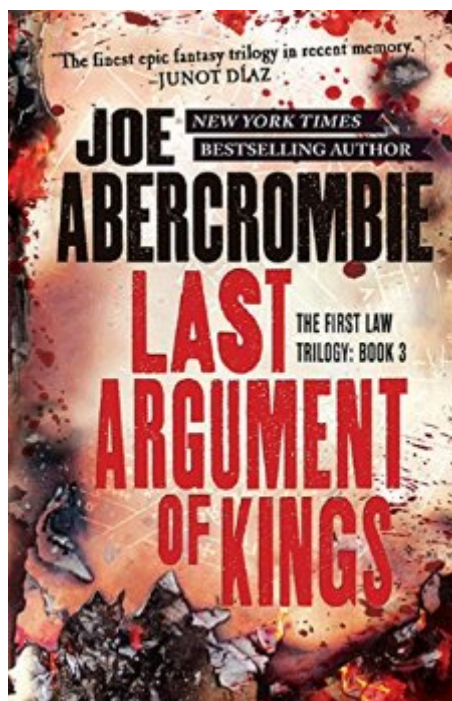


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Last Argument Of Kings



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 Luthar 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 TrilogyThe Blade ItselfBefore They Are HangedLast Argument of KingsFor more from Joe Abercrombie, check out:Novels in the First Law worldBest Served ColdThe HeroesRed Country

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Customer Reviews

It was with much excitement that I opened the box that months ago I had pre-ordered and had rapid-shipped from the UK. As with the first two books, *Last Argument of Kings* has superb cover-art. It's a very dashing trilogy displayed on your bookshelf appropriately. But to the story: In the first two installments, in particular the first, action took a back seat to characterization. You can check out my critiques of both those books if you like. Some of the most interesting and original-yet-archetypical characters in fantasy were made flesh and earned high-praise for me for that feat. In *Last Argument of Kings*, action definitively steps to the fore. All of the plot-lines that were set up like dominoes in the first two books are tipped, and before you know it you're swept up in a tide of the little black bricks like Mel Brooks' entrance in the computer-animated 'Robots'. From climax to climax, Mr. Abercrombie charges you through exciting conclusions to every plot and sub-plot introduced before-hand. This is a difficult review to write because, even more than usual, I would be loathe to give away even the slightest hint of what happens, but most of those characters from the first books that you felt needed some comeuppance get it in this book. But Joe Abercrombie isn't sentimental, and by the end of this book it will be plain that some of those that got a comeuppance didn't deserve it as much as others or as much as you might have thought they did, and those that deserved good certainly don't get it, and many of those that you used to want good things for you'll find you no longer do.

When you come away from a book feeling disappointed in pretty much every character - minor and major alike, and outright wishing death upon several of them, it's hard not to feel disappointed in the book itself. It left me wondering whether good writing was enough, or if something actually has to happen in the story itself. Ultimately, nothing changed for any of the characters. If you want to know what they are like at the end of book 3, look no further than the first half of book 1. We're left with the same characters doing the same things, just to different people. The perverse cynicism is so unrealistic and forced that I felt a near-overwhelming compulsion to fly to the U.K., have beautiful women drag Mr. Abercrombie to a pretty garden with singing birds and bright sunlight, and force him to take antidepressants until he breaks down under the torture and lets himself smile for a moment. **** Spoilers **** Glokta's ending was probably the best of the bunch, but still disappointing. He ends up in the same profession, doing things that he hates for a master that he hates for reasons that he hates, and gets to babysit someone he hates for added... err, hate. Ferro becomes

an extra superhuman woman bent on vengeance. That's different because she started out as just a superhuman (notice the missing 'extra') woman bent on vengeance. Logen kills one too many of his own friends, flip-flops between being sure he can be good and sure he can't, and really doesn't do much more than spectate. Even in his big fight, West and friends win the battle for him. He's just a leaf swept along by the wind, and I can look out my window to see that. The character didn't even contribute many hilarious observations like in past books. Jezal.

Alright, I'll confess: I loved this trilogy and I enjoyed the third installment every bit as much as the first two. This is an unconventional fantasy epic that stands typical fantasy stereotypes on their heads and I had a blast reading it and would unhesitatingly recommend the entire series. This is fantasy with dirt under the fingernails and pus festering under ragged scabs though. Sure, you have your traditional cast of characters...barbarian warrior, old wizard, handsome young captain, and a fearless warriorress, etc. but Abercrombie takes these archetypal characters and gives them deep character flaws, dodgy pasts, and poor attitudes. They must face hard circumstances in a complicated and morally ambiguous world. His books are complex and extremely well-plotted, the characterization superb, the dialogue excellent, and the writing is involving and keeps you riveted to your seat. Even though this finale ran over 600 pages I managed to bang it out in a day, partially because it is so deliciously readable but equally because I simply couldn't put it down until I finished it. The Last Argument of Kings is a grand finale too. Abercrombie satisfactorily ties up most all of the major plot points but there is enough ambiguity at the end that additional books would not necessarily be precluded. Personally, I would have preferred a tighter, less ambiguous ending but I wouldn't be surprised if elements of the ending weren't driven by the editor/publisher. I'll forgive Abercrombie for it and, I confess!, I still loved the book and think it is a wonderful five star read. I'd hazard a guess though that there will be some readers who may not like how this series ended...because it isn't necessarily pretty and it certainly isn't a fairy tale ending.

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