



The Dark Glory War

Michael A. Stackpole

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Four young men come of age in a time of prophecy and war....

New York Times bestselling author Michael A. Stackpole is a recognized star of military fantasy. **The Dark Glory War** is a thrilling new tale set in a world threatened by an unstoppable foe....

In the sacred season of the Moon Month, four young men don the masks that herald their coming-of-age celebration, a time of testing, ritual, festival, and romance.

But for Tarrant Hawkins and his friends Leigh, Rounce, and Nay, their first test becomes a desperate struggle for survival. For they will encounter the vanguard of an invasion force poised to overrun their homeland of Oriosa, and all four will find their lives changed forever when they encounter a legendary weapon that brings its wielder invincibility. Yet the magic sword may prove more curse than blessing, signaling the arrival of a cataclysmic battle with ancient foes. And in the face of dire sorceries and terrible battles, these youths will come to manhood...or to death.

The Dark Glory War Details

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From Reader Review The Dark Glory War for online ebook

Lydia says

Tarrent Hawkins knows he is coming of age. He knows this will mean changes for him and the start to his life-path. However, on the evening of the first celebration of Tarrent and his friends' "moon month" a "normal" test takes a completely unexpected turn and ratchets up the danger. Evil creatures are discovered where they shouldn't be and soon it is realized that war is coming to the whole continent.

So the journey with Tarrent and friends is fun; the battles are harsh but interesting. The other main characters and main side characters, have some great development and even if they aren't in the story for long, are enjoyable. (Often aspects of the story reminded me of Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series, especially with how many characters there are that are important to the story, but we only really "see" from Tarrent's perspective.)

Okay, so with all of these positives so far, why only three stars? Remembering that this is the "prequel" for *The DragonCrown War* cycle, I figured there was going to be some unfinished plot / story, whatever, (though I was **really** hoping it would be like *The Hobbit* where it's still a complete story, just a minor thing that comes back to bite them eventually) but that is sadly not the case (even though it was perfectly set up for that!). The first 350 pages of story were great! I was eating it up and didn't really have a clue what was going to happen next, but the likable characters were doing a great job of taking care of each other and (mostly) staying alive. Then the last 50 pages happened... With a drastic change of tone (view spoiler) and a very incomplete (and evil!) ending; stars were lost.

Content notes: Only made-up swear words if any. The hero meets / falls in love with and starts a relationship with a girl he meets on his travels; though he does mention them sleeping together there is very little detail and nothing lewd. There are several battles that include medieval warfare, magic weapons and creature violence. Some descriptions of injuries or kills, mostly lopping off of heads / limbs or slashes through chest / throat, but no gruesome details.

Dev Null says

Pretty stock standard epic fantasy. Nothing terrible about most of it, and a couple of nice culture touches like the masks. But the ending was terrible; our heroes inexplicably ditch their army and go trapsing into Moria on their own (ok, its not actually called Moria, but it might as well have been) where they get their butts kicked because the badguys did not inexplicably leave their army at home. Surprise! And then the book waffles on for another 50 pages or so before finally curling up to whimper in a corner.

There's a strange pacing problem here too, where the most verbiage gets spent on bits that don't appear to be particularly important to the story, and then some of the bits that are important feel a bit rushed. For example, towards the end we get a paragraph or two that says something like "I trekked across the snow for a couple of weeks, hiding from pursuers and nearly empty-handed, before I was finally rescued." What a perfect opportunity to make us feel his desperation in this amazing battle against the elements and his hunters, but instead we get this kind of casual offhand mention of it from after the fact. And then we get details about his ride home that we couldn't possibly care about.

T J says

This is a coming of age story of Tarrant Hawkins and his friends. Destiny was set for these young men if they only knew it. A chance encounter on their first test becomes a desperate struggle for survival, for they have ran into the vanguard of an invasion force. This story has excitement, mystery and magic. If you are new to the DragonCrown War series this is the one you want to start with.

Shari Mulluane says

My review is here:

[Full Review](#)

Navessa says

Buddy read with Ange, Brandi, Cathryn, Kathy, Khanh, JennyJen, Rashika, and Sarah.

Angela says

Buddy read with Cory, Jenny, Sarah, Brandi, Khanh, Rashika, Loki, Shelby, and Kathylill

Justin says

I had such high hopes for this one. I'm a Michael Stackpole fan, and while I know he's not perfect, I've enjoyed his previous novels quite a bit. In fact, his novel *Talion: Revenant* was my introduction to the world of fantasy fiction. Needless to say I was eagerly awaiting the first installment in his multi-part fantasy epic the DragonCrown War. After reading his surprisingly mature *Eyes of Silver*, my expectations rose even higher.

Unfortunately Stackpole fell back into old habits with the Dark Glory War. The book, which serves as a prelude to the DragonCrown War saga, centers on a young warrior and his friends during their transition into manhood, which occurs during a monstrous invasion from an ancient enemy's forces. While *Eyes of Silver* presented characters that were complex and flawed (in short, human), the characters in the Dark Glory War are 2-dimensional and quite predictable. Hawkins, the main character, is the same flawless noble hero that you'll find in just about every Stackpole novel. Only the circumstances make him any different from Nolan, Locke, or even Corran Horn. The rest of the characters are simply there to fill roles in the hero's life, such as the arrogant friend, the slow but faithful friend, the shallow enemy, the exotic girlfriend, etc. The events in the book are just as predictable as the characters.

That's not to say the Dark Glory War is a bad book. It's actually pretty enjoyable in the same way a summer blockbuster movie is. It's fast-paced and there is plenty of action, as well as some very cool creatures. The Sullanciri, despite their similarities to Tolkien's Nazgul, are a particularly entertaining group. And the idea of a society where everyone wears masks to signify who they are and what they have accomplished is a neat touch. It's a fun book, but you know after reading it that the series will never come close to that George R.R. Martin or Guy Gavriel Kay level of sophistication, intelligence, and sheer quality.

If you're looking for a series that is entertaining, the DragonCrown War will no doubt satisfy. If you want something original with real substance, you're better off reading Martin or Kay.

Daniel Millard says

After enjoying a number of Stackpole's books in various worlds, I decided to take the plunge with the Dragoncrown War Cycle and started with the prequel. I don't know if this was a poor idea or not, but I am pretty encouraged on the whole.

I can see that there's been all kind of talk about the ending of this book in particular, which is almost directly at odds with the claim that this is a "typical fantasy" adventure. Being something of a fantasy connoisseur myself, I fall somewhere in the middle of both.

This is a fantasy novel that starts in an idyllic fashion with the coming of age for several young men, but quickly spirals out of control into a continent-spanning conflict against (what I will grant is sort of your typical) an evil host from the north. The young men rise in heroic fashion, generally best the evil horde, and yes, there's an all-too-obvious "hidden" antagonist.

HOWEVER, the interesting part of this book is the last fifth or so, when Tarrant leaves Nay and Leigh behind to join the small command company going north. Not having read the actual Dragoncrown War trilogy, I can't say how all of this fits into the history of those books, but I imagine that events here are somewhat intimately tied. Things get very dark and interesting in what I considered to be a despicably effective (if not totally unforeseen) plot twist, and Tarrant comes home as a traitor. I'll admit frustration at the rushed-feeling last chapter, the obliviousness of Tarrant to Prince Scrainwood's obvious venom towards him (I don't know if I've seen a more blatant self-serving antagonist in a book in some time), but I felt that it set the stage quite well for the trilogy, which I am now eager to read.

Other impressive aspects of this book included the creatures that compose the enemy's army (temeryces, gibberers, etc.) and the detail that is taken to describe them throughout. The typical halfling race (the ur'Zrethi) is given quite a twist in this series as well. If this book and the rest still abide by the most oft-prescribed tropes of the fantasy genre, then at least Stackpole knows how to switch things up a bit and write a detailed, entertaining tale with some excellent dark parts.

Alain says

Very nice but generic military-type fantasy.

As the prelude to the Dragoncrown War Cycle (trilogy), I loved the premise but not the ending, especially

the unwise & ultimately fatal decision to pursue the primary antagonist without sufficient military backing, leading to the really frustrating conclusion.

Still enjoyed it for the action, 40% of the characters (Leigh was often incredibly annoying & most characters were terribly one-dimensional; not enough depth) and some of the political & social intrigues. Resolute is my favorite & hope to see more of him.

Jason says

A prequel to the DragonCrown War. My first book by Stackpole and it certainly grabbed my attention. So much so that I will be reading a majority of his other works as I get the time. I'm already reading Fortress Draconis. What I like about his book is his attention to details on battle scenes. There is also a bit more gore to his books that brings a bit more reality to it.

Kei says

Fascinating races and cultures and... a good story.
Glad we found the second when we found the first.

Charlie says

OK - well, this is "exactly what it shows on the tin" - the character with the mask? That is a plot devise throughout this novel. And it is not an interesting one at that. I like the premise behind what the novel was trying to do, but the characters had zero qualities for me to enjoy. Again, I got sucked into a novel that everyone raves about online, but I feel that our standard of what we expect is too low these days, and we will read anything if it has a gimmick or a creature that is cool, or something without actual merit or plot device. I was sorely disappointed in this and look forward to what I can do with the money that I won't be spending on future works of Michael Stackpole.

Slattyak says

At first I thought this book was going to be lame. They wear masks and I wasn't really buying into it. The story moves at a nice pace keeping you interested in the development of the plot and characters. The ending was fantastic! Definitely non-traditional and therefore made it on my great list. I loved how politics discredits Tarrant's reputation and ultimately will leave the kingdom doomed in the future. Highly enjoyable. I tip my hat to Michael Stackpole and will read more by this guy!

Eric Moreno says

A light fantasy tale with a dark foreboding narrative. The story follows Tarrant Hawkins and his friends

welcoming into manhood, a sacred tradition for this fantasy world which includes a new mask and parties. Also included are tests to find out where you belong. Things take a turn for our heroes straight away, and one is picked off in their first few chapters by an unexpected arrival of the main villain's minions.

The story from there kind of snowballs into your typical fantasy fare, with a quest for the main characters to rid the world of the evil that is now threatening their boundaries. Having faced the first of the bad guys our young heroes are brought along and continually preform awesome feats, earning reputations as they go. All the while the story has a ominous tone as it is being told.

Coming up to the second half of the book, everything is going great for the heroes. They are winning battles, killing the generals of the army, felling giants and other beasts. Tarrant even ends up with a foxy elf, well done sir. And then it starts to fall apart. Our hero with the magical sword loses it. Our second hero with the blacksmith strength is forced to retire with injures and help out the first hero. A prince falls, but not the one we all want to die. The cowardly prince who is just looking for a reason to destroy our heroes has it but is thwarted by the commander and sent back to a rear guard position.

The remains of our heroes try to chase down the main villain, while the remaining good prince destroys the remains of her army.

So things look bad at this point. But, surely there is not more. Shows what you know! Treachery! Everyone dies! Only Tarrant is left standing to face the dark queen and she tricks him several times over. All the heroes who aren't beheaded in the ambush succumb to the dark promises she offers with the exception of Tarrant who she bloodies and sends on his way home with a two day head start before her hunters track him down.

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He is game, and ends up making it against all odds before Resolute finds him. Unfortunately, he is the only one left to tell the story and prince jackhole is the one who receives him. Tarrants word versus the crowned prince, and we all know who the kingdom believes. He is branded a traitor and stripped of his mask. His father tells him he has no son as he takes his mask.

I don't mind a down ending, but geez man. I was quite enjoying your typical fantasy adventure when out of nowhere it goes pear shaped. The world is definitely an interesting one, with magnificent beasts unique to this story and standard fare. The culture of the world, requiring different masks to be worn at all times to show your station in the world was definitely interesting and sucked me. I would think always wearing a mask would get old, but that's just me.

I enjoyed this book, but it left me with a bad taste in my mouth. I hated that Seethe and Norrington fell. They didn't confirm the end of Faryaah-Tse but I can only assume that has happened and it makes me angry as well. We could all see the betrayal of the prince from the beginning, but it still was weak. And the ultimate slap in the face was his father automatically assuming the worst. I guess he has me hooked for more because I just bought the next trilogy, but damn. 4 stars.

Sarah says

Buddy read with Cory, Ange, Jenny, Catherine & Kathyhill (although I don't think anyone apart from Cory and I actually finished reading it!)

I've not read anything by **Michael A Stackpole** before but I was in the mood to start a new epic fantasy series and the DragonCrown War Cycle came highly recommended by my friend Cory. In fact she raved about it so much that several of us decided to buddy read this! I found **The Dark Glory War** to be a likeable read but unfortunately it didn't wow me as much as I expected it to and although I've already bought the rest of the series I don't find myself in any kind of rush to carry on reading them.

There is a lot to like about the book though and I found the idea of the masks quite an interesting one. All adults from Oriosa wear a mask when they're in public, the mask isn't so much to hide their identity (although it does that to a certain extent) but it is used to show their achievements and they add marks and embellishments to them as they achieve certain goals or to show their allegiances. It's used a bit like a badge of honour and I enjoyed seeing the ways that characters added to their masks throughout the story. I also liked the main character Tarrant, he's an honest and trustworthy guy who just wants to do right by the people he cares about. He is pulled into a horrible situation and does a good job of rolling with the punches and he grows a lot through out the story as he faces his worst nightmares.

While I did enjoy the story I found it quite a slow read. I can't even put my finger on why that is because I can't think of anything I actively disliked but I just didn't feel as hooked as I should have done. As much as I liked Tarrant and I want to know what happens to him most of the other characters came across as fairly one dimensional and I don't particularly feel invested in the outcome of their stories. The book is well written and I enjoyed both the action scenes and world building so it is a series I'll be continuing at some point in the future but it's not one I'll be jumping back into immediately.
