

Sword in the Storm

David Gemmell

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Fierce and proud, the Rigante dwell deep in the green mountain lands, worshiping the gods of air and water, and the spirits of the earth. Among them lives a warrior who bears the mark of fate. Born of the storm that slew his father, he is Connavar, and tales of his courage spread like wildfire.

The Seidh--a magical race as old as time--take note of the young warrior and cast a malignant shadow across his life. For soon a merciless army will cross the water, destroying forever the timeless rhythms of life among the Rigante.

Swearing to protect his people, Connavar embarks on a quest that will take him into the heart of the enemy. Along the way, he receives a gift: a sword as powerful and deadly as the Seidh who forged it. Thus he receives a name that will strike fear into the hearts of friend and foe alike--a name proclaiming a glorious and bitter destiny . . .

Demonblade.

Sword in the Storm Details

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Author : David Gemmell

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From Reader Review *Sword in the Storm* for online ebook

Gordon Doherty says

If I ever forget what good storytelling is, then I can safely turn to David Gemmell for a sterling reminder.

Sword in the Storm exhibits all the traits that made me love his style (have read Troy series, Lion of Macedon series, Stones of Power series) and in particular the very real-feeling portrayal of Connovar, the flawed hero. Every character has a touch of this, no archetypal villains or infallible good guys in this story, and the people of the Roman/Kelt-like world only become tainted as good or bad because of their choices and actions.

Sword in the Storm is the first in the Rigante series and it's a safe bet that I'll be reading the rest after this masterpiece.

If you're a historical fiction fan, don't let the fantasy aspect put you off. This book is a must read.

Preslava says

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Lucinda says

An epic tale of undying love, heroic courage and ultimate sacrifice that is breathtakingly beautiful and uniquely imaginative.

David Gemmell is one of Britain's greatest storytellers whose inspired imaginative ideas and clever creativity merge together strong themes within a fantasy setting that is astonishing. Whether you are an avid reader of the fantasy genre or simply someone who delights in powerful, affecting prose this author whose accomplished ability and remarkable depth of meaning (that remains unmatched) is a master of his craft. As someone who grew up with reading works by JRR Tolkien, CS Lewis, David Farland and Raymond E Feist (to name but a few) I was enchanted by David Gemmell's work who stood-out with a distinctive flair and originality. Fast-paced action, dramatically intense plot twists and substantial, meaningful tales make this book a real page-turner that is quite different to anything else you will have encountered.

Book one in the Rigante series; 'Sword in the storm' begins deep within the green mountains lands of the Rigante lies the settlement of the Three Streams, whose people worship the Gods of Air and Water and the spirits of the Earth. Among them lives a boy whose destiny is written in the starlight. He is Connavar, the Demonblade, born in a storm that doomed his father...

A man with the makings of greatness will always have enemies and from the start of this epic chronicle it is prophesized that the armies of the Stone will one day cross the water...and that their coming will be like an avalanche.

Even as that terrible time draws near, another story is told. One that links the price of glory with the loss of a Witch's powers, and with the abiding hurt of a broken promise. Here the strongest forces, wise and evil, play their allotted part – from the Ghost General and the Malignant Morrigu to the woods whose magic harks back to a world before the coming of man.

This magnificent, indescribable masterpiece of such scope is truly astonishing and remains as great a timeless legend as that of Merlin. With the quality and depths of the Arthurian Legends, combining complex, detailed world-building with exquisite storytelling this really is an extraordinarily, noteworthy creation. With the author's sad death in 2006 it seems that his work has slipped into the shadows, therefore I would like to propel this genius' creation into readers hearts once again – where it deserves to be. If you want to experience epic fantasy, sword and sorcery at its very best and delve into an outstanding creation beyond all imagination, then I urge you to discover the roots of the most widely-read and universally loved genre; for it is authors such as David Gemmell that ignited a passion and the enthusiasm for fantasy and great literature. This stunning, beautifully written piece of spectacular literary greatness is just exceptional!

JJ Hassan says

David Gemmell does write a great hero fantasy. I was a little bit disappointed that, even with some interesting challenges, trips, and falls, the protagonist is a little too "chosen one". The arch villain has some interesting sides to him, but Gemmell has chosen to take the story in a direction in which he is essentially Hitler. As a younger reader, these are the characters I would want; dramatic good vs evil, and a hero to idolise. Nowadays I'm after something a bit more human.

The great parts of the book are the imagination and folklore that set the scene, and I really look forward to seeing these expanded in the subsequent books in the series

Riki Strydom says

I don't know how to begin this review as I was very disappointed. A man character should have a flaw or two to keep him interesting, but this one has way too many! A couple of times a passage of time took place and the reader was not informed then you have to work out how long during the conversations.

All you know is a war is coming and only one person thinks to prepare. There was no real story to build up to and once the big war took place it was finished so quickly the reader barely noticed. I will not be reading the next books in the series, but will try some of the authors other work...

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Jim says

Fairly typical fantasy world, but far better done than most. A lot of thoughtful comments & twisty situations leading to a variety of fates. The characters were really well done. As much as I like them, they can make some really bad decisions, but they're very believable bad decisions. A lot of thought went into this & yet it reads quickly & easily. That is the best part. This isn't just a simple story, yet it reads like one. I'm not sure how he manages to do that, but I'm hooked.

I probably had an iZombie (season finale?!!!) to watch tonight, but I never even thought about turning on the TV. I had to finish this book instead & I know there are 3 more. Yeah, it's that good.

It ended well, too. There's plenty more story available, but it wasn't a cliff hanger. The next book picks up 20 years later, too.

Charles says

This is the first book in the Rigante series, which introduces us to Connavar, a hero in the classic mold. The setting is a recognizable but altered Europe and Great Britain, with substitutes for Kelts, Vikings, and various Germanic tribes, as well as an alternate Roman empire. This first book takes Connavar from childhood into early adulthood, and to a leadership role among his people, the Rigante. Excellent character development, excellent action and battle scenes, and a compelling story line, often tragic but always compelling. Highly recommended.

Steve says

Probably my favourite (yes I can spell, I'm English *laughing*) Gemmell. In fact, definately in my top 3 reads of all time. Gemmell's ability to draw an intense and gripping story through the ability to make his character's 'human' was the best I've ever come across. All his heroes had their flaws or weaknesses, with most of his villains having a side that showed them as 'not too far removed from most' or 'even holding some great skill beyond ours'.

I don't rate 'all' of Gemmell's books (though I've read them all), but I do rate most of them highly. They have

the ability to take you into another world, another dimension, that we know is not too far removed from our own dreams and experiences, challenges and feelings.

What did I learn from this book? Similiar to what I learned from many of his best works, that beautiful thing called 'hope'. You ride the waves and struggles of his heroes, their choices, consequences and angst. You learn that his characters, although fictional, are based on human nature and that within us all is the ability to choose the right choice, do the right thing, and find strengths that we didn't believe we had. A few Gemmell's have brought tears to my eyes (okay, I'm bloody empathic *smiling*) and this book is no exception. While Connavar makes a split decision to risk his life to save his crippled friend and you ask yourself 'would I do that?', well, maybe you could keep a dry eye where I could not. His tales are immense, but it's the depth of his characters that I have never found an equal to.

Notice I didn't spoil the story for you by giving away the plot? *Laughing* I hate it when that happens (like some well meaning b*stards on Amazons' Reviews ;)). This is one of many books that I have read numerous times over the years (that bloody good).

Mike says

4 Stars may be a little generous but how can I reduce it when I found myself shouting at the characters... "No! Don't do it!!" just before they committed an act that will have terrible consequences? Most books don't get you so involved with the players. An excellent story but a very flawed hero figure.

Jason says

5 Stars

The Sword in the Storm, book one of the Rigante series by David Gemmell. David Gemmell has been in my to-read queue for more than 30 years. I know that the Drenai series is his most popular one starting with Legend, however the description of this one had me from the start. This is a classic sword and sorcery series that is every bit epic in sense and scope. Magic plays a role here but is not the star.

I really enjoyed pretty much everything about this book. Gemmell gave us great characters, great places, an amazing world, interesting magic, plenty of fighting and action, and overall awesome world building. The book is all about it's hero Connavar, who reminded me a great deal of the bad ass Jorg from Mark Lawrence Broken Empire series. Conn is not a bad man, and he really isn't an anti-hero per se, he is however a man that knows his own faults.

I loved the writing and the story telling of Gemmell. I can't believe I waited so long to read a book by him. I will go on to the next book immediately.

"We all face it, and succumb to it. It follows us like a dark shadow. Yet if we live in terror of it, then we do not live at all. Yes we are born alone, and yes we will die alone. But in between, Tae, we live. We know joy. I am a lonely man. I think I always have been. But I am not lonely now. Not at this moment."

Highly recommended!

David Dalglish says

At what point do you condemn a hero?

This seems to be the overall theme in *Sword in the Storm*, the third novel I've read by David Gemmell. The first was *Legend*, the other one of the *Troy* series. In all three, we have legendary warriors, towering men who can stand at the center of a battle and survive through sheer skill and will. Yet of the three main heroes, *Sword in the Storm* seems to have the most failings, not in just his character, but in the way he is told.

In *Legend*, we have Druss. He's old, tired, and grumpy. Yet despite that, we see a legendary warrior still mourning his wife. Facing impossible odds, he refuses to give in, and that strength aids the many around him until they triumph. Druss is almost perfect. He's intelligent. He can fight. He acts calm and rational when he needs to, and he can roar and bellow when he needs to.

In *Troy*, we have Helikaon. Again, skilled fighter, revered by many, superb wealth, handsome, and able to turn an impossible battle. Except we also see him perform incredibly harsh actions. In this, though, he seems almost at peace about them. The world is dark and unafraid, and they will understand only the violence he delivers to them. Sure he gets a little close to crossing the line, but nothing like Connavar. Nothing like *Sword in the Storm*.

Connavar slaughters innocent women and children. He cheats on his wife. He often swears revenge, easily gives in to hate, and is sorely lacking the self-control of either Helikaon or Druss. But the problem is...he's still a "perfect" David Gemmell hero. It just doesn't feel quite right yet. What do I mean by "perfect" Gemmell hero? He's got the looks, the brains, the charisma, and the fighting skill. Basically, cross Napoleon with Conan the Barbarian. As a child, he struggles to help his parents, he saves a fawn with no thought to the injuries he'll take himself, befriends a cripple solely to be kind to him, and he commits self-less act after self-less act.

The problem is when anything "personal" happens to Connavar. See, when dealing with warfare, politics, diplomacy, it doesn't matter. He'll react perfectly, keep his head, show mercy, etc. However, the second something happens to a friend, he loses it. Completely. He'll storm off with vows of vengeance. He'll give in to red fury and slaughter whole villages. The lack of self-control is astounding. Sure, he acts guilty about it later, but it almost feels like I'm dealing with a schizophrenic. Dealing with foreign leader? Connavar the magnificent: outsmart him, say the right thing, defeat some lackey, and then leave a hero. Dealing with the death of a friend? RAAAWWWRRRRRRRRRRRRR, CONNVAR SMAAASSHHHHH!

Anyways, I'm getting wordy. Gemmell deals with some wonderfully mature themes, playing one what is right and what is wrong. My favorite example is of a fox eating a hen's chicks. To the hen, the fox is a murderer. To the fox, he just had a meal to sustain his life. He constantly tweaks with perspective. Who is evil, the king who kills four people to take the throne, or the warlord who slays thousands to take the throne back "honorably"? Connavar is clearly supposed to be complex, and he's pictured as a massive bear with chains holding him in check (the chains being honor, duty, etc). More often, he feels like two characters. Cliche or not, repetitive or not, I still LIKE the good Connavar, the stereotypical Gemmell hero. While I certainly understand readers who cannot endure this book because of what bad Connavar does, I also can sympathize to some extent. I can forgive a man who himself is seeking forgiveness. I just expect him to learn

eventually.

So far, it doesn't seem like Connavar is learning. After one incident, he swears that he will never be the same again, and always remember that lesson. And then a few chapters down the road, he does something even worse. He mopes, hides, and eventually swears, again, that he will never be the same, and never forget. Except this time, I don't believe him. I want to, but I don't. We'll see if the next Rigante book changes my mind.

Estelle says

Abandoned at 70%.

It's not a bad book, but there's nothing really gripping about the story and I'm tired of reading mediocre and unoriginal fantasy.

Rob says

Well, this is what I've come to expect from Gemmell. A classic story of struggle and heroism well told. A world that has parallels to historical settings with a bit of mysticism discreetly blended in. A protagonist who is an ass-kicking ass-kicker who proves beyond a doubt that he can kick some ass.

And this is where I get off the boat. Maybe I'm old and cynical. Maybe I think too much and feel too little. Maybe I'm too far removed from my 16 year old self. But I just can't buy into this kind of over-the-top wish fulfillment anymore. I'm okay with a protagonist being a skilled, even a great fighter. I'm okay with unusual courage. And with inspiring leadership and personal charisma. I just can't handle it all combined together, dialed up to 11, and manifested in a 16 or 18 year old character.

It's not just Gemmell either. Many authors of fantasy and historical fiction give us these uber-elite killing machines. Boys who can run and fight and ride and kill better than any other warrior alive. Who are born military geniuses, charismatic leaders, and indomitable leaders of men before they're old enough to shave. And of course, they're irresistible to women.

This is a solid book. Gemmell was a talented storyteller who could bring emotional conflict to the page with great power. People who like this sort of thing will like it a lot. Hence the rating of three stars, even though I pretty much gave up on it after a battle scene where Connavar uses a sword to knock aside a spear thrown at him, then grabs the spear out of the air and hurls it into an opponent in a chariot. All while riding at break-neck speed (and without any explanation of why he might be a superb rider at 16 years of age). This stuff is tolerable in cartoonish pulp. I just don't buy it in the serious and otherwise realistic tone Gemmell writes with.

I might be at the point where I stick with female fantasy and historical fiction authors. They seem less prone to the superman protagonist syndrome.

Shima says

Gemmell's books are always hard to review, because it's hard to explain why they're great.

This one in particular is tricky, looking back at the plot it seems like it should have been at least a bit boring yet it was captivating and utterly enjoyable.

After some thought I believe there are two main reasons for that :

First there is Gemmell's way of writing in a simple no-nonsense way which holds your attention completely. It actually reminds me of the writing of A Game Of Thrones.

Second there is how much you care about the characters. In all of his books Gemmell has a way of creating some of the most in depth and real characters I have ever read. You find yourself really caring about them, their fears, hopes and dreams become truly important to you. That's why any small danger they're facing becomes interesting and the plot turns exiting.

I'm looking forward to reading the rest of the Riganate series and seeing where Connavan ends up.

On a final note I should say that some of Gemmell's stand alone works like Knights of Dark Renown and Echoes of the Great Song remain my all time favorites and I strongly suggest you start reading Gemmell with them.
