



## Ren of Atikala

*David Adams*

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## **Ren of Atikala** David Adams

I am Ren of Atikala. Kobold. Sorcerer. Warrior. I am many things and I have many stories to tell. This one is about my home.

Home. The word has a special resonance with us all. Great or humble, rich or poor, everyone cherishes their home and if deprived of it loses a piece of themselves.

I remember looking back at Atikala, its ceiling collapsed in, the homes of fifty thousand kobolds crushed under unimaginable tonnes of rock and dirt. I remembering the feeling of horror and denial that immediately set in. I wanted to reject that this had happened to me, to scream to the ceiling until the rock receded, until fate changed its mind and restored everything to the way it was. I thought that life could not be so cruel as to take everything I'd known in an instant.

Oh, how I now understand that life can be capricious indeed.

This is story of how I came to the surface of Drathari and unwillingly traded a life for a life.

## **Ren of Atikala Details**

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Author : David Adams

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## From Reader Review Ren of Atikala for online ebook

### James says

Things just felt right when I was reading this book. It's a simple "heading off into the unknown" kind of fantasy adventure, featuring some races that normally don't get much of the spotlight: kobolds and gnomes. It has some delightful surprises and some that are terrifying. It's not a perfect book, but I had loads of fun reading it. I can't wait to read the next installment. And I hope a certain sadistic gnome makes a return, he was a real psycho bastard.

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### Will Swardstrom says

What can I say about Ren?

I could say nothing.

That is, after all, what Ren means in the language of the Kobold – Nothing. Why is she named Nothing? To answer that, you'll want to read this book, which is an outstanding contribution to the field of Fantasy works. David Adams should be proud of Ren. He expertly created a world with multiple intelligent races – Kobold, Gnome, Elf, Human, Dragon – and has a clear picture he lays out for the reader while telling the story in "Ren of Atikala."

What I will say instead — I love it.

Immediately after opening the book, the reader can see the love and passion Adams has for the world he created – beautiful maps that paint a picture even before you are engaged in the story. In fact, if you look, the larger map has so many places Adams hasn't even touched on or referenced in "Ren of Atikala," leaving you with the impression Adams has much more planned for Ren beyond the initial journey she is forced to take.

I'm a casual fantasy fan, so I wasn't familiar with kobolds, but Adams has done a fantastic job taking a species usually considered to be evil or inherently violent and turning them into the heroes of the story.

But, let's get back to Ren, because without her this story wouldn't exist. Ren is a six-year-old female kobold. She is special – when her egg was tossed in the fire to be destroyed, she was made alive by the flames, a heritage that haunts her throughout the book. Her skin is gold and she is a sorceress – a place above the normal warriors in their culture, even though she still wants to join the warriors as well.

It is on a warrior patrol that Ren and her companion Khavi survive the total destruction of their home – the city Atikala. With no place to return to, they immediately focus on vengeance for the annihilation of their friends and families – aiming for the gnomes.

However, as their journey progresses through the Underworld, their worldview is changed by their experiences and those they meet along the way. Khavi is much more grounded in traditional Kobold culture, but Ren sees more to life – a way of life that Kobold before her have not adopted. It is eventually that way of life that saves her with profound consequences in the end.

There is so much to love about this book. Told from the point of view of a species about half the size of a human, we are treated to a unique perspective on new sights and sounds. For example, when a gnome takes off her shoes – which Ren and Khavi believed to be her actual feet, they were at first disgusted and amazed at her “outer feet” and how she could climb on rocks and walk with them. Then when the same gnome was apparently sweating, to the lizard-like kobold, this was a foreign concept and Ren likened it “body tears” providing for moments of levity for the reader.

I was heavily invested in Ren’s story more and more as the book went on and will be very interested to read the next installment in Ren’s story as soon as Mr. Adams can write it. Excellent book – I highly recommend it to any fantasy fan.

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### **Alicia says**

I also received an advance copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

I thought the book was a very interesting concept. I really wanted to like this book. But I didn’t - at first. Although I thought the overall concept was interesting, I struggled through the preface. For some reason the words kept jumbling around in my head like I was reading a history book (I know in essence, it WAS a history lesson). It was brief, and I got through it. I wasn’t enjoying the book until the cave-in (not a spoiler, it’s mentioned in the book description). That’s when I feel like it all really started (and I guess Ren did, too), and I suddenly couldn’t put the book down. The main character is not human and I had a really hard time identifying with her in the beginning. My guess is that was the author’s intent - introduce a completely alien creature with splashes of “humanity” that shock us and make us feel...bad? Guilty for assuming they were unfeeling because they were so unlike us?

The characters continue to come to life beautifully. Ren undergoes an incredible transformation through the events of the story, and although I really dislike her and her companion at the beginning of the book, by the end I am feeling close to her, feeling everything as she does, grieving with her. Ren’s story is one I am anxious to continue when the next part of the series is complete.

I do feel the need to add that once I was finished with the book I went back and re-read the beginning that I had difficulty with at first and it made so much more sense, and I really did enjoy it then.

There were quite a few places in the story where some passages that David Adams wrote sounded so profound that I really wondered if they came from somewhere else. He has a way of eliciting strong emotions through his words.

I went into this experiment (I’ve never reviewed a book before) intent on leaving an honest review...I didn’t expect it to be a glowing one! I really thought I’d think it was “just an okay” book. But I came out of this story feeling that it had changed me. Not an easy task to accomplish.

I sincerely recommend this book to anyone looking for a really, honestly GOOD book. And I look forward to the next part of Ren’s story.

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### **Derek says**

When adventurers think of kobolds, it is usually in terms of their being a container for single-digit XP.

This book only barely shows the flip side of the situation, of an extremely communal and regimented culture whose values are only tangentially in common with human society. It grabbed me with a fantastic opening line--"I was born dead"--and propelled through a few chapters of this weirdly disciplined and alien state of mind. Then it threw that all away as the protagonist became separated from her home city and began a long spiritual and emotional journey as she traveled through unfamiliar territory toward a nebulous goal, in the company of someone distasteful and slanted the other way on the cruel-monster scale.

Ren's spiritual journey is ultimately unsatisfactory and rather off-putting, as it shows her diverging from the kobold norm and stepping toward the humanocentric for no adequately explained reason other than "she was born different and decides her own destiny". It is doubly unsatisfying because this first part of her tale doesn't complete it, and ends on a cliffhanger.

Oddly, the book leans so heavily on the Pathfinder Role Playing Game materials that the author felt it necessary to include a copy of the Open Game License.

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### **HueDCypher39 says**

#### **Well written and a good story.**

This book is well written. The story flows at a good pace and was quite interesting. I hope this author can keep it going. I am looking forward to the next book.

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### **Sam says**

#### **High above the rest.**

An excellent adventure, complex characters, very well done with multicultural and multidimensional themes. Much better than the average fantasy fare.

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### **Andrew says**

#### **I'll rate this on Goodreads**

Although somewhat amateurish, the author finds his voice and tells quite a compelling tale. I'm looking forward to the next installment.

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### **Nicole says**

#### **Good book with a new perspective**

There was an amazing amount of philosophy in this book without ruining the story. I was a little disappointed in the ending but it was a good story and I will probably pick up the sequel

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## **Jamie says**

(Warning: Another super long review by me!)

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest Review.

It's been a while since I've read a standard fantasy book. The first books I ever read were the Dragonlance series by Margaret Weis and Tracey Hickman. I didn't read for several years after that until I discovered the wonderful Earthsea Trilogy by Ursula K. Leguin at my highschool's library. It was that trilogy that really kindled my love for reading. Much like the beautiful covers of the Earthsea books which always reminded me of tiles for some reason the cover of Ren of Atikala drew me in and made me want to know what the book was about and the premise of it was so extremely unique. There are plenty of your standard human heroes, elves and even a dwarf or two but a kobold? I'd never read about one and not only was a Kobold the main character but also the hero of the book and on top of that Ren is a female kobold. I just had to know more so I eagerly dug into Ren of Atikala and discovered that there was nothing "standard" about this fantasy book. It was exceptional! Ren's world is a big scary place and her travels instantly took me back to my childhood, of playing Dungeons and Dragons, reading Dragonlance, learning about Drizzit for the first time. It brought back all of those memories and added to them. Ren might be a little Kobold by human standards but there's nothing little about her, her tale or her destiny.

The book starts out by introducing us to Ren's world deep inside her cavern home with her community. Kobolds are very different from a lot of the other races yet so eerily similar. They love their homes, guard them with their lives and they value their community. In fact the normal Kobold lives each and every second for their community so when tragedy strikes and Ren is forced to leave everything she's ever known behind we begin her journey into not only discovering the big wide world but also who she really is. Ren has always been different and it's not just her scales which are pure golden. She's always had a bit of an independent streak but inside her home she's never really had a chance to grow or even think about what she really wants or who she really is in the great scheme of things.

Home. The word has a special resonance with us all. Great or humble, rich or poor, everyone cherishes their home and if deprived of it loses a piece of themselves.

Ren is not only a little bit different but she's also a warrior and a sorcerer.

I disliked being unable to control my mind while I slept, but I knew sorcerers always dreamed. Our dreams reflected the faint sliver of powerful blood in our veins, a body stuffed with too much soul, the excess spilling into the night hours. It was the price we paid for our arts.

As Ren and her companion Khavi travel through the tunnels leading to the world beyond and to Sarsdale where their Kobold cousins live they face many obstacles and Ren begins to question many things that she has been taught her whole life. You see Kobolds have much in common with the other races of the

world. They are raised in fear and believe that humans, elves and gnomes are all evil and that they are the good guys. In fact there are many passages dealing with this. At one point it shows them talking about how gnomes hearts must be black along with the blood in their veins so what happens when you're thrust out into the world only to discover that which you were led to believe your whole life isn't true? That even through their differences the races all have much in common and maybe, just maybe they are not all evil like Ren once believed. But then what does that make her and her own kind? Evil? Or just different. These are the moral dilemna's Ren must face along with surviving her journey.

We live in a world surrounded by hate, by hungry steel in blood-soaked hands. Humans. Elves. Gnomes. Jealous of our gifts, these wicked races of darkness are your enemies. They hate you as you hate them, seeking only your destruction and the denial of our destiny. Never hesitate to spill their blood, for they would end you in a heartbeat. The righteous can have no mercy for monsters. Say it with me now, children! Shout it to the stones above! Let all who hear our voices tremble in fear! No mercy for monsters! No mercy for monsters! No mercy for monsters!

I could go on and on all day about this book. The writing was superb and it reads like David Adams has been writing fantasy for his whole life. The story along with it's setting was so unique and fascinating. I literally could not put down my kindle. For some reason I was thinking that this was going to be a lighthearted adventure and while there were some funny passages, especially when the kobolds were trying to figure stuff out about other races and the world it was a very gritty and realistic story. I forgot that Kobolds are not gnomes. They are not happy go lucky creatures and they live in a big world where they are just the little guys. That is why they breed so fast, they win wars and discourage aggression through sheer numbers but that doesn't mean they aren't brave. Some of the things Ren and Khavi face would send many humans or elves fleeing for their very lives yet they do it with courage and honor. One thing I really enjoyed about this story was that inbetween the chapters you get to read a journal entry from Ren's future self and catch a glimpse of who Ren will eventually become and her views on the world and the things she went through at the very beginning of her tale. I cannot wait to find out what Ren's destiny is. It's apparent from the book that great things are in store for Ren, that her destiny is larger than her small frame and you get to experience the beginning of her growth as she learns to value those around her and follow her own course. This was simply a great book and deserves to stand amongst those titles I mentioned earlier. It's been days since I've finished reading it and I still can't get Ren out of my head. If you love adventure, fantasy and want something a bit different then give Ren of Atikala a try. This is one journey you do not want to miss and I'm so very thankful for getting a chance to read this and for that the wonderful cover which drew me in and made me want to find out more. Just all around an excellent read! I'm going to leave you with this last little passage, it just feels like the best way to end this.

"you...I sense something about you. I sense you are destined for great things." A sad edge filtered into his tone. "And great pain." "Pain?" "This is the curse of all those who bear great power. Each of us suffer our burdens, and those are stones we carry until we are dead. The greater our strength, the more weight life stacks on our backs."

I would give this one 10 stars if I could but will have to settle for 5 since that is all that is allowed. :)

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## **Georganne says**

### **A great fantasy and must read!**

Great read! Adams beautifully crafted and described characters are wonderful. You can see the monsters, animal and humanoids as he describes them right before your eyes! The story is fast moving. The adventure is thrilling. Thought provoking through the mind of the main character, Ren. Can't wait to read the next book!

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## **Alan Colclough says**

Interesting tale, which was a good read, but ultimately did not grab me enough to want to read the next in the series. Characters appear and disappear with alarming rapidity which keeps the reader slightly off balance - this may be the author's intent but does not allow the reader to stabilise themselves in the world created - I felt more like a voyeur and couldn't fully immerse myself.

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## **Dixie Conley says**

I received an electronic copy of this book as part of the EPIC: Fourteen Books Of Fantasy boxed set in exchange for an honest review.

The beginning of this book was good and I was all set to like the series, but then it got stupid. The beginning was all about the culture of the kobolds and what made the heroine unique among them. I liked that part and could have easily read more of that and her upbringing. But the book skipped on to the main plot in which all of her past becomes immediately irrelevant as everyone dies and she and a companion have to survive on their own and hopefully reach shelter at the nearest kobold city.

The point of the journey is, I think, to show how our heroine is evolving away from being a normal kobold who has no individuality and thinks only of the good of the whole and views everyone who isn't a kobold as a monster into a being more like a human. I detested that part as it makes it seem as though it's not okay to be anything but human, that her own values were wrong, and because the way it was done was so clumsy. We see the bad sides of being kobold, but not the bad sides of the gnomes and the humans. I think I would have respected the heroine more if she'd made her own kobold path rather than rejecting their values.

There's more to the story than this. A lot of fighting, some backstabbing and, of course, dragons, but the backstabbing and dragons take up relatively little of the book, which is a shame as they were the second most interesting thing about the book.

There's good stuff about this book, but I can't stand the moralizing.

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### **Elizabeth Fraley says**

I wanted to like this. The writing is good. If you want to read a game of Wizardry, then this is for you. I got tired pretty quickly and abandoned it.

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### **Valië Débora says**

Oh, I liked this book.

I didn't have any expectations of it, I'm already pretty tired from reading 12 other fantasy books from the bundle, and I think this one should have been placed right at the beginning of the bundle, not at the very end. It's not much in the sense of story, plot, or anything, but I like very much that it showed the world from the eyes of something not human.

I figure Ren's probably going to join some typical RPG party sometime in the series, and I'm not sure I'm all that excited to see it, but I liked her and loved how she named and described things she'd never seen before. I laughed a lot with things as "body tears", "outerfeet" and "world bones", and that's what got it that fourth star there. It gave the book the light, fun, endearing feel I was needing so much.

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### **Charles Wheeler says**

I was expecting an upbeat adventure story about seemingly insignificant creatures doing something heroic. Instead, this story was rather bleak and dark, with creatures needlessly killing each other throughout the story, cruelty, and a lack of compassion.

I can't say that it was poorly written, I simply didn't enjoy the story.

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