



The Shadows of God

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"INVENTIVE AND EXCITING, FILLED WITH CLEVER DETAILS AND HIGH ADVENTURE, this brings to a close a sequence that seems likely to establish Keyes as one of the more significant and original new fantasy writers to appear in recent years."

- "Science Fiction Chronicle"

As the ruthless forces of Russia lay waste to the New World, English troops make landfall in the east, determined to reconquer the colonies. Trapped in between are the Native Americans, ex-slaves, and European refugees, led by Benjamin Franklin and the Choctaw shaman Red Shoes. But the balance of power rests with the French woman Adrienne de Montchevreuil, whose grasp of science is the equal of Franklin's, whose magic may be stronger than the Choctaw, and whose shocking secret may call into question where her true allegiances lie. . . .

The Shadows of God Details

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Kathi says

For the most part, I thought this was a satisfying conclusion to the series, although I'm still not exactly sure what happened, especially to Red Shoes.

I have not read a lot of alternate history-type books and I kept trying to fit the alternate history with actual history--which obviously, doesn't work very well. No fault of the author or the story, just my perspective.

I kept thinking this series would make a good movie--then I could see all the inventions (and the malakim) that I sometimes had trouble imagining.

I'll be interested to read some of the fantasy books Keyes has written and see how they compare to this series.

Wench says

I actually finished this three days ago, and I have had a hard time with my feels about it. On the one hand, it's a hell of a story. On the other, there's a lot of RAH RAH AMERICA, only three major female characters and one is off-screen the entire time, a minor female character gets fridged, ho wow is there racism (some "well accurate attitudes for 1720 and some hi the author has internalized racism), and really none of the women get treated very well, and just... hmmm. HMMMM.

Marijan says

naravno da pri? a ima rupa, i istina da je kraj malo mutan i nejasan, al je pri? a toliko brzog ritma i tako puna preokreta, da preporu? am svakom tko voli ovu 'povijesnu fantastiku' ili kako bi to ve? nazvao

Adysnewbox says

A big, wild, somewhat messy conclusion to a mostly-pretty-fun alternative history series. There's something sublimely silly in a tale where Benjamin Franklin hijacks submarines, dodges death rays, and zaps demon robots with electricity (HA!).

I think the book plays it a LITTLE safe. ****MILD SPOILER**** This may sound morbid, but given the stakes of the story, too many of the main characters survive! I can think off the top of my head of at least two or three characters that, by all rights, should have died, given the grave danger they were in. Saving just about everyone at the end robs all the chaos of its weight and makes the book feel a bit "wimpy."

But that's my major complaint, and it's mostly a nit-pick. Most of the characters get Awesome Hero Moments that were worth waiting four books for. Most action scenes are genuinely exciting and pretty easy

to understand. The conclusion of the final conflict is actually a little vague and confusing: sci-fi/fantasy fans who love detailed explanations of magic systems may feel ripped off. I didn't mind it because the character's reactions to the climax feel genuine, and their knowledge remains roughly at the level it was already at. So the ending may not work for EVERYBODY, but it worked for me just fine.

The Age Of Unreason books aren't going to change the world or raise the standard of speculative fiction, but they are all fun to read, and "The Shadows Of God" is no exception. I may never read the series again, but I will always be glad I took the time to read them. It was a fun ride.

Artorius Rex says

I'm ready for it to be over. Two books in it was OK, but after the last two books I'm ready for it to stop.

This series of books declined in interest and focus after the second book. The only thing I can be glad of is that the remaining loose ends were cleaned up, just not via an enjoyable journey.

Bax says

Suffers from Series Fatigue- not quite up to the high standard of the earlier books.

Nicolas says

Après trois tomes de destructions massives, que pouvait-on encore espérer d'un auteur souhaitant terminer avec style son épopée ? Personnellement, j'aurais apprécié une conclusion aussi inattendue que certaines prémices de ce pavé. Malheureusement, il semble cette fois-ci que Keyes, contrairement à certains personnages de son récit, ait épuisé toute sa chance et en soit réduit aux vieilles recettes de la bataille finale(1). Et c'est bien malheureux, après toute l'inventivité déployée dans les tomes précédents, de voir tout ça se résoudre, d'une part à une bataille pour sauver New Paris(2), et d'autre part en un affrontement mystique entre deux des personnages les plus intéressants de ce récit. Quelque part, j'aurais dû m'y attendre. Le premier tome était en effet trop écrasant pour permettre à des suites de s'épanouir sereinement. C'est en fait une formidable leçon à tous les apprentis auteurs de la Terre : on peut écrire avec style (ce qui est le cas ici(3)), disposer d'une idée et d'un univers très "crédible"(4), avoir sous la main des personnages tout à fait fascinants (de Benjamin Franklin à Red Shoes en passant par un fascinant Tsar Pierre de Russie), et pourtant gâcher ce formidable matériau par ce que j'appellerais une "apothéose précoce" qui fait de tout le cycle une espèce de petite mort littéraire particulièrement pathétique parce que pas mauvaise en soi, mais cachée dans l'ombre d'un titanesque premier tome. Donc voilà, l'âge de la déraison, c'est bien ça, déraisonnablement long. Et j'en suis particulièrement déçu, même si ça peut paraître difficile à croire.

(1) Facilement, on peut faire remonter ça au Seigneur des Anneaux. Toutefois, je me souviens avoir entendu quelqu'un m'expliquer que ça fait partie de l'imaginaire anglo-saxon, puisqu'on retrouve également le concept de la bataille finale dans tous les films d'action, puisque ça semble venir tout droit des légendes Vikings, ou autres nordiques, avec le Valhalla et l'ultime bataille du bien contre le mal (Aaaah ! Sors de ce corps, Dubbya !).

(2) que le traducteur aurait été inspiré de traduire en "Nouvelle Paris"

(3) même si les transitions entre les multiples personnages deviennent à un moment vraiment agaçantes quand le lecteur est obligé de passer en plein chapitre, et presque en plein paragraphe, de l'un à l'autre.
(4) Il faut en effet une bonne dose de suspension of disbelief pour accepter l'idée initiale de l'Ether comme paradigme scientifique de base. Mais ça, c'est fait dans le formidable premier tome.

Violetta says

I finally finished the series! I think I liked this one the best of the four, since we finally had answers to so many questions. It also featured the most action of any of them, and didn't spend so much time digressing in random alchemical or theological debate (he had three books to clear up that mess).

Andy says

A fitting end to the series.

Although end result was predictable, how it happened, imho, wasn't.

The action moved forwards at a good pace.

Overall a good read, enjoyed it.

Robert Negut says

This book is just a maelstrom. It brings the whole series together, all the characters together, for one fight, one purpose, one deciding moment. There are still far too many lucky coincidences, far too many characters survive when they shouldn't have, too many things happen that shouldn't happen, the writing still isn't as good as it should be... But there comes a moment when none of that matters anymore, when you see how everything comes together and are drawn inside that maelstrom yourself. The ending may be something of a disappointment for some, myself included, but... One hell of a ride. One hell of a ride.

Connie Fogg-Bouchard says

tuning in for the end

all of the players are gathered in one place and the music, out of tune as it may be, is calling to everyone. the malakim have at last put their destructive plan into motion, ensnaring Adrienne, her son, Nico, Ben and Red Shoes. the battle for the New World is nothing more than an attempt to cover up their plans for ending mankind. if God is not with them, how can they survive?

the close of this quartet is full of fun surprises. it is a triumphant flourish both happy and sad. this was a fantastic series that i've read more than once and shall continue to read

Joel Flank says

The conclusion to the Age of Unreason picks up immediately after the events of book 3. The angelic forces of the malakim have assembled a massive army that's sweeping across North America, destroying all in its path or recruiting those who will fight for them. They also are armed with a new weapon in the pseudo-scientific war against humanity, engines that will let the most powerful malakim to take a physical form, literally obliterating all life in their path.

Against this, the meager forces of the Americas are led by Benjamin Franklin and his allies, as they try to hold a fragile alliance together to fight a hopeless battle. The forces against them have beat them to the court of New France, and winning over their last possible redoubt and haven might be over before it's begun. Fortunately, Ben's combination of tenacity, earnestness, clever wit, and diplomacy have pulled him out of tight spots before. This time, can he pull another scientific miracle out of his hat, even while his life's work and marriage are in shambles?

In other fronts, Adreinne is seeking to catch up with the army that she in part was responsible for, trying to discover a way to stop the malakim, the deposed Tsar Peter is looking to reclaim his empire, and Red Shoes has undergone a monstrous transformation as he wrestles with beings of great power from the spirit world.

Will all these events converging, Ben Franklin will have to change the very nature of reality to fight for humanity's survival.

Eli says

The Age of Unreason concluded much as I thought it would, but it was thoroughly enjoyable just the same. The series would probably have been better with a little tightening up to make a trilogy, but the pace and length of the series overall were fine.

Arnoud Visser says

Quite a final

Ron says

“It is a short step from having a djinn who serves you to having a god you must beg for favors.”

Keyes redeemed himself with this series-closing story. His particular alternate history was closed in both a satisfying and a consistent way. Good storytelling. (Readers not inclined to read all four books of this series won't miss much by reading one and four.)

“... as unaware as a pen of what it writes on the page.”

Inevitably this series will be compared with Eric Flint's sprawling alternate universe which opens with 1632. The premise of this series works better and is developed more logically. Both are exercises in imagining "what if".

"If you are no magician, how will you kill him?" "Carefully, Tsar, carefully."

Quibbles Muskets are not that accurate, no matter who is shooting them. Black powder smoke is white.

"All my old selves follow me as ghosts."
