



The Final Warden

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The Final Warden is the first book of the Gifts of Vorallon trilogy.

The world of Vorallon is failing. Hordes of demons destroy cities and everyone who lives in them. The raiders of Zuxra, foul men who answer only to their mad queen, enslave and conquer all that remains. As all descends into darkness, the Old Gods sleep, but they have entrusted the survival of Vorallon to the gifted.

The gifted are men and women blessed with unique abilities that are fueled by the strength of their spirits.

Lorace is one of the gifted, a hollow shell of a man who has been scarred by demons and bereft of all memory. Lost on a desolate shore, the only clue to his destiny, and his past, is a sphere of dull silvery metal he holds clutched in one hand. A mysterious call draws him north, toward the last bastion of light that exists upon Vorallon, the fortress city of Halversome—the next target of the Queen of Zuxra and the gifted people who do her bidding.

The Final Warden Details

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Author : Thomas Cardin

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Underground Book Reviews says

Fantasy lit comes in many colors. The Final Warden's color is blue, as in blue blood. This is pure-bred classic, world-building fantasy. Perhaps "formal fantasy" might be a better description. Thomas Cardin touches all the familiar tropes: magic, elves, dwarves, knights, evil queens, and terrible demons. I often find these kinds of books simply Tolkiennesque knock-offs, with a few things changed, like calling elves or hobbits something else. Cardin doesn't do that. No, he plays by the rules, and handles the genre with the utmost respect. In the doing, he creates a uniquely enjoyable novel.

The Final Warden is the first installment in the Gifts of Vorralon series. Lorace finds himself washed up on a strange shore with few memories and grasping a small metallic sphere. Hungry and confused, he stumbles into the city of Halversome. Soon, Lorace begins to discover who he is, and that he possesses powerful gifts, magical powers. He also finds himself on a collision course with enemies, including demons, possessing equally powerful gifts. Along the way, Lorace meets Tornin, a handsome knight who swears an oath to protect him. Other allies join them as the nature of Lorace's gifts, and past, are revealed, and how they are tied to the world of Vorralon itself.

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Claudia says

This wasn't your typical save the world book. Once I started reading I couldn't put it down. Remembering you have a important job to do and driven by an unseen forced that you continue to follow and not know why I can totally relate to. The swords fighting and mysteries made the slow start made it worth the wait to get to the end. I really look forward to reading the next book in the series.

Angie says

I really enjoyed this book. Nothing makes me happier then reading a book that involves a world saving quest but when you add in some elves, dwarfs, old gods and then some demons for everyone to fight and I'm tickled pink.

I liked the concept of certain people being gifted with different things, it really added a fantasy feel to the read for me. Not saying the dwarfs and elves didn't do this for me, it just not that uncommon to find them in books now a days so the added element of the different gifts made me happy. I liked how this was explained as well. It was something different, but not hard to understand either.

The book is told mainly from Loraces point of view, but there are a few time when you get a peek into someone elses head. This was done really well, normally I love when a book is told from a whole bunch of point of views, but this one wouldn't have worked half as good if it was done that way. You really need to learn about Loraces and what he went through so that you could better understand him.

The story itself felt like it cut off to soon, at least for my liking. It seemed that we were finally starting to get to the meat of it when the book ended. Though most of the major plot points had been answered I was just starting to really get into everything and I was a little sad that it ended when it did.

I really love books that have this plot done in them, so it was really wasn't surprising that I enjoyed this one so much. This book is written really well, not everyone can nail the flawed hero on a important quest thing but the author did a really good job on this.

Would I recommend this book? Yes, if you are into books where there is a hero to fight some great evil you will really like this one.

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book from the author in exchange for a honest review.

<http://zephyrbookreviews.blogspot.com/>

Travis Mohrman says

This is a very good, very well paced fantasy story. Many fantasy authors seem to build a world that is too complicated and it all gets explained just once in the very beginning, which ends up creating a confused reader.

What this author has been able to do is wonderful. He laid out the world slowly, but I never felt like I didn't know enough as I read it. The little facts and oddities of this realm just rolled out as they needed to and didn't feel forced or boring, creating an incredibly fluid story that i found very enjoyable.

As a mark of a great fantasy book, after reading much of it in the first day, I dreamed that evening that I was in this new world. I won't tell you what my "gift" was, but it was impressive!

Read this and dream about it, you won't regret one second of it!

John Hancock says

This is a nice return to traditional fantasy in its most fun form. Uncluttered by anything else but the sheer joy of gods, special powers or *gifts*, magical weaponry, secret folklore come to life, and the loyalty of friends, well met.

I enjoyed reading this first installment and the only thing I can say against it is it ended too abruptly, it felt. So on to the next installment!

Brian Braden says

The novel is well-written, edited and suitable for most ages. First, it's easy to read, and easy to follow, I could actually follow the lore, and understand the rules of this world's magic with little effort. This allowed Cardin to slowly reveal a world that is both unique, yet builds on familiar tropes. I've read a few other works by this

author, and found myself beginning to play ‘connect the dots’ with the world’s history and artifacts. Basically, I began to ‘geek’. For a fantasy author, that’s called mission accomplished.

My critiques are minor. Warden could have used a bit more levity and romance, and sometimes the dialogue felt a tad too formal. Overall, I found The Final Warden a worthy read for hardcore fantasy fans, or those new to the genre.

Colby says

Very well written! Thomas Cardin has done a fantastic job of world-building that will leave you eager to read the rest of the trilogy. His character development is very good, and Lorace, although God-like at times and completely vile at others is a character that can be easily identified with. Cardin has a very descriptive and flowing style, with imagination to spare. Bring on the sequel, sir!!

Carol says

The Final Warden can best be described as the beginning of an epic tale that captures the reader with a unique plot and a fresh angle. There are sorcerers, ogres, dwarves, elves, giants, and even demons. Main characters possess special abilities, or gifts, that manifest differently for each, aiding the quest. Cardin manages to bring all of these to the table with admirable symmetry. Possibly what I enjoyed most about this book was the depiction of the dwarves. Unlike many other books, Cardin hones in on the customs, rituals, languages, and lives of the dwarves. They no longer take what I call a supporting-supporting role to the tale. I will leave it at that to avoid spoilers. I can not wait to dive into the next installment in the series, City of Thunder!!!

Shannon says

The Final Warden begins with the ominous introduction, "This story is forbidden. It was forbidden for us to write, and it is certainly forbidden to read. We who worked ... under the illumination of magic ... send it to a new, young universe where it may be read. ... It is the story of ... perhaps the best man ever to live in any world of any universe."

Oh yeah, and there's a map of the world – which I.M.O. is becoming necessary for fantasy novels that take place in a new world.

The Final Warden was a very fast and easy read overall. The author doesn't get hung up on using crazy, impossible-to-pronounce names for the world he has created. The story flows smoothly – but at times it's almost too smooth. By this I mean that the main character, Lorace, recalls various memories just at the right time to help everyone out of whatever situation they've gotten themselves into. I would have liked to see just a little more conflict and hardship placed on him. After all, Lorace supposedly has a great destiny ahead of him – and all great heroes have had many obstacles to overcome, and have suffered great loss.

A couple of other things I liked about this story were the different gifts that people could possess. I also liked the idea that if a demon kills too many victims, it gets sucked back to Nefryt. While an all powerful world

spirit is not a new idea, the author develops his own personification of the spirit and I enjoyed reading about Vorallon, the spirit of the world that cares for the inhabitants. The Ritual of the Forge where Lorace's godstone is finally forged into Sakke Vrang was really detailed, lovingly written, and contained astounding imagery. The mini stories within the story were wonderful as well. I thoroughly enjoyed when Ralli told the tale of the bearers that had come before Lorace that lined the wall in the Hall of Heroes in the mountain of Vlaske K'Brak. The elements of the story come together fluidly and create an entertaining read.

There are a couple of cliffhangers and unanswered questions at the end that will ensure readers will pick up the rest of the books in the series. What is Lorace's destiny – and just what is he supposed to do with the unlikely weapon forged from the godstone? And although the story mainly centers around Lorace and his companions, we read a little about the Queen, and the tidbits we receive raise even more questions. Like what is the "charm" that the "darling" sorceress Scythe holds over the Queen? It makes me wonder if Scythe is responsible for corrupting the mad Queen – and if that is the case, then is the Queen merely a puppet in a stone castle with Scythe pulling her strings?

I enjoyed The Final Warden and have added books 2 & 3 (City of Thunder and Lord of Vengeance) to my to-read list!

Overall rating: 4 out of 5 stars.

Appropriate for ages 12 & up.

I received a free eBook of The Final Warden from Goodreads-Making Connections in exchange for an honest review.

Debbie says

Fantasy is a unique genre, requiring a complete suspension of disbelief from the reader. Opening a fantasy story means departing this world to experience an entirely new one, somewhere that has different rules, issues, and people. We have expectations, of course. We don't want the bad guys to win. We want to understand and relate to the characters. We want to be able to picture this new world as we read of it. We want unfolding events to make sense without being predictable. It's a tough order, really, for an author to fulfill, but many do so quite well. It's a pleasure to find and read such good books.

I find The Final Warden to be one of those books. This is a debut novel, and the first of a trilogy. By the end of the first chapter, I was hooked. I had to see what would happen next. I spent far too much time reading it that first day, in fact.

There will be no spoilers here, just some impressions. Several characters and story elements are introduced in separate chapters, with some of those elements beginning to weave together as the story progresses. I like the concept of the planet being self-aware, and able to assist its chosen defenders in a limited fashion. The conflict between the dark and the light is a complex one, involving both gods and mortal of several races. The hierarchy of the gods is not completely clear, at least not yet. It is clear that these gods cannot battle alone, are not invincible, and perhaps were not always gods. I find that intriguing.

The races populating this world have familiar names from our own planet's rich mythology. They have some expected traits as well as some unusual ones. Humans on our planet aren't quite the same as humans on

Vorallon. The description and history of the two main settings for the action paints a vivid picture without disrupting the flow of the story. Most of the character development focuses on two main characters, and is well done, though I suspect not yet complete. A third important character I thought to be just a bit naive, but his back story is an unknown factor as yet.

Overall, this is a very well written book with a good pace, and a nice combination of action and interludes. Be aware that there is no neat ending, with two more books to follow this one. There also is no annoying cliffhanger, that's a plus for most of us. I enjoyed reading it and certainly want to read the rest of the story.

Steven says

At the start i wasn't to sure about this book, but after the 4th or 5th chapter i was hooked. I loved the idea of the world and how the Author let slip bits and pieces all the way through to keep us wanting more. I can't wait to finish work so i can get started on the second book.

Adelaide Metzger says

Well, if I hadn't written a review to explain how awesome this story is the 8 pages of annotations and highlights on my Nook Simple Touch should give you an idea. These characters and concepts are—awesome!!

It was a slow start for me when I started reading this but I'm gunna say that that wasn't my fault because it was the end of the semester with finals and graduations and family members visiting. But when I was finally able to sit down and put just a bit of my concentration on this book, I couldn't put it down. That's a book review cliché, but I really mean it. Thomas Cardin's writing is fluid and captivating with a style that hones the fantasy atmosphere with his great artistry and it's done with just the right texture. What I mean by that is the fantasy genre today is expected to be a big thick book made up of 400+ pages and written in such a thick style it takes great concentration and even translation to read it as if one was trying to learn a new language (it dates back to the fantasy icon Tolkien, but we won't blame him because he was awesome anyway). Cardin doesn't do that. It's a quick, understandable read but it's crafted with a delicate and satisfying style.

The other reviews for this first in a trilogy complimented greatly on "character value," and "character development," and they're absolutely right—100 times so. But I didn't hear a lot about what made these characters important to the reader and that was THE EMOTION! God, I haven't read a (sci-fi/fantasy) book that made me this emotional since Star Wars: Republic Commando (and it didn't hit me as hard as Republic Commando, but it had emotional scenes worthy of Karen Traviss' praise). Traviss' 'Commando books made me want to throw my Nook at the wall, but Cardin's book made me want to clutch my Nook to my chest so tight that it would break out of its two-year warranty all the while reenacting each heart bleeding moment with as much luster as Jimmy Stuart in every single one of his movies (but we all know no matter how hard we try, we can never be as good as Jimmy was). I'm working on my first film degree, so I can't help it when heavy moments like these in the story inspire me to see it as a film. Trust me, with the right actors and passion, this would be THE next blockbuster franchise (think Michael Fassbender's superb performance in

Prometheus but in a fantasy epic style like LOTR's only on a smaller scale with more emotional characters). I'm just saying, that's how good it is.

Besides the great emotional quality that plugs you into the characters as if they were your own children, the concept of each character having an ability unique to themselves was really cool; things like super speed, control over the weather, and telepathy worked well because *X-Men* powers haven't been done before in a setting like this. (view spoiler) And did I mention the emotion when you got that unbreakable, to-the-death friendship in the mix. Makes my mouth water.

Usually I'd say something like, "So, definitely give this one a chance," "You'll like. I know I did," or "Bring it on (author's name)," but all that needs to be said is, "Buy it. Read it. Now." You'll thank me.

(MU-VEE! MU-VEE! MU-VEE!)

Anita says

I really enjoyed the overall story and a lot of the concepts in this book (like how the dwarves communicate with the spirit of the world amongst other things). The main character Lorace is interesting and I felt empathy for him, and I want to find out what happens to him in the end so I will probably read the rest of the books too.

The things that brought my experience of this book down was simply that I felt like it rushed ahead a lot, Cardin could have slowed down the pace a little bit, but of course that is just my own personal opinion. There were also quite a few grammatical errors that kept popping up unfortunately, and I think that chapter 1 and 2 might deserve to be slightly re-written or at least edited a little as I found them a bit difficult to get through.

The conclusion is that the book is worth reading, and deserves a fair chance. The passion of the author is very evident and that alone makes it worth the while.

Max says

I guess it is mean to compare this book with the "Triple-A" titles in Fantasy, since they are usually written over several years with the help of editors and assistants, while this is an "independent" book written by one guy, but I cannot really help it.

I was actually surprised how much the story pulled me in. In the beginning, I was expecting a piece of "generic" fantasy with perhaps one cool idea to distinguish it from the other fantasy books. I also expected it to be predictable in large parts. Well, I'm glad to say that both fears were unfounded. The story is interesting and well written, and while it objectively cannot hold up against the likes of Sanderson's *The Way of Kings* (my reference in High / Epic Fantasy against which all others are measured) it was still very enjoyable to read.

The characters are interesting, and while some of the "usual" Fantasy tricks of lost memories and mysterious

abilities are employed, I still found it refreshing that Lorace (the hero of the book) always immediately began testing out what he could do with his abilities (something which I personally would always do with a cool new magic skill I just found out I possessed, and something I want to scream to do at all the fantasy characters who only ever find new ways to use their skills in the most dire of situations).

The lore of the book is also well written, and explains enough to make us understand what is going on while still leaving enough mystery for us to wonder about. The same goes for the magic, or the *gifts*, as they are called here.

A special commendation needs to be given for the fact that this eBook is not only available on amazon.de, but also part of the currently rather lacking lineup of eBooks in amazon.de's Kindle Lending Library. Thomas, *thank you!* I was beginning to think that I would never be able to make use of that library.

Now, to mention the one thing I found rather irritating: I found several typos and grammatically questionable sentences in the book. I understand that Thomas is an independent author, but some of the worse ones should have been found by any decent spell check program, be it Word, OpenOffice Writer or the integrated Spell Check of Scrivener. It's a small thing, but I found it irritating. Sadly, I neglected to mark them in my ebook, so I cannot report them to the author (sorry, Thomas). I promise to do this for the next part of the series, which I will begin to read now.

4 of 5 stars, but don't let that discourage you. I still recommend this book, and it is neither expensive nor does it take too long to read. I am always in favour of helping new authors earn some money from their hard work.

Monica says

This is a book of beginnings. On the world of Vorallon, Lorace awakes with amnesia. In the Final Warden, we follow Lorace as he journeys to recover his memories and begins his quest set forth by the Lady of Destiny.

There are a whole multitude of characters, quests, gods, and destinies. At times, this can be somewhat overwhelming; however, the author does an excellent job of weaving a coherent and compelling story by focusing primarily on Lorace and using his quest/destiny as the central/primary story pivot.

No matter which group of characters the story is traveling with at the time, the narrative is descriptive and detailed allowing the reader to become immersed in the atmosphere of the world.

Definitely an entertaining read!
