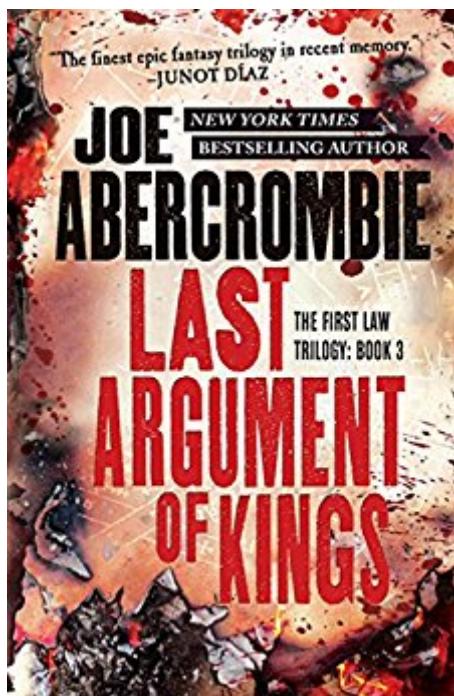


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Last Argument Of Kings



Synopsis

The final novel in the First Law Trilogy by New York Times bestseller Joe Abercrombie. Logen Ninefingers might only have one more fight in him -- but it's going to be a big one. Battle rages across the North, the king of the Northmen still stands firm, and there's only one man who can stop him. His oldest friend, and his oldest enemy: it's time for the Bloody-Nine to come home. With too many masters and too little time, Superior Glokta is fighting a different kind of war. A secret struggle in which no one is safe, and no one can be trusted. As his days with a sword are far behind him, it's fortunate that he's deadly with his remaining weapons: blackmail, threats, and torture. Jezal dan Luthor has decided that winning glory is too painful an undertaking and turned his back on soldiering for a simple life with the woman he loves. But love can be painful too -- and glory has a nasty habit of creeping up on a man when he least expects it. The king of the Union lies on his deathbed, the peasants revolt, and the nobles scramble to steal his crown. No one believes that the shadow of war is about to fall across the heart of the Union. Only the First of the Magi can save the world, but there are risks. There is no risk more terrible, than to break the First Law...First Law Trilogy
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Customer Reviews

"In the end? Nothing ends, Adrian. Nothing ever ends" -Doctor Manhattan, Watchmen. The conclusion to The First Law Trilogy is both a bang and a whimper. The climax takes place roughly two-thirds of the way through the book and then takes its time focusing on the horrific human cost. A justified criticism of the fantasy genre is it promotes war and an idealized view of conflict by showing the big epic battle then pulling away from the ugly consequences. In most fantasy, there's the big battle, a short epilogue and done. That's not the case in Last Argument of Kings. Last Argument of Kings really does an amazing job of tearing apart the basic assumptions of a typical fantasy trilogy conclusion. We get brutal deconstructions of Happily Ever After everywhere we turn. Not that people ends up miserable (sometimes they do, sometimes they don't) but the biggest subversion is that it's very clear the story doesn't end. The big climax to the two wars set up in the previous books happen, characters get married, some people get crowed, others don't, and when it's all done then they have to go live the rest of their lives. There's no cliffhanger, the plots are brought to a close, but the characters have the rest of their lives to deal with and just as many struggles as before. I liken it to The Lord of the Rings ending with, after defeating Sauron and Saruman's forces, the books spends a good deal of time discussing the dead and wounded as well as the tax reforms Aragorn is planning to make on Gondor. Also, a talk about how Rosie Cotton and Sam don't actually get along because it turns out she fancies women. It's not boring and helps contextualize the grittiness of the series. It doesn't matter who wins or who loses the epic conflicts of the story because life will go on either way. It's really an experience and I recommend it to people who are used to fantasy novels ending a particular way. The premise is the Union's armies are besieged from two fronts. The Northmen are holed up in a powerful citadel with even victory there not guaranteeing triumph. The Gurkish are going to lead a vast navy to invade the Union in revenge for their slain minister (and other reasons). Bayaz has lost his chance at recovering the Seed so he is going to begin a daring, some would say contemptible, plan to manipulate the Union into fighting shape. The romance between Ardee West and Jezal Luthor also takes a bizarre turn which is both heartbreak and amusing in equal measure. This is a book which is annoyingly difficult to talk about because it really is one that benefits from not being spoiled about the ending. There's a hundred or more twists and turns in the story which flow organically from the plot once you realize what's actually going on. Stuff happens, a lot of stuff happens, much of which is unexpected. I was able to predict a lot of the ending but only about halfway through the book when things develop a train wreck style quality. You

know where things are going but are hoping they are able to be stopped in time. They aren't. Truth be told, I would be lying if I said the ending is particularly fun to read in places. In simple terms, a lot of the "heroes" cross the Moral Event Horizon which makes their actions not only despicable but unforgivable. As much as I love Inquisitor Glotka, any justification for his actions goes out the window toward the end. One particular scene with a newly-revealed lesbian character made me think, snarky and witty as he is, it would be better if Glotka just fell down a hole and died. Likewise, we find out other characters have been evil scumbags all along and have been playing the role of hero because it's better than playing the villain. A frustrating fact is a lot of the characters prove unable to follow their character arcs to any sort of conclusion. People who try to change and grow find out, in fact, they can't change and fall back into old habits. To make an utterly cracked analogy, it reminds me a bit of Trainspotting. A guy can go through an unimaginable amount of effort and horror to quit heroin but it's just as likely the next time he's presented with it, he might snort it. That's the arc of five or six characters here, except replace heroin with whatever horrible character flaws they possess. A lot of people will hate that kind of storytelling. So what did I think? Overall, I enjoyed it. I think the final climatic battle took a little too much of the book up. I think the ending took a little too much of its time ripping the heroes to shreds. I also think a certain character revealed to be evil became something of a caricature of himself. If he was that good at manipulating people this entire time then nothing is stopping him from continuing to the role of the good guy on. It certainly works much better for him than the reverse, which has everyone now seething in hatred of him. The characterization is wonderful throughout and we see changes I never expected accompanied by the aforementioned complete failure to change. Logen Ninefingers struggles with his decision to become a better man as well as the fact you can't change by repeating the actions which made you a monster. Jezal Luthar's arc is absolutely insane and yet remains appropriate for a man who has had everything handed to him on a platter but never realized how crippling this was until recently. Ferro? Ferro, in a way, is the only one who manages to skate through everything unscathed because she understands when you are after vengeance then you can't quibble over the niceties. I also feel the endings for everyone were well-designed, even if I hated some of the places the characters ended up. Logen's, in particular, was beautiful. In conclusion, this is a bleak and uncompromising finale to a great story. I'd like to see more of these characters and their adventures but others I hope fall in a ditch and die. This isn't a realistic trilogy but it does have the very realistic message, "Sometimes good people get what they deserve, sometimes they don't. Life happens." Also, you should always take water from a man in the desert except that metaphor leads plenty of people to a fate worse than death by dehydration.9.5/10

Spoiler Alert: Every book in this series was a 5-star winner ... until the end. Abercrombie's characters come through the pages as fully human, with virtues and weaknesses, regrets and joys, and I could fully relate to their struggles and dreams. I could even sympathize with the twisted torturer, despite his horrible actions. This was a great, rollicking ride ... right up until the end of the trilogy. Abercrombie seemed to ask himself the question: "What would be the most totally dissatisfying ending I could write? How can I leave a bunch of dangling storylines and maybe set up a second trilogy?" Once he had the answer to those questions, that's what he did.

Boy! What a great ride. I thought the first two books in this 3 part series were good and they were. But this last book was FANTASTIC. What a list of retched characters. A mad Magi, A huge North men who kills anyone in his path when he goes on a Bezerker mode, a cowardly fop, an inquisitor who is so wretched that you actually like him, and many more. And they are all involved in this fantastic epic in ways that they do not know or even understand. In the end, some win, some lose but no one is the same. Do not read this book at night if you want to go to sleep. I was so taken by the whole series and the author that I went out and bought his first book in the "World of the First Law" series called "Best Served Cold". And I paid \$10 for it. I never do that. Only the daily kindle deals. But this guy, Abercrombie is incredible. I have not read battle scenes that are in this book since I was reading Bernard Conwell's The Saxon Tales Series.

Review is for the trilogy as a whole. I have devoured this series in the span of a few weeks and loved just about every bit of it. The character development is masterful. Scenes are crisp and well paced. Abercrombie gives us characters we care about, root for, and connect with. Dat ending tho. As many other reviews have pointed out, the ending was lacking. Not lacking in action (there was plenty of that). Not lacking in great writing and vivid scenes. But lacking in closure. And let me tell you: I didn't realize how important closure was and the ending of series until I was confronted with its absence. It means quite a bit. So much in fact, that the lack of a suitable ending taints the view of the ENTIRE series. Read the other reviews -- this sentiment seems commonplace. The reader needs a complete and clear understanding of just how the characters he/she grew to love over the course of the pages turned out. The reader doesn't need: "This person walked off into the darkness." "This person fell off a cliff." The reader wants: "This star-crossed couple found each other against all odds, settled down, and raised a family by the beach.". Something we can rest our minds on. A closed circle. Completeness. It doesn't necessarily have to be happy, just complete. If the author wants to bring

these characters into the spotlight again, well -- it shouldn't be too hard. (Especially for this author in particular.) I recommend the series without reservation. It's the best fantasy you will have read in a long time. Just go into it eyes open knowing that you won't get a clear resolution for some of your favorite characters.

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