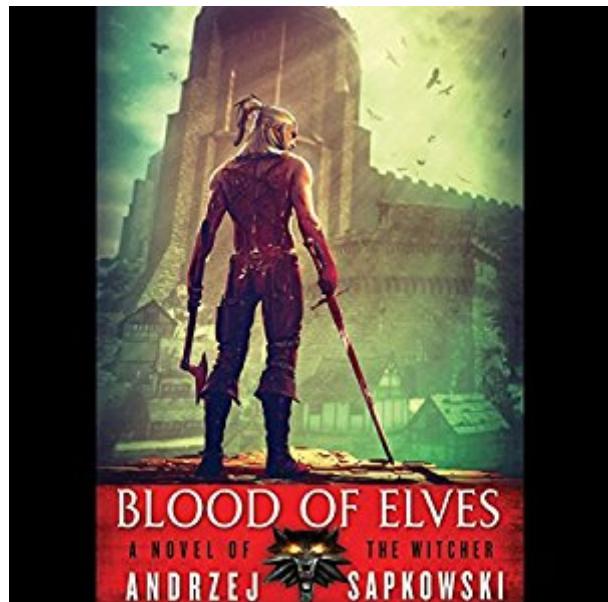


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Blood Of Elves



Synopsis

Watch for the signs! What signs these shall be, I say unto you: first the earth will flow with the blood of Aen Seidhe, the Blood of Elves.... For over a century, humans, dwarves, gnomes, and elves have lived together in relative peace. But times have changed, the uneasy peace is over, and now the races are fighting once again. The only good elf, it seems, is a dead elf. Geralt of Rivia, the cunning assassin known as The Witcher, has been waiting for the birth of a prophesied child. This child has the power to change the world - for good, or for evil. As the threat of war hangs over the land and the child is hunted for her extraordinary powers, it will become Geralt's responsibility to protect them all - and the Witcher never accepts defeat. Following The Last Wish, Blood of Elves is the new novel starring Geralt of Rivia, the inspiration for the critically acclaimed videogame The Witcher.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have been a big fan of the Witcher books for a long time. I was fortunate to read them all in Russian translation. Here's the deal: the English publisher has skipped "The Sword Of Destiny" that chronologically follows "The Last Wish". The "Sword" introduces the new characters later seen in "The Blood Of Elves". I was deeply disappointed with such move. My wife has read the 1st book and loved it, but now she can't continue to "The Blood of Elves"! I was not surprised to find out that the "TBoE" has received much lower rating than the "TLW" on . People are all confused, it ruins the story flow. I have written to the Gollancz publishers and here's what they said: "... You probably are not aware that short story collections do not sell very well, and so it is often difficult for a mainstream

publisher to put that sort of book out. We were lucky with THE WITCHER, first, because we published it as a novel, and second, because we had the launch of the computer game to back it up. We are currently in discussion with the author about what we do next, but please do urge your wife to read BLOOD OF ELVES..."Somehow I believe that Mr Sapkowski was pushed to follow the order of publishing against his will. And the statement that "short stories don't sell" has already been disproved by the success of "The Last Wish". Gollancz has done the readers and the author a very poor favor by omitting the "Sword Of Destiny". Recently I have found this petition [...] (if removes the link, just google "sword of destiny petition") that collects signatures to support the release of the "TSoD". I strongly recommend everyone to join in and add their name to it, the book really deserves to be read by the massive English-speaking audience.

This book is a must have if you enjoy the "Witcher universe", but not if you're hoping for another collection of 'whiz-bang, sexy sword slinger' short stories, ala Last Wish. While I enjoyed the Last Wish quite a bit, this is a notably different outing - a complete novel set in the Witcher universe, with an actual story arc, a longer tale to tell, and promises of more to come in future books...

GREAT! This book explains (among other things) the beginnings of the Scoia'tael (Squirrel) movement, how the various races came to inhabit their corners of the world, more info on Triss Merigold, Shani, Dandelion, and a host of other interesting characters. Kingdom level politics are discussed, pursuits and narrow escapes ensue, and assassins, torturers and sorcerers abound. Geralt is present all through the book, weaving into and out of other character's lives. He is not 'absent' from the book at all... it's just that each story isn't focused exclusively on him. The overall framework of Ciri's maturation as a enchantress is interesting and appropriate, not boring or drawn out, in my opinion. Geralt is revealed through other characters eyes as a more interesting and conflicted warrior - perhaps moodier and more withdrawn than we might expect, but more complex. He's far less cocky in this book, which may put some people off if they were expecting the white-wolf swagger. So... less "swords and babes" overall, more plot and story arc... I enjoyed it thoroughly, and read it in one sitting. Can't wait for the rest. Side note: anyone who has played and enjoyed "The Witcher" PC game will see lots of it in this novel, and appreciate the book even more.

Geralt, the title character, is a 'Witcher' - one of a semi-secret society of monster-killing specialists. Already born as mutants (a word bandied around anachronistically throughout the book), Witchers are then trained and chemically altered to become killing machines. All hopped-up on primitive combat drugs and armed with meteoric swords, Witchers travel the world killing nasty beasties.

Preferably for money. Although Witchers are scrupulously neutral in matters of politics, Geralt has broken the code by adopting an orphaned princess, Ciri. The heir to a conquered kingdom, Ciri is one of the most valuable people in the world. The forces of light and darkness are both competing to find her - and that's even before her potent magical powers begin to surface. Geralt and his network of friends (more acquaintances) are drawn reluctantly into the vortex of events surrounding Ciri and soon become irrevocably linked to the fate of the world. Ciri, to give the author credit, is never just a passive object in her own destiny. In fact, she receives much more 'screen time' than anyone else in the book, including Geralt. Her education, training and rambunctious gallop towards maturity are the core of the book. Geralt, and the more conventional adventuring elements that surround him, only appears in alternate chapters - generally fighting off some sort of insidious plot that would otherwise threaten the young princess. Geralt also takes a backseat to some of his companions - Yennefer and Triss, the witches, and Dandilion, the entertainer and spy. All are drawn to Ciri and the need to protect her - either from loyalty to Geralt or to the greater scheme of fate. They're all interesting characters (I'm partial to Dandilion), although Sapkowski spends more time than is comfortable having Triss muse about her youthful sexual explorations. In fact, Geralt mostly appears through the eyes of others. Even Dandilion is less loyal to Geralt-the-person as he is to Geralt-the-excuse-for-an-adventure. The conflicting viewpoints keep Geralt mysterious, but also keep on the right side of the line when it comes to outright veneration. While Ciri worships Geralt, Yennefer sees the Witcher as an outright annoyance - an emotionally-stunted ex-boyfriend with a knack for doing the wrong thing. The overall plot is pleasantly confusing. There's definitely a big prophecy out there, and the big evil empire is sufficiently big and evil. Our heroes, however, are more interested in saving their own skins. They encounter the creeping arms of evil, but only in tangential ways - local uprisings, the occasional assassin. The author occasionally takes the reader to someplace quite random - for example, the high conclave of Wizards, or a gathering of monarchs - to give the bigger picture. However, we learn very quickly that these important dignitaries know even less than the little guys. Whatever is actually happening, only Sapkowski knows. The main flaw in the book is the translation. There's a strict avoidance of detail which, although presumably part of the original writing style, becomes irritating. In one scene, for example, various participants are described as having 'a hat' or 'red-haired'. Not much paint for the mental picture. The occasionally anachronistic word choices - of which 'mutant' is the most annoying - leap out. As if to compensate, the translator also peppers the texts with obscure medieval terminology ('caparison'? 'cachalot'?). Sapkowski has an unusual voice (when properly interpreted) and a grimly entertaining take on the traditions of fantasy. The Blood of Elves is an exercise in dramatic tension - complicated

characters, coming of age stories and a careful unearthing of the overall plot - all building up to a sequel that promises to be a hurricane of action.-- PORNOKITSCH

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