean I support his actions at ALL**, it's just that we see tons of people's head bashed like potato in tons of other books we read and no one bats an eye towards those scenes, apparently one short vague paragraph about rape is worse than people's head exploding or bodies part being cut off.

I must also state that the book really lacking in actions department, there's tiny bits of action here and there but most of them are forgettable except for maybe one courtly duel scene.

In my opinion, Jorg as a character is really unique to read, there's probably less than 10 POV I know which role-played a sociopath or villain as the main POV and although he started out as a complete villain, by the end of this book he transformed himself to be an anti-hero and I can't wait to read more about his development.

"The way to break the cycle is to kill every single one of the bastards that fucked you over. Every last one of them. Kill them all. Kill their mother, kill their brothers, kill their children, kill their dog."

If there's a con that I had with Jorg's POV, it's not on reading his behavior or personality (*once again, doesn't mean I support his actions AT ALL*) but his godlike ability in everything. He's 14 years old, his narrative sounded like a 20-30 years old adult (*probably due to his past*), blessed with power and skills better than all veteran soldiers which doesn't make sense. Not to mention that all conflicts in this book seems too convenient for him to solve and the infamous enemies he faced more or less have an IQ so low to even be considered a worthy enemy. I find myself reading the book almost completely devoid of intensity excluding one or two scene.

Picture: Chibi Jorg by peastri

Another great thing about the book is in its prose. The structure of the book is told within two time frames, past and present and Mark's prose is really great in gripping the reader to the book. It's immersive, well written and philosophical at times.

“Memories are dangerous things. You turn them over and over, until you know every touch and corner, but still you'll find an edge to cut you.”

Now, two of my biggest problem with the book lies in its **lack of well written characters and world-building**. Jorg aside, there's no other compelling characters, all the other side characters are devoid of personality that I could care less if they died or not. This includes Jorg's group of mercenary, the Road Brothers. I want the books I read to have other compelling characters rather than one only, the more the better. This is achievable despite the 1st person narrative, Kingkiller Chronicle for example, for a book solely focused on Kvothe, there are tons of other great characters endearing for the readers despite their brief appearances, Simon, Auri, Devi etc. I really hope the sequels to this book to have more great side characters to care for.

And finally, the world-building aspect, this book doesn't have the feel of an epic or high fantasy book, at least not yet as of now. There's no lore or mythology here, the setting of the world is the same as ours with fictional cities in a map with high resemblance to Europe or maybe it is Europe I have no idea yet. The God in this book is Jesus, there's talk of Plato, Roma, India, Robin Hood that it felt at times like reading historical fiction. There are some elements of high fantasy of course, with the undead and angel for example but their brief appearances and the setting of the world doesn't help in bringing the tone of high fantasy to the book as of now, there's actually a hint of Sci-Fi in the world-building and that part intrigued me so let's just say, **my problem lies in my expectation for thinking this is a standard high fantasy book.**

Picture: Jorg & an angel. (Interior Artwork from Broken Empire Omnibus edition by Jason Chan)

Despite the faults I have with the book, Jorg and the prose itself manage to pushed me to read the book in 2 days (*not something to be proud of though, the book is really short*) and from what I gathered so far, this book is more like a setup for the next two books. It's more of a character background book to Jorg rather than his real journey and the ending of the book really piqued my interest in continuing the trilogy, which I'll do so after posting this review. **Prince of Thorns is an okay read for me and I hope the rest of the trilogy could push the series towards greatness.**

You can find this and the rest of my Adult Epic/High Fantasy & Sci-Fi reviews at Booknest

Robin Hobb says

I had to grit my teeth several times to get through this, and more than once I wondered, "Why was this recommended to me?" Then the pieces began to fall into place. Not a tale for the faint of heart, but well worth it to prevail. Trust me.

Alex ? Deranged KittyCat ? says

Disclaimer: This is not a book for the faint-hearted or the easily offended. There is violence and a 14 years old prince with a total lack of conscience.

Now, did you ever have a really bad day? Did you ever want to punch something/someone just to vent your anger? Did someone ever belittle you and you had to hold your tongue? Did you ever imagine how it would be if you were free to do whatever the f*ck you want to? No morals or laws to contain you. No conscience to keep you in check.

Well, yesterday was such a day for me. A day when it was proven to me *yet again* that being a good, honest person let's other people think they can trample all over you. So I had a lot of anger in me with no *satisfactory* way to release the pressure. I have morals, a conscience, so what to do? Good things there's GR, so I posted that *I need a book about a broken, angry hero/heroine who sets upon getting their revenge. And they get it. No pretty, fluffy stuff. Just an angry person who gets their way.* That's when Petrik, Haifoun and Nafeeza came in and all three of them recommended the same book: Prince of Thorns. And, guys, thank you! I loved it!

Prince Jorg Ancrath was only 10 years old when his uncle had his mother and brother killed. He expected his father, the king, to go to war, but it was all settled for a few coins and trade rights. That made the boy snap, free some prisoners and join a brotherhood of criminals and rapists. He soon became their leader.

That brings us to *the present*, when Jorg is mostly a man at 14. He kills and rapes. And he never forgot he's need for revenge. But guess what. His father remarried and his new queen is pregnant. And the king's personal Rasputin claims the future child will be a male. That prompts the king to find out if his first born is still alive or not. What's more interesting is that Jorg decides to return to court where, **bam!**, Rasputin, aka Sageous, tries to pull his nasty magic on him. Of course his father is an idiot already under the creep's influence. And then...

Lord Ruler, I loved this book! It's exquisite for when you're angry. Because all you want is for Jorg to go berserk. No stupid YA bullshit. No fluffy romance to make the character want to better himself. **Just hate, anger and revenge.**

Lis says

Cw: rape

Well, I did it. I finished it to the last page, mostly so I could review it like this. Give me a medal, because I was very much tempted to drop it when within the first few pages, the protagonist manages to rape two women and murder a few others just 'cause. More on this later.

This book was the metaphorical equivalent of some /r/morbidreality bullshit. Palahniuk pulls this shit too, but at least he does it well. Lazy writing. Lazy lazy lazy lazy. It's like filming a trainwreck and

presenting it unedited because Oh man look at it! It's Art! It's Edgy! But it's honestly lazy and ineffective and there's just way better stuff out there than this.

Let's start with the main character. "Jorg." Asshole in a position of power, indeed. I am not protesting the use of rape as a plot device, however sickening I might find it personally. I am protesting the fact that rape, a special kind of evil, is downplayed to benefit the protagonist's standing among his men. **RAPE IS NOT A MATTER TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY. THIS BOOK TREATS IT AS SUCH, AND NOT NECESSARILY JUST FROM JORG'S POINT OF VIEW.**

This book starts out with the plundering and burning of some small town in the country. Jorg is seen giving several less-than-stable orders to his men about what exactly they can do about the absence of material wealth, and points them in the way of several farm girls.

Cue rape scene.

Anyway. The one star is not because of Lawrence's sheer honesty and brutality in portraying the total psychopath that people even as young as fourteen years old can become from a bad childhood. His honesty was...alright. Sure.

But why is it that every white male author writes shit like this literally for the sake of being **edgy** and **cool**? This was senseless, baseless — there was simply no point. Why am I expected to be sympathetic to the main character when he pulls shit like this?

There was a great quote I'm going to bring up that was directed at ASOIAF, but it will work here:

Tons of trolls have thrown out the “but THINGS WERE JUST LIKE THAT BACK THEN!” argument ad nauseum. Which is total bullshit, of course...

I just want to ask, why is it whenever producers/directors/writers want to demonstrate “gritty historic realism” it’s **ALWAYS RAPE**? It’s always sexual violence toward women/girls.

You know what would be gritty historic realism? Dysentery. GoT has battles and armies marching all over the place. You want to show “what things were like back then”? Why aren’t we seeing 500 guys by the side of a road puking and shitting their guts out from drinking contaminated water while the rest of the army straggles along trying to keep going? Or a village getting wiped out by cholera? Or typhus, polio or plague epidemics?

I'M GOING TO GO AHEAD AND ANSWER WHY PEOPLE DON'T SEEM TO WANT TO DO THAT — No one wants to see that shit! And the same goes with rape, goddammit.

Anyway, let's move on to the other characters.

Wait. What other characters?

Jorg IS the main character, but, I mean, seriously, it's almost as if the most important supporting characters around him were just plot devices in living flesh and bone and nothing more. No development. Totally flat. Lifeless. Existing to only complement the already-gritty-edgy-omgimsocool vibe of the main character. Don't they get any development? At all?

Another point — one redeeming part of this book could have been female representation, but... what did you **DO** to Katherine, for fuck's sake?

We have her *stand* there as Jorg starts to strangle her near the end. That's what you do to her. Here we have that recurring motif of violence against women, where every girl is either raped or beaten and don't exist in this insipid, too-edgy plot in their own right. Thanks, Mr. Lawrence.

In case you couldn't figure it out, I do not recommend this book.

Peter says

I kept seeing good things and/or controversy about Prince of Thorns everywhere I looked, and everyone loves controversy. I decided to take the arc along with me to Worldcon in Reno, with the intention of reading it by the pool (I am still not comfortable taking an expensive eReader poolside).

Boy, am I glad I did.

Prince of Thorns had me by the balls in the first chapter. I found myself stealing time to read just a page here and a page there, and whenever a rare block of time opened, I commandeered it in the name of PoT. Read the whole book in less than a week. This used to be nothing, I would read two books a week in high school and college, but these days even a standard 300pp paperback can take me weeks to finish. Too much to do. If I'm reading 50+ pages a day, that is a damn good book.

I was immediately pulled into Prince Jorg's sociopathic little world, fascinated by the flashbacks of his past that hinted at how he became the amoral monster he was. Lawrence's writing is a wonderful mix of vivid metaphor and tight, economical prose. There are no wasted words, each is beautifully chosen. His world, too, is a wonderful blend of medieval and post-apocalyptic fantasy. Jorg's interactions with his teachers, foes, mercenary brothers and royal family are fabulously done.

After seeing mixed reviews and controversy, I expected PoT to be a lot more violent and disturbing than it actually was. I guess that shouldn't surprise me. I think my own books are fairly tame compared to what goes on in the really real world, and yet there are plenty of reviewers who would have you think they are one long rape scene. Fool me once, reviewers, shame on you. Fool me twice...

Don't get me wrong. Lawrence's Prince Jorg is one delightfully twisted little bastard. But you may find yourself having a little sympathy as you get to know him.

Blink, and you might even find yourself rooting for him to succeed.

Mark Lawrence says

My latest trilogy (in a whole new setting) starts with Red Sister.

Join my 3-emails-a-year newsletter #prizes

++++++

The Broken Empire signed, limited edition, omnibus is available! 69 of 1000 left when I last checked. Hurry before they go.

<https://grimoakpress.com/products/lim...>

It has 10 pieces of internal art by trilogy cover artist Jason Chan. Here's one from very near the end.

Road Brothers : tales from the Broken Empire is now out!

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2...>

an anthology of 14 short stories about Jorg &/or his companions!

Prince of Thorns is 24th on Goodreads' voteable Best Epic Fantasy list!

*

Yay! Robin Hobb (newly welcomed to Goodreads) reviewed my book on Goodreads! LOOK That's officially ten types of awesome right there!

Yay! Terry Brooks reviewed my book on Goodreads!

LOOK Unreal! I read The Sword of Shannara as a kid in 1979!

Yay! Rick Riordan reviewed Prince of Thorns on Goodreads! LOOK

Yay! Peter V Brett reviewed Prince of Thorns on Goodreads! LOOK

Wow... Orson Scott Card reviewed the whole trilogy! Look.

Twice!

And on twitter Holly 'Spiderwick Chronicles' Black said "I gotta say, Prince of Thorns was pretty great."

& reviews from other fine authors Anthony Ryan, Courtney Schafer, Myke Cole, & Theresa Frohock (has to be said Myke is more wordy on King of Thorns!
