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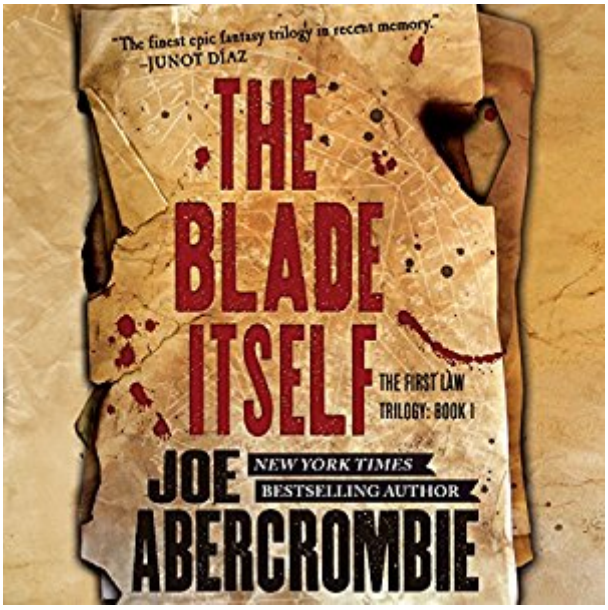
The Blade Itself



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Synopsis

The first novel in the First Law Trilogy and the debut novel from New York Times best seller Joe Abercrombie. Logen Ninefingers, infamous barbarian, has finally run out of luck. Caught in one feud too many, he’s on the verge of becoming a dead barbarian - leaving nothing behind him but bad songs, dead friends, and a lot of happy enemies. Nobleman, dashing officer, and paragon of selfishness, Captain Jezal dan Luthar has nothing more dangerous in mind than fleecing his friends at cards and dreaming of glory in the fencing circle. But war is brewing, and on the battlefields of the frozen North they fight by altogether bloodier rules. Inquisitor Glokta, cripple turned torturer, would like nothing better than to see Jezal come home in a box. But then Glokta hates everyone: Cutting treason out of the Union one confession at a time leaves little room for friendship. His latest trail of corpses may lead him right to the rotten heart of government, if he can stay alive long enough to follow it. Enter the wizard, Bayaz. A bald old man with a terrible temper and a pathetic assistant, he could be the First of the Magi, he could be a spectacular fraud, but whatever he is, he’s about to make the lives of Logen, Jezal, and Glokta a whole lot more difficult. Murderous conspiracies rise to the surface, old scores are ready to be settled, and the line between hero and villain is sharp enough to draw blood. Unpredictable, compelling, wickedly funny, and packed with unforgettable characters, The Blade Itself is noir fantasy with a real cutting edge.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition
Listening Length: 22 hoursÂ andÂ 16 minutes
Program Type: Audiobook
Version: Unabridged
Publisher: Hachette Audio
Audible.com Release Date: September 8, 2015
Whispersync for Voice: Ready
Language: English
ASIN: B014LLTNGK
Best Sellers Rank: #6 inÂ Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Military #50 inÂ Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Action & Adventure #57 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > War

Customer Reviews

I wasn’t sure what to expect from this book. I read the blurb from the back and nearly turned away

after reading only half of the summary. But something made me open it up and try the first few pages--and I was hooked. It starts with an action scene--like most fantasy novels--and it is described so well. It is realistic without splattering gore in your face. I can't think of any other author who treads that line so well as Joe Abercrombie does in The Blade Itself.I didn't find this a funny book, overall. It's not a comedy at all. But there are several moments where I did laugh out loud as I read some clever description or a reaction of one of the characters. In fact I think I found more to smile at in this book than most other novels that are specifically tagged as being funny or humourous. The humour here isn't forced. I didn't feel like the author was trying to be funny. It was more like the humour you might find in casual conversation with a friend.This book moves along at a good pace. It is one of those books where you want to keep reading to find out what happens, but, unlike many other page-turners, things actually happen in this one! I hate books that promise action or resolution just over the next page, just another page, one more page, and before you know it you've read half the book and still nothing's happened. This is definitely not a one-trick pony of a book. Each character is well developed and the plots intertwine naturally.What this book doesn't contain are tired old writing techniques. Well, it's not perfect, but it's as close as I've come across in 15 years. Anyway, there are no stereotypical cliched fantasy characters.

Every year one of my old college buddies sends me one or two sci-fi/fantasy novels for my birthday. Knowing my disdain for pop-fiction writers like John Grisham (What, a lawyer at the heart of a conspiracy? Amazing!)or self-important fantasy blowhards like George RR Martin (it's 2011 and ADWD is STILL nearly finished... or maybe that was his career? Oh well, let's watch some Jets and Giants and forget about it), my friend always tries to show me authors that care more about characters and story than making money, movies and miniseries. Sometimes he has succeeded (John Scalzi, and yes, A Game of Thrones too) and sometimes his suggestions were a little too far off the beaten path (Accelerando, Perdido Street Station).This year it was "Spin" by Robert Charles Wilson and "The Blade Itself" by Joe Abercrombie. This review covers The Blade Itself.Fantasy novels are, quite frankly, extremely easy to do poorly. Barbarian. Wizard. Brave knight. Cowardly knave. Occasional she-devil, be she Nubian warrior or redhead with a big sword. All these characters are well-known to fans of the genre, as are their exploits. Quest to end of the earth to get/destroy magical item/treasure/water fowl, which will save the world from darkness/destruction/enslavement/Ryan Secrest. I've seen and enjoyed all this (except the RS-free world, but a man can dream), so a fantasy writer had better make it fun for me.Joe Abercrombie succeeds for two reasons, the first being the characters he designed for this story. You have Logen

Ninefingers (Lo-gen, of the NINE fingers...), aka the Bloody Nine, barbarian from the North who trades in Conan’s utter lack of humanity for world-weariness and a palpable sense of impending damnation for his many sins.

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