



The Road to Hell

David Weber, Joelle Presby

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Entry #3 in the popular Hell's Gate series by 28 times *New York Times* best-selling author David Weber and Joelle Presby.

The war between magically-gifted Arcana and psionically talented Sharona continues to rage. The dragon-borne Arcanan assault across five universes has been halted at Fort Salby by a desperate defense, but at atrocious cost. One of those costs was the life of Crown Prince Janaki, heir to the newly created Sharonian Empire, who went knowingly to his death in the tradition expected of the House of Calirath. And another price will be the sacrifice of his younger sister, Grand Imperial Princess Andrin, now heir of Sharona, for the accords creating the Sharonian Empire require the marriage of the heir to the Crown to wed a Uromathian prince.

Andrin bears her family's Talent, the Glimpses, which show flashes of events yet to come. She knows the accords must be secured . . . and like her brother, she will pay any price, make any sacrifice for her duty to her people.

Sharona's soldiers dig in, facing the Arcanans in a tense standoff which cannot last long. Both sides continue rushing reinforcements towards the front, but how do armies fight wars when they can reach one another only through the portals which join the universes? And far, far behind the front, carried by dragons, a young Voice name Shaylar and her husband Jathmar hurtle deeper and deeper into Arcanan captivity, their only protection the fierce personal honor of the Andaran officer whose men massacred all of their companions in the horrendous misunderstanding which began the entire conflict.

Men and women of honor on both sides must grapple with the terrible costs and deadly secrets of the spreading cataclysm, and in the shadows, those who will balk at neither treason nor murder drive the conspiracies which pour fuel into the furnace. The stakes are high and the pieces are in motion, but there are factors known not even to the conspirators and not even a Calirath can Glimpse the final outcome.

The Hell's Gate Series:

The Road to Hell

Hell Hath No Fury

Hell's Gate

About the Hell's Gate series:

"Magic and high tech collide in this exciting military SF novel from bestseller Weber . . . The authors treat both societies sympathetically and realistically, with human vices and virtues evenly distributed."—*Publishers Weekly*

About the Honor Harrington series:

"Weber combines realistic, engaging characters with intelligent technological projection and a deep understanding of military bureaucracy in this long-awaited Honor Harrington novel...Fans of this venerable space opera will rejoice to see Honor back in action."—*Publishers Weekly*

"... everything you could want in a heroine Excellent ... plenty of action."—*Science Fiction Age*

“Brilliant! Brilliant! Brilliant!”—Anne McCaffrey

“Compelling combat combined with engaging characters for a great space opera adventure.”—*Locus*

“Weber combines realistic, engaging characters with intelligent technological projection . . . Fans of this venerable space opera will rejoice . . .”—*Publishers Weekly*

The Road to Hell Details

Date : Published March 1st 2016 by Baen (first published February 16th 2016)

ISBN : 9781476780672

Author : David Weber , Joelle Presby

Format : Hardcover 720 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Science Fiction, Fiction, War, Military Fiction

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From Reader Review The Road to Hell for online ebook

Brandon Bourn says

What happens when a civilization based on telepathy encounters one based on Magic? This fascinating plot line took a pretty serious hit when Linda Evans dropped out, but I still recommend it for those who have fallen for the first two books in the series. You can actually SEE the new author Joelle Presby getting better at writing as the book progresses. The book starts out very pedantic, and falls short in character development as well as utilizing definitions of "good & evil" that are woefully lacking in a plot so ripe for investigating the complexities of humanities character, both societal and personal. Nonetheless, the book is rescued by David Webers tried and true brand of science fiction that never ceases to amaze and entrance the reader.

Hopefully Joelle will continue to grow as a writer, and make the next installment even more enjoyable, without falling into the age-old trap of never-ending installments that David Weber is famous for (i.e. the Safehold series).

Leons1701 says

We waited 10 years for this? Weber's weaknesses as an author are on full display here, too much infodumping, not enough actually moving the plot, ridiculously over done foreshadowing, too many minor characters nobody gives a damn about but we're getting a full description of them anyhow (this may be one of the few times I agree with the common complaint about names) and surprised declarations of how important something is that will never be mentioned again in this book. I suppose it could count as a cliffhanger, if it didn't happen halfway through the book. There are some good points, Weber still writes an excellent action scene (this book just needed a few more of them) and does a pretty good job with good people who are stuck on the wrong side (the actual villains are cardboard though).

Not a terrible read, but not something I'd recommend to anyone who isn't a pretty hardcore Weber fan.

Liviu says

Finished my 2nd read of the novel so I will add a few thoughts; first for an overview of the series, here is my review of Hell's gate:

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

- Despite the 8 year hiatus and a change of co-author, the novel (RTH for short) fits naturally and smoothly in the series, starting where HHNF (book 2 Hell Hath No Fury) ends and carrying the story to a good stopping point, not unlike the one of HG (first book Hell's gate) except that now it is from the opposite side; some story-lines are finalized (Andrin's marriage, Jasak's trial) though of course only to continue in new ways, new story-lines are introduced, reunions happen, new talents and magic appear (the Djinn are among the most interesting, but I really liked the three headed Sea Drakes and the Sharonan cetaceans, most notably the Orcas and Tooth Cleaver in particular)

- there is little warfare per se (the cover is accurately representing the main such), but as mentioned the ending being the analog of HG's one presages lots such in the next volume
- this being an e-arc (currently available to buy on baen's website so not restricted to reviewers, while the book will be officially out in March) there are the usual typos and such, though the most notable was an Arcanan reference to saints which is something that should be obviously edited, but nothing truly annoying or out of the ordinary - the final book may or may not have a glossary/character list (the e-arc doesn't), but the portal map is useful and enough if you are up-to-date with books 1/2 which is a must as this one is another chapter in the saga as mentioned
- no real "jaw dropping surprise" moment, a few sentimentalisms and a few fairly predictable story-lines, but a few 'wow' sfnal moments (most notably, the first look at Portalis, the two universe capital of Arcana which is a 22nd century city with skyscrapers, aerial transport, all based on industrial magic and no technology as we understand it), while the new mechanized Sharonian advanced strike force (which is in a some ways at a WW1 tech base though with the psy powers adding a big multiplier in communications and such), is so different and still so naturally fitting...
- more or less everyone from the books so far (and surviving) appears or is mentioned, while new interesting characters are also introduced, so in that way there is a massive expansion which i actually liked, though it leaves pretty much everyone with few pages here and there
- overall - high expectations and a book that delivers what i expected and fits perfectly despite the long delay within a series that has huge potential due to its superb (and ingenious) world-building, with great characters, lots of mysteries and potential of expansion in so many ways; a book4 seems to be guaranteed with some closure and then of course one hopes the series does well enough to allow the promised expansion to more volumes and more universes; highly recommended as a complex series with lots of interesting characters, civilizations and world building

Michael says

This is the third book in the Hell's Gate series by David Weber. This one is also co-written by Joelle Presby. It has been a long wait for this book as the first two were released in 2008. This book is what I would call Science Fiction/Fantasy. It has two different races of humans from two different universe's traveling from one universe to the next by the way of naturally occurring portals. One group, the Sharonians, have steam power and a large percent of their people have , "Talents", which amount to mental powers of various types. The other race, the Arcanains, have , "Gifts", which let them control magic. Their entire technology is depend on this magic. They both have parties out exploring the different universes, which have planets near identical to their home worlds but with one exception, they have never found other humans, until now. They accidentally run into each other while exploring the same universe. A misunderstanding and an accidental killing starts a conflict which quickly escalates into open warfare. This book has a myriad of characters who are brought to life by the excellent writing of David Weber and Joelle Presby. I highly recommend this book and this series to fans of David Weber. Also the next book in the series is reportedly already in the works, so we shouldn't have another 8 year wait. :)

Tim says

I really like David Weber and have read almost all of his books. This book could have used some thinning, maybe up to a third of the book. So many of the words did so little to move the story forward. I finished the book (all 600+ hard cover pages of it) but it was a real slogging read. Otherwise it would have been a 4 star review.

M.L. says

I'm glad the story picks up and things progress more rapidly. However, like all Weber books, there are certain chapters that deal with such useless minutiae and minor logistical concerns that I was forced to skimmed over them. Another thing that disappointed me in this book is that the political opposition of both sides are unambiguously portrayed as evil. Some nuance would have been better.

Alex says

The continuing tale of these two distinct empires examines how fear leads to war even when the wiser course may be peace. A few startlingly well done characters really bring this tale to the fore

Jonathan Scotese says

I'm not a fan of David Webers writing style. I find it too slow and with details other people clearly appreciate, but which just gets in the way of the meat of the story. I like his ideas, and have been waiting for a conclusion to this series for a while. This isn't it, but it looks like the ball is rolling again.

James says

I like the magic versus technology theme but the heroes and villains are so black and white. It also ends on a cliffhanger which given the last book was written nine years ago, is annoying. You must read the previous books, it cannot be read as a standalone.

William Bentrim says

The Road to Hell by David Weber and Joelle Presby

This is book three of the Multiverse series, Book two which I reviewed back in 2010 was Hell Hath No Fury by David Weber and Linda Evans. Evan's and Weber's portrayal of two unique civilizations on a road to

conflict progressed to the actual conflict itself. This book deals with the aftermath of the initial confrontation. Arcana base magic technology challenges Sharona's psychic talents and their science based technology. The multi-universal aspect is that both civilizations have discovered portal to alternate earths that have no populations until they confront each other. My review back in 2010 closed with a concern that the series might never be finished. David Weber made it pretty clear six years ago that a third book was not on his calendar. Seeing his name on this book and not Linda Evans make me wonder if she was the stumbling block or Weber was. Regardless it was a well done book but... since it was six years since the 2nd volume it was really hard to get up to speed. I read a lot of books and in six years I have read an average of 100 books a year of scifi/fantasy and a like number of general literature. So I had a lot of trouble getting up to speed on the story.

Since the last review was six years ago, I will indulge in some repetition.

David Weber and Linda Evans do a superb job in describing two dissimilar cultures and those cultures' idiosyncrasies. As they alternate back and forth from culture to culture you find your sympathies vacillating as well. The beauty of their work is that you truly find things that are both laudable and stimulating for each culture. They are being drawn into conflict by serendipitous contacts and malicious behavior in spite of their root similarities.

The contrast of opposing technologies is interesting. What makes the book great is the emotional undertones. The ability to evoke strong emotions regarding the characters is rare. I cared for Emperor on Sharona and his family and loathed the Arcana villains.

This book adds a laudable Duke of Arcana and some thoroughly despicable Sharona villains.

This was an excellent follow up to book 2 and I have no idea if a future book is in the works. There may something worse than a woman scorned and that is a deeply involved reader scorned which is how I felt six years ago.

I recommend the book.

websites: <http://www.davidweber.net/>
<http://joellepresby.com/index.html>

Scott Holstad says

Wow, what an awesome book! It was so worth the wait. The Road to Hell is the third book in the Multiverse series, a series that began in 2006 by David Weber and Linda Evans. The next book was published in 2008, I believe, and stopped. Word got out that Weber's collaborator's health was poor, so the series was put on hold indefinitely. People lost hope for a new entry in the series, which would have been a disappointment because the first two books were so compelling. And now, as of March 1st of this year, Weber and a new collaborator, Joelle Presby, have finally put out the third book. Geez, it's good. Just what I needed after how badly things had gone for the good guys in the first two books.

The war between magically-gifted Arcana, the "bad" guys, and psionically talented Sharona, the "good" guys, continues to rage. The dragon-borne Arcanan assault across five universes has been halted at Fort

Salby by an extremely desperate defense, but at a horrible cost. Prince Janaki, heir to the Sharonian Empire, went knowingly to his death in defense of the empire. It was critical to stop the Arcanans because they were torturing and executing their Sharonian prisoners, especially the "Voices," or telepath communicators used by the military and civilian commands to communicate from universe to universe. For weeks, no one had known there even WAS an invasion because no one had heard anything from any Voices. They were all dead. Fort Salby stopped that. And I, and probably all of the other readers, wanted vengeance. Demanded it. And we started getting it in this book. 'Bout damn time too! While the defenders held the pass at Fort Salby, the newly mechanized Sharonian advanced strike force, went through other universes traveling thousands of miles over the course of three months to take back all but one of the universes and their forts, all without alerting the Arcanan army. Sweet.

We also see the sacrifice, it seems, of Janaki's younger sister, Princess Andrin, now heir of Sharona, to be wed to a Uromathian prince in order to establish the new Sharonian Empire. But no one wants that except for the Uromathian emperor and his sons. Wait until you find out how Andrin and her advisers solve this puzzle!

Another major part of the story line in this book is the trial of the "good" Arcanan, Jasak, a court martial, where he is defended by his new fiancé and his two Sharonian prisoners he has taken in as family members. I was worried about this court martial for three straight books. It's finally here.

Of course, since it's part of an ongoing series (I hope it's ongoing again), the authors had to stop at a critical point where I had to know what happens next, just so I'll buy the next book that comes out, damn them, but I can't wait until the next one and it'll be a long time. I'll probably reread the series a couple of times before it arrives on the shelves.

I loved this book. It had mystery, intrigue, sci fi/fantasy elements, character development, action, passion, tactics, etc. In short, just what you want out of a book. Very recommended, particularly if you're reading the series. Five stars.

MAB LongBeach says

The continuation of the Hell's Gate series begun in 2006 by Weber and Linda Evans. After two books, the series seemed to have been abandoned; now, nine years later, it continues with a different coauthor, Joelle Presby.

Multiple almost-identical universes are connected by a series of portals connecting disparate spots on the planets. Both the Sharonans and the Arcanans have been exploring their nearby universes for hundreds of years. When they meet, a bitter war breaks out, fueled by misunderstandings and malice on both sides. Many Sharonans have psychic Talents, including a kind of telepathy that can broadcast news very quickly across the multiverses; they have reached a roughly Victorian tech level, with steam trains and rifles and cannon. Arcana, on the other hand, relies heavily on magic and uses dragons and spells in warcraft. The collision of the two is horrific to both sides.

This is very much a middle book. When "The Road to Hell" begins, the war has paused in the aftermath of a major battle. Both sides are being whipped to a fever pitch by their losses and by inflammatory reports from the front. There is very little actual fighting in this book, but a lot of maneuvering both military and political. The Sharonans and the Arcanans both have deep divisions in their societies that affect their responses to the

war and may yet rip their empires apart.

Recommended for those who enjoyed the first two books--and the series as a whole is recommended for those who like military fantasy in general and/or Weber in particular--but this is not the place to start. Hopefully the series will continue--without another nine-year hiatus--and hopefully it will come to a conclusion at some point.

Dan says

I waited years for another book in this awesome series. It was so worth the wait. What a great read!

Kevin Brown says

The largest portion of this novel deals with the logistics of crossing large swaths of land. Which unfortunately detracts from the story rather than building up the universe. Those large sections drag the narrative down in an otherwise good story.

Grant says

Magic vs. psychic powers (plus steam power) continues. The characters remain compelling, and the saga clearly isn't over.
