



Guardians of the Flame: The Warriors

Joel Rosenberg

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Science Fiction Book Club omnibus containing the first three books in the series: The Sleeping Dragon, The Sword and the Chain, and The Silver Crown.

Guardians of the Flame: The Warriors Details


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Author : Joel Rosenberg

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Elizabeth says

As someone who enjoys fantasy roleplaying games, I enjoyed reading this anthology, which contains the first three books in *The Guardians of the Flame* series. I definitely thought of some of my fellow roleplayers with some of the things which went on, and I'm definitely planning to get the next book in the series because I want to know more of what's going on with some of the more powerful characters and what's going to happen with the main characters - Rosenberg gives you intriguing glimpses, but he's definitely left questions in my mind after reading the first three books.

Nancy says

Hoo boy. Okay, so the only way to get this for Kindle is to get the first three books, and let me tell you, one was quite enough. Ugly, ugly attitudes towards women, and worse, in a way where I suspect the author thought he was being progressive. That was hard to get past. The rest of it is also not great, about a gaming group whose GM, who is also their professor, has them sucked into their game world. So, yeah, we're talking a lot to overcome, here.

Allen says

if u plan on reading this book, plan on a long read, there are 10 books total in this series but the 10th book does end with everything working out. now on with my review. great 1st 3 books of the flames series. the last book the author doesnt quite finish the tale but doesnt leave u hanging either if that makes any sense so u will need to read the 4th book in the series to know how the full story goes. its a fast paced read. once u start reading it u wont want to put the book down. lots of action in all 3 books. its a balance of dialog and description blending well together.

Steve Tetreault says

I originally read this back in middle or high school, when I was a D&D nerd, so the idea of getting sent into a D&D world as the character I played (since that was usually a big ol' barbarian) fit my personal preferences to a T. I picked it up recently to relive the old days and see how it had held up, and I have to say, it's done pretty well, all things considered. The writing itself is pretty solid, and the basic story line is interesting, with a lot of foreground elements to keep the reader in the moment, but also some bigger "long simmer" elements of the story slowly playing out over the course of the series.

Reading this story from the early 80's in 2017, there are definitely some flaws. Different parts of the story are told from different character's points of view; yet despite the fact that there are 5 main characters, two of them female, the story is only ever told from male perspectives. The females are treated pretty brutally, and usually are used to move the story forward, though they do get a little bit developed by the end of the third

book. There also seem to be a few details here and there that present some minor continuity errors, but overall, it all holds together pretty decently.

Speaking of the book, this is a collected volume that includes multiple single books collected together. This was a nice way to read the story, as all of the pieces fit together pretty well (with continuity errors, as mentioned above, excepted).

The story revolves around a core group of college students who get magically sent into a D&D-like medieval world where magic is real. As they quickly discover, what seems cool in a game is not nearly as entertaining when you have to live through it (one main character doesn't make it more than a few hours before dying horribly). In the world in which they find themselves, slavery is a going concern, and the major cities are run by self-serving wizards. The first book gets the characters (and readers) used to this world, and sets up the paradigm-breaking that the characters will attempt in later books as they try to bring freedom and science to a world that has been living under the thumb of the strongest and most ruthless.

Reading this book in 2017 was also interesting because each chapter starts with a quotation, many of which deal with the ideals of freedom, leadership, and rulers. There were more than a few I wanted to clip and share with the world at large as reminders of where we've come from, and how far we still have to go.

I have several more books in the series sitting on my shelves, so I'll probably keep going through them, though I recall the quality of the stories dropping off a bit over the course of the series. I guess we'll see how far I get!

Daniel Lofton says

There's a decades old nostalgia at work here, definitely, but I've read this compilation more time than I can remember since one summer when I was 12 or 13. I love this book and all it's self-assured smarter than the average bear folks trapped in a game world tropes.

Michael says

This book is actually the first three books of Rosenberg's "Guardians of the Flame" series combined in a single volume. I have reviewed each of them individually, based largely on my reminiscences of reading them as an adolescent. Now, I have gone through the entirety of the three of them as an adult, and I find that my impression of them is a bit different: My review of the first seems overly enthusiastic, and my review of the last seems overly harsh. In all, this is a solidly "good" fantasy series that was written very much for an audience of nerdy gamer-geeks like myself at the time, and today it fills me with a certain nostalgic satisfaction. I wish that my current players would familiarize themselves with it, because it is the kind of campaign I'm trying to run.

I had thought that these three novels were the only ones I ever read, but there's a scene "missing" from them that I recall, involving Ahira brooding in a Dwarven enclave somewhere. Probably that's from the next book, which I must have at least started at some time.

Harrison Phillips says

This was very enjoyable with well developed characters and a nice story line. It was fast paced and kept my interest. This is actually three books in one with each book separated. I especially liked the way the author was able to create the concept of having characters from our timeline and society into those of a fantasy and how he made them into dwarfs and wizards and warriors. Though they remembered where they had come from they also knew who they were in this other fantasy world. I would recommend this to anyone that likes the fantasy genre.

Uri says

Books 1 and 2 are 3.5-4 stars, but book 3 is a solid 5 star

J Wrin says

Started ok but soon wondered off into self-indulgent nonsense. Lead characters are too smug and self-satisfied. You end up not caring what happens to them because they are so unappealing. A waste of time.

Bill says

The *Guardians of the Flame* is an epicoid Fantasy I read as the SFBC omnibus editions were released in the '80s. This was my 3 reading. These are typical '80s Fantasies, not complex, good always wins, easy, quick escapist reads. They are simply fun without a lot of philosophical or moral wanderings. I fully enjoyed this 3rd read.

7 of 10 stars for the series. Book #1 of the series is the best, as usual, 7 of 10; books #2 and #3, 6 of 10 stars.

Robin says

Really fun and different book. Great fantasy tale, and it was the first 3 books of the series combined into one. I look forward to reading the rest at some point.

Jason says

It's a fantasy a lot of us sword-and-sorcery nuts have had for a while- "what would it be like if I went to the world of my game characters? I bet I'd be so awesome and kick all kinds of butt!"

Well... Karl and his friends end up finding out the hard way of just what can happen when they're all

whisked away to the supposed imaginary world of their game, in the personas of their characters, but with their own minds in them- and things quickly go from okay, to kind of good, to rather bad, and then to rather good.

This has always been one of my favorite books on my fantasy shelf- even if I usually end up skipping a hunk of the first book because of a rather disconcerting scene that was fleshed out a bit more than needed, I feel (under the spoiler, if you really want to look:

(view spoiler)

It's a rather disconcerting part of the book (even if said bunch later get exactly what's coming to them), but it might throw off a number of people.

Out of all the characters, I'd have to say that my favorite is easily Walter. Quick with a knife, even quicker with a quip, he's the one that everyone seems to go to when something needs to be done.

Each of the characters ends up being a major part, even if some of them come much later than others- Karl, Andrea, Walter, Ahira, Andrea, Doria, Louis all form a rather cohesive team, when everything is working in their favor- which it rarely does, unfortunately. (There's one more party member, Jason, who doesn't really have a lot of screentime because he manages to end up dead for doing something rather stupid).

In these three books, the story covers the first chunk of the journey- there are some really low points (the spoiled scene is about the lowest it gets), and there are some really high points, as well- and the book even starts to tackle some interesting ideas on what happens as the Other Siders (as the group tends to name itself) end up doing their damndest to implement ideas and tech from our own world (specifically things like gunpowder, electricity, and other scientific concepts meant to improve their own little slice of the world), and what happens when these ideas end up raging out of their control.

It's a rather great start to a good series, but I'd avoid recommending it to anyone under the age of maybe fourteen or so because of some intense scenes.

Bookfrog says

Excellent old school D&D style series. What sets it apart is that the characters make a moral decision to save one of their own and sacrifices are required...

The later books in the series lose some of their charm as a few of the core characters move out of the main storyline.

Great action, biting humor and endearing characters.

Joel Rosenberg's passing was a great loss. Condolences to his family and friends.

Brian says

The Guardians of the Flame: The Warriors contain the first 3 books of the series, of which I believe there are 10 total.

I first read these books many years ago and thoroughly enjoyed them as they gave a somewhat plausible explanation of the two different worlds, and had a raw gritty feel to them that I enjoyed.

Rereading them however, I had a hard time with sympathizing with the characters - the main characters seemed self indulgent and spent most of the time bullying other characters into doing what he wanted. The "takeover" of the fantasy world seemed far too easy, and despite the killing of several characters I really didn't care whether they lived or died.

The world the author built however was interesting, I particularly liked how magicians were portrayed, how spells were learned and how they couldn't be reused until learned again. So while magicians were powerful they were also limited in a significant way.

The ideas of the book, tackling of the slavery issue for example, were of a very serious nature and although I thought it admirable to write a book that addresses some of these issues, it also didn't handle them in a very compelling way.

Regardless, I enjoyed the books.

Erich Weidner says

A book clearly inspired by (early) Dungeons & Dragons the role playing game with an interesting twist.

Though it started a bit weak and I had trouble getting into it it certainly picked up and by a third to half way through had captured my interest sufficiently that I read through the last half of the book over just a few evenings.

The author tried to be faithful to some of the key tenets of D&D (character classes & levels) which though a bit amusing to see the characters in the fantasy world riding on these rails clearly illustrates that such rules systems do not well translate into telling a story or portraying a world. But for a book written in the 80's during the early years of role playing games I can forgive this and it was an enjoyable enough read. Whether I'll read more in the series is up in the air.
