



Light in the Gloaming

J.B. Simmons

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"The Gloaming was worse than the grave..."

Or so Tryst believed when he banished the former prince to this secret and brutal exile. Now Tryst sits on the throne of Valemidas. He feasts with nobles and prepares an army to conquer the world.

But things are never as stable as they seem. Old loyalties remain. The people of Valemidas groan under Tryst's heavy yoke and his network of spies. While the seeds of rebellion are planted, Tryst's own family is divided. His sister has ambitions exceeding her brother's, and their half-sister wants vengeance for the disappeared prince she loved. No one escapes the Gloaming, but perhaps the fallen prince is different. What would happen if a man emerged from a place worse than the grave?

Alliances will crumble, battles will rage, and souls will transform in the Gloaming.

Light in the Gloaming Details

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From Reader Review Light in the Gloaming for online ebook

Nathan says

JB Simmons will transport you to another world in his highly enjoyable fantasy debut, Light in the Gloaming. Descriptive, rich, REAL, Valemidas and its environs (and also what lies below) mirror elements of the human condition, and the complex and well-developed characters bring an enormous energy to the sweeping plot.

I especially enjoyed its exploration of perspective, particularly in its treatment of villainy and redemption. His ability to take you into the mind of each character is a tremendous talent - thoughts, motivations, anxieties laid bare. Not only do the universal themes and moral framework make for a Rand-esque epic achievement, but the small touches are equally delightful. It is obvious that the author spent many thoughtful moments crafting his narrative - from each chapter's epigraph to delightful descriptors throughout, some almost tongue-in-cheek in their cleverness ("an old stone wall, held together by moss and inertia").

Simmons is a master of timing, most notably in the novel's action-packed scenes. His pace, tone and descriptions can both slow time and speed it up, and Light in the Gloaming has a distinct "special-effects" feel to its most intense scenes, which are Hollywood-fun to read.

You can tell that Light in the Gloaming is just the start to a successful series of can't-miss novels.

What an awesome (and very fun) read - highly recommended!!

Amy Neil says

There were parts of this book that were absolutely beautiful, and then there were parts that were rushed and glossed over. The premise was good, but that was about it.

Michelle says

Good book

You people should just read this book yourselves and write your own review on this novel yourself and I really enjoyed reading this book very much so. Shelley MA

Lisa Hapney says

I was provided with a copy of this book by the author in return for an honest review. I had started to read this book once before, but couldn't get into it. I put it down for a really long time, but it was at the top of the list when I was clearing out those books on my list that I had not yet reviewed simply because it was the oldest one on the list. So I decided to settle in for a good read and give it a chance.

Light in the Gloaming started out pretty well in the Gloaming, which is an advanced dungeon. In fact the way they dropped people in was very Chronicles of Riddick. I actually thought about Riddick almost as soon as the book started in the Gloaming. Don't worry though. It's not a Riddick remake. It only follows that path with regard to the start of the story and it does not continue in that vein. I will say that there was a rather unrealistic escape made at the beginning. If it was that easy, everyone would be doing it. Despite all of that, I would have been interested in learning more about the struggles of those who had been cast off from society to inhabit the place, but the majority of the book isn't spent in the Gloaming. It's spent in the outer world.

The story was okay, but I didn't really "feel" anything for the characters. I wasn't invested in them or the world building. There were some interesting parts to the story, but for the most part it read like a watered down Game of Thrones book with a good helping of religious philosophies thrown in. The good part is that I didn't have any problem finishing the book so it's not that it is poorly written, but I did find some typos in the version I was provided by the author (I have to put a disclaimer here because it's been quite some time since the author requested I review the book and there may have been updates since then with regard to proofing).

Tryst is the bad guy, but he's only so frightening. Ramzi is supposed to be a bad guy, but once again he didn't feel too frightening. I didn't get the true feeling of dread you ought to from the bad guy. Andor is the good guy, but most days he is pretty inconsistent as a character and seemed to just be going through the motions. I really thought there should have been more time spent developing Andor as a character since he's the hero of the story. In my opinion, the best characters in the book were Wren and Jon who I did enjoy reading about. They were the only two characters that came across as real people to me or that interested me enough to want to know what they were up to not only during the book, but afterwards.

So the final rundown is that the book was okay. The writing was okay. There weren't a bunch of typos and I didn't have a hard time getting through it based on the writing. In the end though, this book left me with a kind of blah feeling. I wasn't excited about the story and have no interest in the continuing tale. I read a lot of books of this general type so I don't think it had anything to do with the genre. That's it for January. I hope everyone has a great weekend. I'll be back with more book reviews next week.

There were some good parts to the story. I was very interested in the Gloaming and what took place there given its very dystopian feel. It's possible that the next book delves into that more, but I doubt I'll be reading the second book in the series as I still wasn't really interested in this book even at the end.

This review was originally posted on my blog and is worded as such, <https://tjhapney.wordpress.com/>

Celia says

Summary: Amateur. Needed an entire rewrite, not to mention a good editor.

When I read the author's bio describing him as carrying "forward the torch lit by heroes like J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis" I wanted to hit my head against the wall.

Besides princes, swords, and horses, this book, not to mention its *style*, has nothing to do with either Tolkien or Lewis.

The plot is the one thing I think has potential, but even it was linear.

Now for the cons.

This book needs some serious editing. Mere verbosity pales next to this novel's abundant passages of telling, not showing. Add to that travesty the frequent clumsy wordings, dangling phrases, incorrect usage, and missing words and it's a miracle anyone can finish reading it. I actually went through the book making edit notes to keep my sanity.

In a bewildering collection of both first and third voices, the two princes, the evil prince's advisor, a princess, a merchant, a priest, and a random omniscient narrator all put their two cents in throughout the book. They all sound strangely the same, but I believe this is primarily due to the next error on my list.

Other reviewers will tell you the characters are "outstanding", "motley", and "interesting." Did we read the same book? All of the characters, though described differently, almost always talk and act the same. Ravien, the evil prince's sister, was the only interesting character, and it was only because she was halfway mysterious and seemed more like a Japanese ninja than anything else. I could have cared less for the protagonist and the antagonist, which is obviously not how a reader should feel.

There were also awkward jumps in the protagonist's character arc. For example, he begins the story out for vengeance, and then a short while later only wants to save his enemy from the evil poisoning his good heart. How? Why? From then on the protagonist is an angel and decidedly boring.

Put a bunch of copies of the same character in a scene and listen to them chat. It's intense, let me tell ya. I did get sick of the author just describing everything, but I actually writhed at times when the characters were talking. Take this passage for instance:

Of course, my princess. Many of us have been worried about you, but here you are, and it is such a great day for a ride. Juniper has missed you. She is such a beautiful mare. I say she is the finest we have. She will be thrilled to get out of these stables.

What. The. Heck.

It's supposed to be a stableboy talking to a princess, not whatever that train wreck is.

Also, everyone talks to everyone else as if they are on the same level. The princess reveals a secret(view spoiler) to the aforementioned stableboy. Later, a knight, busy training a battalion of soldiers and who supposedly "fire[s] off words in quick succession", tells a nobody farmer how he was raised to knighthood *for a paragraph*. The two princes' speeches were similarly unimpressive and quite lacking in inspiration. Near the end, a (view spoiler) is used as a platform for the protagonist to explain all the movements of the "good guys" from the beginning of the story up until that point. Why.

Then there are the randomly fantastical situations and inconsistencies: In battle the antagonist inexplicably dodges a dozen arrows simultaneously fired at him. Yet, in a knighting ceremony, this same amazing antagonist doesn't recognize another main character from only a sword-length away, while looking in his face! After being banished, the protagonist implies that he named the Gloaming, but throughout the book every other person calls it the exact same thing even though they never talk to him about the place and supposedly no one else has ever returned from the Gloaming to chat either.

In all, a disappointing read. I hope the author keeps writing, but he needs to get a good writing group and editor to help him. I won't be reading any more of his books.

Ashley Tahg says

I received this book merely on the chance of my flighty interest in its synopsis.

I truly had no idea what I had placed inside my own hands.

This novel is truly a work of art. Each character felt so poignantly alive, every shadow seemed darker and every sun beam brighter when described by Simmons.

Original plot, amazing world building (I'm a sucker for beautiful world building and this book was like a candy store for my imagination) and, as mentioned before, characters that took on a life that seems impossible to merely exist on paper and ink.

If you crossed C.S Lewis' story telling with Tolkien's world building, you might have J. B Simmons' novel. But there is also a writing style so clear and visible that is taken from neither but is Simmons' own that inspires and entrances me.

I will be following this author and his novels very closely from here on out, and I'm unbelievably excited for the sequel to LitG.

R. says

The beginning was really catchy. The plot was kinda slow, but okay. The characters were also okay. (These three contribute to the two stars). The attempted theme was stated too explicit.

But my major objection is content. There was WAY too much obscenity. Never were any sexual scenes described (that I can remember) and never did the main character pervert himself (he actually refused the temptation) (the villain did pervert himself, though). However, bar scenes, a few descriptions of women, etc. were not uplifting at all.

Don't waste your time and don't fill your mind with this.

Gwynneth Ott says

Evil begets evil.

It starts in a vile, dark place. Then follow the forgiveness and dreams we accept as the world. Action, love and the journey back.

Anna Tan says

I'd put this somewhere between a 3 and a 4 star - it was interesting enough to catch my attention and I did like the story very much. It's classic fantasy - bad prince usurps the throne, good prince fights to win back his throne and his bride (though his bride wasn't really in any danger, I think?)

Throw in family relationships and make it convoluted - Andor is a half-brother to Tryst, though there was a mention of an orphanage and adoption - so he could just have been an adopted brother. Ravien is Tryst's full sister... Lorien is (somehow) a half-sister? At first, I interpreted this for her to be Andor's full sister, but this didn't quite make sense, and also they were... betrothed? This was one of the things that confused me actually - how everyone was related to everyone else, and a family tree would have helped. Or them not being related at all might have worked better, because Andor's lineage apparently has some repercussions for the second book...

The weakest point in this novel, I think, is the constantly changing point of view. Simmons jumps from third to first between chapters, changing viewpoints from Andor to Tryst to I think Lorien at one point. There's no indication of this in the chapter headings (I checked because I was confused) so that doesn't really help you along.

At any rate, Andor makes for a good, complex character, even if he plays into the trope - the broken prince trying to reclaim his own, walking the tightrope between strength and weakness. Ravien is full of intrigue - I would like to know much more about her, actually. Tryst is pompous, proud and idiotic - he felt *almost* one-sided, but not quite. There were a few glimpses into his character that proved otherwise, but we don't know much more about him.

Of the other characters, I like Jon and Wren quite a lot. Father Yates was quite annoyingly preachy, but I suppose, in character. The Gloaming could be a character on its own, though it's a place, and exploring its origins and its purposes would have been fun.

So yeah. I guess somewhere about a 3.5 star.

Chelsea says

Blah. Uninspiring writing that manages to be preachy at the same time, female characters whose primary purpose is as sex symbols (one who fights in flared knee-high boots that reveal skin before the start of her miniskirt, one who wears a gown that "suggests that a slip of the fine silk off her shoulder would leave her naked before the banquet hall," and another who is literally just there for men to lust over and have sex with), a lack of understanding of the grammar related to dialogue, and multiple instances of misused words such as "wrenched" instead "retched" (also "wretched" instead of "retched") and "shoot" instead of "chute."

Will not be pursuing this series further or this author again.

Richard says

The characters were outstanding, they had interesting and diverse personalities. The good characters had flaws. There were also some characters who appeared to be aiding the main character, but with the way the author conveys the heroes thoughts we have doubts along with him whether they are truly helping him or if they will betray him in the end. The author did an excellent job of bringing across believable thoughts and feelings from all of the characters.

It was interesting to see chapters from the point of view of the hero, Andor and his rival Tryst from first person perspective and chapters from the point of view of other characters written in third person

perspective. It was an good technique and it certainly made me feel it was a story about these two main characters.

The story was excellent. It was different from your average hero having to overthrow the villain story. Since the hero had to be more subtle about it and was attempting to do it without killing his rival.

The action was fairly light and the fighting scenes tended to be short. That's not to say there isn't anything happening or that it is short on excitement. There is plenty of that; it just takes a different form, such as the main characters planning on how they will overthrow Tryst. Probably the biggest disappointment with the action was how the tension could build up, or something appears to be set up for an action filled sequence only to turn out to be fairly small. (view spoiler)

The descriptions are very well written, every part of the world is more brilliant in the way the author describes it.

The Gloaming was a very interesting place, but sadly only fills up a small section of the book, a couple of chapters at the start and at the end, which was odd giving the title and the synopsis. The memories of the place do effect Andor during the story, but I really would like to have seen more of it, either by having the prince spend more time there or by having more detailed flashbacks to the place.

Overall I would rate this book four and a half out of five. The lack of action, and results not matching up to the build up were my main reasons for not giving this book the full five out of five. But it is strong enough for me to be on the look out for the next book in the series.

**** 1/2

In full disclosure I won this book in a Goodreads giveaway.

Susan says

I enjoyed this book. It was easy to imagine and had a lot of action and intrigue. The lessons were not forced either.

Sarah-Jayne Briggs says

(I received a free copy of this book in exchange for a review).

(This review may contain spoilers).

This book was quite an intriguing one. The idea of a prince being exiled to a horrific place is an intriguing one, as is said prince's escape and how that experience changes him.

Since I hadn't met Andor before his time in the Gloaming, I only saw the effects the place had had on him.

Although it was interesting to see the thought processes in his mind (and how his mindset worked after escaping the Gloaming).

It was really interesting to see the way Andor had to build up his allies and strength before he could challenge Tryst, but I felt the challenging past came across a bit rushed. I think it could have been extended a bit.

I quite liked Jon and Wren as characters, but I found myself questioning the decisions Andor made concerning them quite a lot, especially given how Tryst viewed Wren. I was expecting more subtle action and towards the end, it was less satisfactory than it should have been.

I think Tryst could have been an interesting character, if there had been many redeeming qualities to him. I glimpsed something at the end, but nothing that made me think redemption might be possible. Though it would be interesting to read the next book and see if that's proved me wrong.

I did like Andor as a character, too. I did, however, find myself quite confused by his relationship with Tryst and Ravien. I liked Ravien as a character, but I would have liked to see more of her mindset. By the end of the book, I still wasn't sure I really trusted or understood her motivations.

I didn't really like the constant switching between first and third person through this book. If the POV had to be changed, I would have preferred it to be in third person all the way through.

I did find this book to be quite well-written. I would like to read the next book that comes after this at some point in the future. It would be good to see how everything turns out and what happens next with the characters.

Lauren Stoolfire says

Prince Andor of Valemidas has been exiled to the Gloaming by his once friend and now betrayer, Tryst. The Gloaming is an underground wasteland with no escape. Just as Andor is about to finally lose himself and all hope to the Gloaming, he meets a new man named Lucian and Lucian gives Andor what he needs to escape their twilight prison. As there are still people loyal to him, Andor works to take back the city against power hungry and tyrannical Tryst.

Excellent fantasy debut of J.B. Simmons with *Light in the Gloaming*! If you enjoy the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, you should definitely give J.B. Simmons a try. It's a classic story of good versus evil, but instead of the fantasy hook of magical creatures it explores the effects of power and ambition on human nature. Fantastic setting with very well-written characters. In fact, the depth of the characters is what really hooked me. As much as I enjoyed opposites Ravien and Lorien, in a way I did wish for a little more from Lorien. Ravien is a very interesting character; she definitely has more of a gray area than others in the story.

I also enjoyed the dystopian-esque Gloaming. I would have loved to have learned more about the Gloaming itself; I have so many questions about it and it's just such an awesome setting. It works as a great contrast to Valemidas above. Speaking to that, it is also very refreshing to take note of the themes of hope and redemption alongside the depressive Gloaming. These contrasts are also visible in the changes of perspective, especially between Andor and Tryst.

Great read! I hope to see more from this author - perhaps a sequel with that ending seeming to set the stage for one. Very recommended!

I received this through the Goodreads First Reads Program. Thank you so much!

Ryan says

J.B. Simmons's *Light in the Gloaming* is a refreshing work of fiction that manages to strike the perfect balance between a fantasy world and the underlying ideals. The *Gloaming* is a unique setting that immediately pulls you into the action and gives the novel a dystopian feel. For me, however, the key to Simmons's success is the characters. Readers of all kinds will relate to the variety of well-developed and likable (or even dislikeable) figures that take turns driving the plot. A must read!
