



The Kingmakers

Clay Griffith , Susan Griffith

Download now

Read Online ➔

The Kingmakers

Clay Griffith , Susan Griffith

The Kingmakers Clay Griffith , Susan Griffith

The epic Vampire Empire trilogy rushes to a heart-wrenching conclusion of honor and love, hatred and vengeance, sacrifice and loss.

A war to the death.

Empress Adele has launched a grand crusade against the vampire clans of the north. Prince Gareth, the vampire lord of Scotland, serves the Equatorian cause, fighting in the bloody trenches of France in his guise as the dashing Greyfriar. But the human armies are pinned down, battered by harsh weather and merciless attacks from vampire packs.

To even the odds, Adele unleashes the power of her geomancy, a fearsome weapon capable of slaughtering vampires in vast numbers. However, the power she expends threatens her own life even as she questions the morality of such a weapon.

As the war turns ever bloodier and Adele is threatened by betrayal, Gareth faces a terrible choice. Their only hope is a desperate strike against the lord of the vampire clans--Gareth's brother, Cesare. It is a gamble that could win the war or signal the final days of the Greyfriar.

The Kingmakers Details

Date : Published September 4th 2012 by Pyr (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9781616146740

Author : Clay Griffith , Susan Griffith

Format : Paperback 391 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Steampunk, Paranormal, Vampires, Fantasy, Romance, Urban Fantasy

 [Download The Kingmakers ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Kingmakers ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Kingmakers Clay Griffith , Susan Griffith

From Reader Review The Kingmakers for online ebook

Hitandmiss says

Short review - A very lackluster and disappointing ending, Sure the empire is safe and England is secure. However major things are left kinda up in the air, without a real resolution. Many of which could of provided an interesting chapter or two.

People don't know the truth about the Greyfriar, or even what happened to him.

How will Adele and Gareth work out? (Empire needs a future ruler and she isn't going to get one from him!)
Side note most of the Adele/Gareth talks as they are just the same conversation in a different locations, with the rare exception of the library scene which was refreshing compared to all the rest. The relationship is so slim and dull I really don't care how it ended, other than the fact that she has essentially doomed his race to extinction on her current course and he really should care about that.

What is the purpose of the Lay lines other then as a convenient weapon against the vampires? (I really thought they might be used to "Cure" vampires)

Clark - who we all loved to hate deserved a better ending then that!

what about the America campaign or the rest of the world?

I could go on, but meh. I don't think this series really connected with me well and I probably wasn't the target audience. Too much dramatic love, not enough plot or real tangible solutions for my liking. As someone whose not really into Steam punk I was kinda expecting this to win me over to it, Other then Airships there really wasn't much steam or punk in it either. Oh well.

Mitticus says

[and with that 'deux ex machina' incredible -literally- salvation at the penultimate hour. (hide spoiler)]

Mags~CVAddikt~ says

REVIEW TO COME

I need this book ... like ... NOW!!

Gavin says

This was a good conclusion to the Vampire Empire trilogy. I like the world the Griffiths created. It was a steam-punk alternate version of our own world. Despite that it had definite "fantasy" feel to it which I liked.

I love the romance between Gareth and Adele and was happy with how their relationship progressed in this book. They are a great couple. Very caring and romantic. I enjoyed most of the scenes they shared together. My favorite probably being the play they seen together in Alexandria. It was so funny.

This series had an abundance of villains. The villainous vampires were especially great and always compelling to read about. Cesare was ruthless and manipulative while the vampire war chief, Flay, was as scary as she was crazy. The human villains, like Senator Clark and Mamarou, were equally threatening.

I liked the balance between the action and the romance this and did enjoy the locations like Edinburgh Castle and Greyfriars church.

I was a bit surprised by the way things ended. I do think there is the possibility of a sequel series in the future, which I'd be happy to read.

Rating: 4 stars.

Audio Note: This series was narrated by James Marsters, of Buffy fame. He did a good job, but did sound a little bored at times. I'm sure this is just his style as I felt the same when I listened to him narrate *The Dresden Files*.

Ferdy says

Spoilers

This was the worst book in the trilogy — it was slow, cheesy and predictable. The plot was boring - Adele, now the Empress of Equatoria uses her powers to help her people in the battle against the vampires. Whilst vampire prince, Cesare, wants to crown himself king after killing his father so he can unite all the vampire clans under his rule and win the war against the humans. He needs his brother, Gareth, to become king but Gareth wants to stop Cesare so that his beloved Adele will be safe.

Gareth was just a bore, there was nothing to him except for his love for Adele. I usually like reading the hero's POV but I think Gareth would have been much more endearing if his POV wasn't known.

Cesare was slightly more engaging than Gareth, he still didn't have much depth though — all he wanted was power and control. His daddy and big brother issues were pretty dull but they made for far more interesting reading than Gareth's ridiculous feelings for Adele.

The worst part of the book was Adele, she was a bloody awful heroine. There were so many things that pissed me off about her, so be prepared for a rant about her.

Adele and her Mary Sue ways were so fucking annoying. Her stupidity was amazing — she kept questioning whether she should use her powers to kill the vampires despite the fact that 1) they were evil 2) they were responsible for millions of deaths 3) she was at bloody war with them 4) they wanted to enslave humanity. I suppose her defense of the vampires was meant to make her seem forgiving and compassionate but it just made her look like a dumb bitch.

The only reason she refused to use her powers to kill the vamps was because she didn't want to kill her twu wuv Gareth - never mind that Gareth had once killed thousands of humans and enjoyed it, never mind that the future of humanity was in her hands, never mind that humans were dropping dead. None of that mattered if it hurt her centuries old twu wuv. What a stupid, selfish bitch.

Adele's hypocrisy irked me no end — she was pissed if any of her friends didn't embrace her vampire boyfriend but then she'd feel betrayed, disgusted and self righteous when someone else was working with vampires. What a silly cow.

Naturally the only people in the spoilt bitch's life that were important to her were men - Greyfriar, Anhalt, Mamoru, her brother. There wasn't a single female that mattered to Adele. She was a sexist douche.

A very disappointing read, mainly due to an insufferable heroine, although the dull plot didn't help matters. I'm so glad I'm done with the series.

Anzu The Great Destroyer says

You are the empress, but I'm just the Greyfriar, popular elephant-riding hero.”
“No. You're the future King Gareth of Britain.”

First impressions

Sadness. Pure sadness. No more Greyfriar. No more Adele. How am I supposed to go on with my life after this? How??

Long story short

Humans are at war with the vampires and they are losing. Their only hope is Adele's geomancy power which may end the war in their favor. Adele and Gareth's relationship meets a strong barrier since Adele's gift can easily destroy Gareth with one mistimed touch.

The news is finally out that Dmitri, the vampire king, is dead. Desperate times make Gareth be willing to take Cesare's soon to be throne even if it means killing his only brother. The stakes are high and there can only be victory or death.

My thoughts

I like deep stories that are not slow paced. They should be interesting, present inspiring characters and toy with my emotions. I want fresh ideas and intelligence. I want good taste. I want to feel what the characters are feeling. I want to read something memorable. I want to feel proud of holding the book in my hand and recommend it to people who ask me about it. *The Kingmakers* perfectly satisfied my wishes.

It's no surprise that I absolutely loved *The Kingmakers*. I may have been overconfident, but I had a feeling the Griffiths wouldn't disappoint.

Theoretically, *The Kingmakers* was supposed to bore me. More than half of the book was about the war

between humans and vampires, and I usually get bored by so much politics and strategies. *The Kingmakers* approaches these points very well, and the authors do a very good job in keeping the story dynamic and very interesting. I wasn't given even a remote chance to get bored.

The story concluded in a very different way from what I was expecting. I really had a difficult time predicting what was going to happen. In the end, it was a failure from my side. I could not predict much of the story, except the obvious things. This is a very good thing because I hate it when books get too predictable. The ending was perfect for every character except perhaps Anhalt. I felt bad about what happened to him. I won't tell you more because that will spoil the story.

After reading Mamoru's story I understand his actions, and what he is doing can be considered normal for his situation. Of course this does not justify his actions, but it all makes sense now. This is another thing I love about the Griffiths. Their characters feel real and their actions always make sense.

I am absolutely happy because Adele and Gareth got a happy ending. I was extremely worried that the Griffiths will go for a tragic ending and make Gareth sacrifice himself for Adele. This did not happen, thank goodness. There were lots of things left out in the end, but this did not bother me. I like to think that this was done on purpose, and that the authors' next project will involve Simon. I'd really love to have a series focused on him once he comes of age to rule the empire. Maybe then we'd have more glimpses of Gareth and Adele, and maybe we'll get more bits and pieces regarding their future. If the Griffiths don't go for it, I won't be mad. I'll just compose a decent ending for Gareth and Adele in my mind, and live with it.

Speaking of Gareth and Adele's relationship, *The Kingmakers* had many cute moments, especially from Gareth's side. The opera scene, when he was so excited over the play. The moment when Adele showed him the Alexandrian Library. And my favorite scene, when Gareth made tea and boiled eggs for Adele.

I did not expect any of these things from Gareth. Cuteness overload!

The Epilogue made me cry. Not because it's painful or bad, I already told you that Gareth and Adele get a happy ending. It's because it was extremely emotional and sweet. I don't usually get teary eyed over these things, but Gareth and Adele grew on me over the time I've read their books, and now I see them as some people I know that finally got what they deserved. I also cried because, theoretically, I won't be reading anything for these two anymore. I'm saying "theoretically" because I'm still hoping that Simon's book will be out one day.

The following quote was in the book, after the Epilogue.

CLAY AND SUSAN GRIFFITH were married at Greyfriars Kirk in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle. That's why these books exist.

You need to finish the book in order to get why I liked it so much. This is an extremely sweet fact that changed the way I see Clay and Susan Griffith.

The Kingmakers is everything I wanted from a conclusion to *Vampire Empire* and more. It's a masterpiece, and I cannot find words strong enough to express how much I loved it. I need more than the mere five-star rating for this book.

A short conclusion

The Kingmakers is a beautiful love story coated by adventure, tragedy and sacrifice. It is the perfect conclusion to a series that is a true work of art. I strongly recommend it to those who like to read complex, action-filled stories that revolve around memorable characters that will leave you breathless.

Favorite quote

In four hundred years he had never loved anyone like he loved her. There was no logic, no rational explanation save who she was. He would never find her equal again, and he knew it. He would live and die beside her. Whatever happened in the future, his calendar now matched hers, no matter what.

Review also posted on

Jamie says

Epic story.

Spoilers from the previous two Vampire Empire books

He was the Greyfriar, the mysterious swordsman of the north. He was the consort of Empress Adele.

First, let me begin by gushing about this cover. All three of the books in this epic series, *The Greyfriar*, *The Rift Walker* and *The Kingmakers* are gorgeous. These are some of my favorite covers to view. I love how both main characters are portrayed. It's a shame that this series was penned as a trilogy, because I would love to see more of these covers (not to mention read more of this story!).

The Kingmakers begins with a lengthy war scene. The Greyfriar/Gareth is fighting alongside the Equatorian military as they are pushing northward into vampire territory. Prince Cesare, the vampire King of England, has made it clear that he plans to overrun the Equatorians. The Americans, led by Senator Clark are making progress in the new world, but the Equatorians are facing heavy losses in northern Europe. The Greyfriar is excellent help in scouting and strategy against the vampires, but even with his skills and talent, the Equatorians are facing a major defeat.

Empress Adele can no longer sit idly by while her soldiers are dying by the masses. She takes it upon herself to help save her men. Of course, no one is happy about this turn of events, but this is one of the reasons why Adele is such a powerful and compelling heroine. Adele will not sit by and watch destruction. Although she knows that her powers could possibly injure The Greyfriar, she travels to the war's front lines on her own, and takes matters into her own hands. She doesn't ask Garreth for permission, and she doesn't let fear dictate her actions. She understands the risks involved, but she is a consummate head of state. She will do whatever is best for her people, no mind the risk to herself. Adele has grown up a lot since the events of *The Greyfriar*. When she first met Garreth, she was a teen-aged princess, not accustomed to ruling the world. By the events in *The Kingmakers*, she has lived through political and personal betrayal, grown into her powers, become a leader of her nation, and followed her heart. She has learned that she has a greater responsibility than to just her own happiness.

Her hair was unencumbered and went chaotic in the wind. She was lovely, but not stunning. Still, she exuded a personal authority that demanded attention.

The relationship between Garreth and Adele is one of the sweetest and most dedicated romances I have had the pleasure to read about. Garreth and Adele are only really whole when they are with one another, yet both feel a larger responsibility to their people and their places in the world. Adele has the power to destroy Garreth, and many times, after using this power to protect her or her men from Ceasre's vampires, Garreth cannot even be in the same room as her. Garreth's family and old acquaintances would love to see Adele dead. This is not an adult, sexy-time book. There are romantic scenes, yet the physicality of their relationship is not what this book is about. It is about these two powerful people, from very different backgrounds, who love each other more dearly than anything else in the world. I really could go on and on about their relationship, but it would be best for you to read about it yourself! It's hard to put into words how awesome this couple is.

The moment the door closed, he grabbed her arm and pulled her to him in a deep embrace. She crushed against him, her mind filled only with the desire of him. His leather glove held the nape of her neck and tilted her head up as she pulled the cloth from his sharp-featured face so he could kiss her. His long, dark hair brushed her face. She thought only of the long days and nights without him, filled with worry and want.

There were so many times in this book where I thought there was no way for Adele and Garreth to survive this vampire war. There were many close calls, and moments where I thought all was lost. "Politics, deceit and death" were thrown at Adele and Gareth at every turn. Adele's power is such that Garreth could very easily be destroyed. The northern vampires are hell-bent on destroying Adele, including planting Equatorian assassins near her, so there is danger for this couple on all sides.

"Never doubt my love for you, Adele. How could I not love you? Your mind and your heart never stop working; you never stop trying to find the right path. There is always hope in you."

The side characters bring a different and layered texture to this story. Trusted confidantes turn enemies, political allies turn to betrayal, and some loved ones do remain loyal to the Empress. I must begin with the loyal, selfless and loving General Anhalt. Anhalt has been like a second father to Adele. Although he didn't originally approve of the romance between Gareth and Adele, he allowed Adele to make the decision on whom to trust. As this book continues, Anhalt comes to respect Gareth and to see that the vampire truly does love Adele more than his own life. Anhalt gave Gareth a chance to prove himself, which is more than anyone else in the Equatorian military would have allowed. Anhalt also proves his loyalty to the Empress and Equatoria when he makes a selfless sacrifice in the name of all that is good.

Flay is just as evil as she has always been. Unfortunately for Gareth and Adele, Flay is also highly intelligent and an excellent fighter. Although she has feelings for Gareth and wants to be in a position of power, she does not take kindly to Gareth's regard for Adele. When Gareth attempts to garner Flay's assistance, he doesn't take into account Flay's anger and pride. It makes for a very interesting scene towards the end of this book.

Mamorou, oh Mamorou. How you disappointed me! I won't spoil what it is that Mamorou does in this book to make me hate him, but it was nothing that I expected. I had an idea of what Mamorou planned, but was unprepared for the full scale of his ambition. I liked his back story, but he always struck me as an honorable man. Let's just say there's more to Mamorou than originally presented.

The sarcastic, sardonic humor that Clay and Susan Griffith have used in previous books is present in *The Kingmakers*. This is not a laugh-out-loud type of humor, but a sneaky, intelligent humor. Gareth and Adele are nothing if not amusing. Even during the worst of times, they tend to make observations about their surroundings or one another that had me grinning. Here is an exchange between Gareth and Adele:

"But he is a fearsome warrior. Known far and wide as the deadliest hunter his kind has yet produced. In fact, Gareth is credited with the killing of -" Adele touched his sleeve as her lips quirked upward. "Um, yes. We get the point. Prince Gareth is a god among vampires." The swordsman lowered his head with a rebuked cough. "Well, he is known to be quite impressive is my only point."

The ending of this book was intense. It seems there is no path to happiness for Adele and Gareth, and that destruction is sure to follow them. I was on the edge of my seat while reading the last couple of chapters, as if I were lost in a fairy tale. The ending was satisfying, yet not my favorite type of ending. There was an open-ended feel to it, and there are still questions I'd like answered. The authors have said that this series was only imagined as a trilogy, but I feel they have more to explore with these characters in this lovely world they have created.

If you are a fan of fantasy and steampunk, or epic, romantic stories, or like dark and gritty fairy-tale-type books, than I urge you to pick up this series. It is one of the most well-written and intelligent UFs that I have had the pleasure of reading. Thanks to Clay and Susan Griffith for penning one of my more cherished stories! I look forward to seeing what these two write in the future.

She would never stop loving him no matter where their paths led them. Never would she have regrets.

VampireNovelFan says

Powerful, Perfection

Epic doesn't even begin to describe *Kingmakers*, the final novel of the Vampire Empire trilogy. Each installment is better than the last; Susan and Clay Griffith have done an amazing job at building momentum to this moment and it really doesn't disappoint.

Adele leads the war against vampires to the north and Gareth is getting first hand experience with the it, fighting for Adele in the front lines of battle. But the vampires are formidable opponents and have gained the upper hand, quickly bringing the humans to their knees. Something must be done and Adele's geomancy powers may be the ace in the hole that the human race needs to win once and for all.

The last novel is jam packed with story, but there's a lot of action so it gets going much faster than its predecessors. Politics, betrayal, and new revelations are key to Adele and Gareth's development. They are the heart of this saga after all. But with their seemingly impossible love, can the heart still beat?

Adele has matured wonderfully over the novels and she's become really admirable. I liked seeing her in a major position of power, strategizing and making difficult decisions that challenge morality. It's a nice departure from other urban fantasy novels where the heroines start at the bottom and have to work their way up. She's on a slippery slope as she tries to control her geomancy powers, which may be dangerous to more than solely vampires.

Gareth is as wonderful as always with his selflessness. He's even adorable at times as he still tries to fully understand human customs and history. His light moments with Adele really gave me the case of the warm fuzzies, if only because it feels so fleeting as the pull of his vampire heritage requires that he finally face his brother once and for all. That, and her powers seriously conflict with his entire being on a biological level beyond their control.

This book has pretty much everything you could ask for and you'll experience practically every emotion while reading it. The ending is very powerful, enough that you may want to have kleenex on hand, but I won't spoil it any further. My only complaint is that I want more. I love this world and I'm sad to see it end; though unfortunately that must happen to all good things...

Well done to the Griffiths on their fantastic work! This is definitely one of my favorite trilogies ever.

*ARC provided by the publisher

*Review also posted to Amazon.

Sharon says

All I can say is Colonel Anhalt is the bessttttt. He's not even the main character, but he's literal perfection. His honor, loyalty, and kindness. *sigh* I don't even know what age he is (don't know if I missed it or the series just didn't say), but whether he's 20 or 100, I'll marry him in a jiffy.

As for the actual other stuff in this book, it was OK. I'm still not 100% into the romance or politics or pacing of this series, but it has been interesting and different.

The ending was pretty satisfying too.

Aly is so frigging bored says

What an ending!

Savannah (Books With Bite) says

Vampire Empire is by far, an amazing series. I have followed this series from the first book and love it. I'm, sad to see the story end, but so happy that it's ending well.

The characters of the book have grown and learned so much. It is so cool to see both Gareth and Adele working together. The way they came up with plans so flawlessly, the way they work together, the trusted each other. They were a fabulous team. They both made some very important decisions, that I think well do them good. They thought things out and weren't doing anything rash.

Now, their love for each other is so amazing to see. It's a love that everyone yearns to have and jealous to watch. They are a match made in heaven. Their few stolen moments of peace left me in awe and wanting more.

The plot itself is excellent. Loose ties are tied as well as the final secrets are exposed. The magnificent action sequences leads the reader to full blown adventure right where you are sitting. It's fast, it heart-racing, it's AWESOMENESS! The intimate details of the world building along with flowing emotions, it blows you away.

The Kingmakers is an amazing story! Written beautifully, The Kingmakers raises the bar for all YA books. A complete package of writing, story line with amazing characters, nothing goes wrong in The Kingmakers. If you want a adventure that takes you away, The Kingmakers will rock your world!!

Yodamom says

What an ending for this trilogy, WOW-it had it all- intrigue, betrayals, action, political upheavals, and of course love. What a wonderful end to the series. I found myself cheering at the demise of some nasty characters, they really asked for it so many times. I was also in tears for the ones lost for no reason other than cruelty. There is a lot of drama packed into this one book. It all comes to a fine point that left me satisfied and a bit jarred from the thrill ride.

I can't tell you anything about the story without spoiling it.

Willow says

All in all, I have to say this was a great ending to the *Vampire Empire* trilogy. I had no idea how the Griffiths were going to pull everything off, but they did. And what's funny is, they truly waited until the wee end of the book to resolve everything. While reading, I wanted to peek ahead, but I stopped myself, saying "No no, don't do it."

Now I don't want to give anything away, but this review is probably a little spoilery. Don't worry though, I promise not to give away the ending. :)

Now that it's over, I've been contemplating the series as a whole, and I'm not really sure if it's a five star series. I think at first I was just so blown away by the amazing Steampunk world the Griffiths created that I couldn't help squeeing like a fangirl. I would love to see this series made into movie or a graphic novel. It's so visually stunning.

The book seems to lack a certain grittiness though. The characters aren't twisted and gnarled with little flaws and peculiarities. The dialogue is flat and stilted. There's no raunchy sex or grisly horror...no disturbing surprises (except for one at the end.) Of course it's YA, so it isn't supposed to be too disturbing. All three books have a certain wholesomeness to it that reminded me of old 1930s swashbuckler movies, with the same noble sentiments and same morality. And I say this even with the grim world the Griffiths created and the vicious vampires. I can't help but feel this book needs a good dose of dark fantasy and some spicier personalities. Don't get me wrong, Cesare does some horrible things and I was shocked a couple times, but I wasn't pulled in kicking and screaming into the horror. The writing style is too distant to be visceral.

Gareth is probably the most complicated character in book. As a vampire, he has killed hundreds of humans, yet he has grown to love humanity. He's still a vampire though, and is missing a certain empathy which makes him unable to notice the nuisances of human behavior. Yet what he does miss, he seems to make up

for with instinct, speed and strength, plus a keen sense of smell and hearing. One of the advantages humans have over the vampires is they are smarter and more complex. Humans read and write, build fortresses and weapons, while vampires are just parasites, wearing the clothes of dead humans, letting the walls of the cities they conquered fall into ruins around them. Vampires don't even clean up after themselves, leaving dead bodies to stink up the streets. While Gareth may have looked outside the box and decided his race is worthless, he still is not as cunning as his human friends, which I thought was an interesting choice. Does Gareth have to be clever to be a hero, or is it alright to have him go on instinct alone? I liked that they attached the vampire weaknesses to Gareth, instead of making him a super vampire. Some of the bad things that happen in the book happen because Gareth has no forethought. I thought this made him interestingly flawed.

I read a review that complained that Adele was a Mary Sue, and I decided I didn't agree. The main reason being that Adele is vulnerable. I liked her. I was rooting for her. She didn't annoy me. Yeah, she's got a special power, but it's also a curse. It's aging her. She could die, and she is far from invincible. But she never whines about it. She accepts it. And she even manages to laugh at herself saying, that sometimes her overconfidence '*annoys even her.*' Adele's biggest weaknesses is that she's not coldblooded enough to make the hard decisions of a ruler. But she's young, and her harrowing experiences change her through the series. Her other big weakness is her lover is a vampire, which complicates her life. The Griffiths make it quite clear that she and Gareth cannot have children and their future together is not going to be easy. Gareth will outlive her, watching her grow old while he does not. This relationship will be tainted by tragedy, and Griffiths know this. Consequently, the ending isn't all hearts, flowers and perfect bliss. I think having a tint of sadness at the end is always fitting, because it reflects true life.

Problems I had with the series were I found the battle scenes and General Anhalt's point of view boring. I didn't care about Anhalt. But to be honest, the only writer who's ever been able to pull me into a battle was Bernard Cornwell. Most of the time that stuff just doesn't interest me.

I was also bummed that there weren't more scenes with bad girl Flay. She's my favorite character in the series. I could read a whole book about her.

Anyhoo, I did enjoy this series and this last book. Vampire Empire is definitely my favorite Steampunk!

Mogsy (MMOGC) says

4 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <http://bibliosanctum.com/2015/10/13/b...>

I was so happy when I found out that Clay Griffith and Susan Griffith were returning to the world of Vampire Empire this fall with another Adele and Gareth book. Even though you can read the upcoming novel as a stand-alone without reading this trilogy first, I still wanted to find out how things will end in the third book before tackling The Geomancer. Plus, I am a completionist at heart.

It's actually been quite a while since I read the first two books in this series, but this is a very special world full of very special characters, the kind that stay with you for a long time. I jumped right back in with no problems, and it was like I never left. War between humans and vampire is at full tilt, with Empress Adele of Equatoria launching a campaign to take back the lands of the north. Fighting at her side is her consort, the vampire Prince Gareth who is helping the human cause in his guise as the legendary Greyfriar.

The Equatorians also have a secret weapon – Adele herself. A talented geomancer, she has the ability to use the powers of the earth to burn away vampires in vast numbers. But geomancy has its costs. As surely as it kills vampires, the power also poses a danger to her beloved Gareth, not to mention every time she uses geomancy it drains her energy and threatens her own life. After a huge attack on the heart of vampire territory, Adele sees the destruction she has wrought and starts to wonder if there is another way to wage this war. Gareth seeks a chance to do affect change as well, using his influence to undermine the efforts of his brother Cesare, who has become the new king of the vampire clans.

This book is full of bloody battles, hidden alliances, and betrayals. It's a lot to fit into the concluding volume of a trilogy, but in spite of this, the novel is well balanced and pulls everything together in a spectacular finish. Of all three books, *The Kingmakers* is probably the most action-packed and fast-paced, building up to the climax of the war.

And yet, there's also plenty of what first drew me to this series: the romance! In between all the intense fighting and war planning, it's good to see that Adele and Gareth are still able to find ways to spend quality time together. When it comes to forbidden love, theirs is one of my favorites. So many tales involving star-crossed lovers rely on unnecessary drama and emotional manipulation to keep things "interesting", but there's no need for that nonsense when it comes to Adele and Gareth. Throughout the trilogy, their romance has never once felt contrived to me, with their relationship rising above all those cloying clichés. It's always good to see them as a team, with the Greyfriar's resolve complementing the Empress's indomitable spirit.

The Kingmakers is an emotional finale, filled with difficult choices and dark twists. You might be surprised at how things end. For me, it was a satisfying conclusion to the trilogy, and that's what mattered. Clay and Susan Griffith did something very amazing here, taking a tired old trope like vampires but still somehow managed to make it interesting and unique. Throwing in the alternate history and steampunk setting was a stroke of genius as well.

This book has only cemented my love for this world and the characters. Thinking about the sweet moments like the scenes of Gareth and Adele together at the opera house or at the Great Library of Alexandria still makes me smile. It has also made me realize that it's probably a good thing that I read this only after I found out there's another Vampire Empire book on the horizon. Clearly, I'm not ready to say good bye just yet! Now onwards to *The Geomancer*!

Hayat says

I really enjoyed reading *The Kingmakers*, the conclusion to this brilliant trilogy. I read all three books too fast to do a proper review, since I was desperate to know what happens next but now that I'm finished, can't wait to reread this series, take my time and savour each moment.
