



## The History of the Runestaff

*Michael Moorcock*

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## **The History of the Runestaff** Michael Moorcock

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## **The History of the Runestaff Details**

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## **From Reader Review The History of the Runestaff for online ebook**

## Nebojša Petković says

## **Gabriel Benítez says**

Buenísimas las aventuras de Dorian Hawkmoon en un mundo de nuestro futuro. El rey feto, Huón, está poca madre y el imperio de Londra, increíble. No sé por qué no lo hacen serie de televisión. Las obras de Moorcock han sido muy descuidadas en una época en que sería increíble verlas en producciones de televisión

Adán says

3.5/5\*

## SIN SPOILERS:

Eres Dorian Hawkmoon, duque de Colonia, una ciudad de la antaño llamada Alemania. Luchas contra el Imperio Oscuro de Granbretan, antes conocida como... bueno... ya os imagináis su anterior nombre. Este mundo es, obviamente, el NUESTRO. Pero varios milenios adelante, de modo que la 'Época dorada' de nuestro tiempo es llamada con temor "El Milenio Trágico", una era en la que la ciencia literalmente explotó, y el mundo se autodestruyó. Se considera que también la 'Magia' tuvo su lugar en aquella época, pero en el tiempo en que la historia se ambienta, sobreviven muy pocos restos de aquella ciencia y magia.

Asesinan a tu padre, intentas tomar venganza, te raptan, y te implantan una joya en la frente, la Joya Negra, un artefacto cuasi - científico que torna a su portador en un ser sin voluntad, que hará lo que le digan, por miedo a que la Joya anique su mente.

Eres Dorian Hawkmoon, y en estas condiciones te ves obligado a cumplir órdenes o, por el contrario, ser reducido a un ser sin cerebro con una joya pegada a la frente y casi incapaz de valerse por sí mismo.

La misión es raptar a la princesa de Camarga, la única provincia de Europa que todavía resiste al Imperio Oscuro. Allá vas, con casi nulas esperanzas de vivir. Pero, por supuesto, nada sale como se espera. Las cosas se tuercen aquí y allá, alguien jura por el Bastón Rúnico, y a partir de ese momento la maquinaria del destino queda activada, trabajando para imponer un modelo de eventos predeterminados, y ninguno de cuyos

participantes tiene idea de que está en el ajo (o casi nadie...).

Hasta aquí, el planteamiento de la historia. Es algo sencillo, pero de por sí, para haber sido escrito en los 70, no está nada mal. La peor parte es la siguiente:

A pesar de ser una historia activa, llena de giros y curiosamente con muy pocos puntos aburridos (620 páginas), los personajes y sus relaciones interpersonales no llegan a cuajar del todo. En muchas escenas los diálogos son 'insuficientes', la comunicación no es la que esperarías en una situación parecida, y sin embargo los personajes ACTÚAN. Esto les da un aire de eterna impulsividad, una impulsividad demasiado 'heroica', demasiado instintiva, demasiado animal. Pareciera como si los personajes tuvieran el sentido del honor, el deber, el amor, la venganza, tan claros en sus mentes, que ni siquiera necesitasen expresarlos en voz alta, ni siquiera a sus aliados. Así, muchas escenas que no sean puramente descriptivas, sino de acción, adolecen de falta de detalles.

Es la falta de detalles lo que ha evitado que valorase al libro con 4/5. El punto restante sigue siendo la simplicidad, una historia que abarca, como mínimo, dos continentes enteros si no tres en determinado momento, y llegan a pasar meses, casi años, y que no hace justicia a este gran alcance físico y temporal con un nivel de detalle a su altura.

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### **Jeremy Preacher says**

Hawkmoon was much more straightforward, and thus somewhat less interesting but also less annoying, than Von Bek or The Eternal Champion. It's a four-part novel, and very much a straight lone-hero-against-evil-empire adventure. One of the problems I have with Moorcock in general (at least in this multiverse) is that because the villain is always Chaos, it has zero subtlety - the villains rape and torture and perform hideous experiments because they're the villains, not out of any sort of serious characterization. That's less of a problem when the story is as twisty and multilayered as the Von Bek stories (although it's still a problem) but Hawkmoon has none of that and it just grew tedious.

That's not to say I totally dislike it - it's still a fast-moving adventure and it held my interest to the end - but it's pretty badly flawed as anything other than straight-up pulp fantasy.

(I'm plowing through the American collections very, very slowly, because Moorcock is not quite to my taste but he's interesting and also tremendously influential in the genre.)

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### **7thTrooper says**

Jag gillar Moorcock och hans del i genrens utveckling är något som inte kan förnekas. Men detta var i ärlighetens namn inte speciellt bra, egentligen. Inte dåligt men ej heller något jag kommer rekommendera. Ljuspunkter finns men de är egentligen få. Det mest blir en ganska typisk och tråkig S&S handling som inte är mer än en serie olika äventyr där Hawkmoon med anhang skall hämta en grej som sedan tjänstgör som Deus Ex Machina. Mannen har fantasi, kan man ju faktiskt ändå säga, då världsbygget fortfarande är bra och förmodligen det starkaste kortet som böckerna har. Moorcock har själv erkänt att han skrivit böckerna för pengar på bara några dagar och, ja, det är ju inte precis ett högvattenmärke. Det börjar lite intressant faktiskt, då huvudkaraktärerna först vill ha så lite som möjligt att göra med något slags krig eller som i Hawkmoons fall är helt tillbakadragen. Men sedan blir det papperstunna karaktärer som inte har någon riktig konsekvent personlighet, som D'Averc eller Flana. Den senare blir hux flux en good guy på slutet.

Det är inget nytt under solen på något sätt, egentligen. Tunna karaktärer, tunn handling och egentligen bara en ursäkt för Moorcock att håva in pengar. Men mannen kan sitt hantverk och han kan det bra. Så det blir egentligen i alla fall ett ganska starkt meh mer än något annat. Egentligen inte läsvärt om man inte är en sådan som vill läsa allt som en viss författare har producerat.

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### **Bill Petersen says**

I think many fans of Moorcock's 'Elric' character tend to forget that Hawkmoon was one of Moorcock's first characters and the 'toe in the water' of creating a multiverse and predates the proper first 'Elric' by a few years. The 'Runestaff' series were written by a young Moorcock in the late 60's with his deliberate choice of a German-born character in a post-nuclear apocalypse Europe. If anything, Moorcock was creating Elric and Hawkmoon side-by-side in many respects.

This omnibus version has an introduction by Moorcock himself explaining that in this edition he wanted to bring the series into one collection for the first time with little editing done beyond technical tightening. As Moorcock says himself, these books reflect a youthful desire to write science fantasy books that are enjoyable to read - like a good pop song. They weren't intended to provide the moral uncertainty of Elric. If anything, Hawkmoon is the straight-up hero of yore. There are elements of doubt and uncertainty in the character but they are never fully resolved or determined.

'The History of the Runestaff' is a good fast read for the beach, the backyard hammock or couch. By the third book, you begin to wonder how Hawkmoon hasn't died yet by a thousand cuts but then again these are fantasy novels.

Don't let the simplicity of the characters sour you on reading 'The History of the Runestaff' but think of this omnibus edition as the large plate of loaded nachos you ate by yourself in guilty pleasure.

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### **R says**

I like it, it's a pity I didn't read it when I was 12...

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### **Milan says**

Ocena za knjigu i po, odnosno nekih 210 stranica, dalje jednostavno ne mogu. Naivno do bola, sa zapletima koji su na momente toliko glupi da me je bio blam šta ja ?itam. Ali bar ima ok ideja, zato ova dvoj?ica.

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### **David Webb says**

I wish to address some complaints at the alleged lack of moral ambiguity in the Hawkmoon stories. It is my impression that those complaining feel that the stories lack of moral ambiguity makes them inferior to Moorcock's stories about Elric or other chataters. There is the oft-heard complaint that Hawkmoon is lacking in shades of gray or that it is too "black-and-white." These stories are denigrated for being too "simplistic" in

their representation of the conflict between good and evil.

I agree with those statements in that the difference between good and evil as represented in these stories is fairly stark, clear-cut, and unambiguous. I differ with those who contend that this makes them inferior to Moorcock's stories that possess greater moral gray-zones. I also dislike the implication, made by some, that those who prefer stories where the distinction between "good" and "evil" is more clearly defined lack intelligence, sophistication or subtlety.

Quite frequently in life, the conflict between good and evil actually is as simple and straight forward as it is represented as being in the Hawkmoon stories. Sometimes in life, there really is no moral ambiguity in a conflict.

I am frankly surprised that people think it strange that someone who was born during the year when WWII began would write even one storyline in which there is no moral ambiguity to the conflict and the distinction between the moral stance of the conflict's participants is very clear and straight forward. Is it possible that these critics can see no parallel between the maniacally destructive behavior of the nobles of Granbretan and the actions of the leaders of the Nazi Third Reich?

The Nazi Reich is by no means the only example of a group of people whose behavior is wantonly and unambiguously evil. Tell me, where is there any moral ambiguity what-so-ever in the recent murder of 9 innocent people who were simply attending a midweek Bible study group? The reason for their murder is completely unambiguous. The murderer himself has explained it: he hated them for having dark-colored skin. How is there any moral ambiguity in that? Where is this moral gray area that it's claimed must be present for a story to be realistic?

What about the arson of 6 six black churches in the southern United States? (Specifically in states of the defunked Confederacy) Is there really any doubt as to the reason for those attacks in anyone's mind? Can you honestly point out any moral ambiguity in these acts of racist destruction and terrorism?

What of the act of capturing and enslaving other human beings? How can packing people into the dank holds of slave ships where a great many died be seen as being in any way at all morally ambiguous? Where is this moral gray zone that some feel is required for a story to be "realistic"?

Yes, there are a great many episodes in history and in current events where there is real moral ambiguity. There are human conflicts in which a gray zone is present and where it is not at all easy to determine the "right" from the "wrong" or the "good" from the "evil."

Not all human conflict is morally ambiguous though. There have been and still are conflicts where the differences between good and evil are extremely clear and distinct. If you prefer stories in which there is moral ambiguity, that's perfectly fine. In that case simply restrict your reading of Moorcock's stories to Elric or von Beck. Do not, however, imagine that this preference makes you more intelligent or sophisticated than those who enjoy stories of more clearly defined moral conflicts such as are presented in Hawkmoon. It does not. One of the things that I personally like best about Moorcock's writing is that he acknowledges the reality of both morally ambiguous and unambiguous conflicts.

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**Arsenovic Nikola says**

Ovu sam knjigu procitao kao tinejdžer i tad je ostavila veliki utisak na mene. Zbog toga sam je ponovo procitao. Medutim utisak je drugačiji. Ovo je ok knjiga ski ipak dosta prazna i plitka uprkos velikom broju stranica. U svakom slučaju nije za više od 3 zvezdice i to možda zahvaljujući se anju na prvo čitanje. Preporuka za čitaoce koji tek počinju sa čitanjem njima će biti dobra a za one koji su stariji i koji su pročitali dosta knjiga bolje da zaobidju ovo delo.

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### **Nyree says**

OMG - this was awful. Note to self - read with caution book recommended by husband.

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### **Mike (the Paladin) says**

To say anymore than that it's great and I loved it would require another spoiler warning, so I won't I suppose. I'll just say that some will think that again the writing is a little weaker than in the Elric stories, but I don't think so. It's a bit more abrupt, a bit more plot driven, but it's one of my favorites. It's also still a somewhat "light" page turner (at least in some ways. There is depth, but it doesn't jump out at you) as are most of the Eternal Champion Cycle.

The 5 star here is again based on my personal enjoyment of the books", Hawkmoon is my favorite incarnation of the Eternal Champion. There are books By Mr. Moorcock that (for me) range from 5 stars to 1 star. As I said, my personal favorite incarnation of the Eternal Champion character.

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### **Tristan says**

I'm not sure I have ever read anything more exactly what it is than Michael Moorcock's *The History of the Runestaff*, an omnibus edition of his first Hawkmoon cycle in his Eternal Champion Multiverse. These four short novels tell the story of Duke Dorian Hawkmoon fighting against the Dark Empire of Granbretan (Great Britain) in a far-future, post-nuclear apocalypse sword-and-sorcery setting and there is just enough overwroughtness to be enjoyable without there being too much for the novel to work. For example, here is a bit from the very beginning of *The Jewel in the Skull*:

Count Brass, Lord Guardian of the Kamarg, rode out on a horned horse one morning to inspect his territories. He rode until he came to a little hill, on the top of which stood a ruin of immense age. It was the ruin of a Gothic church, and its walls of thick stone were smooth with the passing of winds and rains. Ivy clad much of it, and the ivy was of the flowering sort so that at this season purple and amber blossoms filled the dark windows, an excellent substitute for the stained glass that had once decorated them.

On his rides, Count Brass always came to the ruin. He felt a kind of fellowship with it, for, like him, it was old; like him, it had survived much turmoil, and, like him, it seemed to have been strengthened rather than weakened by the ravages of time.

The whole thing feels like this, with the far-future setting signaled by comments like "The Kamarg was in what used to be France," the calling of the far east Asiacommunista, and details like the city of Narleen, with

the walled city within it of Starvel, located on a river in the mysterious Amarehk.

This was not a perfect book by any stretch of the imagination. The female characters were decidedly underdeveloped, although Yisselda gets a bit of extra characterization during *The Runestaff* and the world and characters both seemed to exist for the purposes of the plot, with large swathes of the world-building left totally unexplained and seemingly a bit haphazard as it produces plot episodes. It was, however, a fun read with a good adventure and the required eventual victory of good over evil and balance over imbalance. (A particularly interesting issue, since that balance looks in many ways like the victory of Law over Chaos, but from what little of his other work I have read--none of it recently--I suspect that is not actually quite the case). I would recommend this book, but would also be aware that it doesn't break much out of the classic-fantasy-adventure mode in terms of structure and characterization and that should be known before picking it up.

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### **João Batista says**

4 books in 1, so it will be a long review...

**THE JEWEL IN THE SKULL**- Book One: The introduction of Count Brass and a terrible fight against a baragoon, in a world with horned horses, giant flamingos, and the Dark Empire of Granbretan, cruel, insane and depraved. Mentions of the Runestaff, said to contain all secrets of Destiny.

Book Two: Dorian Hawkmoon finally enters the story, who seems detached from the world around him/ emotionless, maybe mutilated by the Empire. After his awakening, he is told of a way to remove the Jewel in the Skull... Whose idea was that of ornithopters, Moorcock's or Frank Herbert's?

Book Three: The hilarious encounter with Oladahn, kin of giants... but not that with Agonosvos and his freak caravan. Dorian and his companion are helped by a mysterious warrior on their way to Persia, to find the sorcerer Malagigi; and once there, they'll have to fight the Empire on the city of Hamadan (!).

**THE MAD GOD'S AMULET** - Book One: A predicament opens up this book as another antagonist enters the story. Helped by wraith-people, the pair will face many dangers to rid the East of the Empire, or try to. On their way back to the Kamarg, they first hear of the Mad God.

Book Two: Again the Warrior in Jet and Gold: what is his purpose? Finally, within the mad God's castle, Hawkmoon is called Champion. Is the Red Amulet infused with Arioch's power and bloodlust? Betrayal! Is Hawkmoon to be betrayed all over the world? Even betrayed, but back at Castle Brass, can they defeat the Dark Empire? A quote: "I have a fear of Germans." [a god said]

**THE SWORD OF THE DAWN** - Book One: Someone from outside is found at the Kamarg of Limbo, and emissaries from Asiacommunista visiting the Empire. Chapter 12 proved as an example of true expert writer's revelation. Hawkmoon has finally found someone who tells him of his destiny and the Runestaff.

Book Two: Stranded in a completely strange place-time, D'Averc and Hawkmoon face horrific experiences. Now they know how to find the so-called Sword, but can they have it? Amarehk (!) is where they are. "Dark shapes moving in the deep pool of blood."

**THE RUNESTAFF** - Book One: Intrigues in the Empire and Hawkmoon trying to change his destiny. Moorcock's preference for J.C.; and was his intention for Dnark to look like another Tanelorn? The Runestaff is finally found but a stalemate is enacted.

Book Two: Schemes and plots from every corner of the Court. So, the supreme treason and Castle Brass planning to fight the Empire, not suspecting a dire surprise!

Book Three: The Empire accomplished to make Castle Brass fight to the end, this time. How can 500 warriors face hundreds of thousands? With the help of strange gifts and brave allies. "The world does not

change, Dorian Hawkmoon."

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**Jeroen Van de Crommenacker says**

Another book that I was so keen to like but that unfortunately fell a bit short for me.

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