



Ashes of the Sun

Hanovi Braddock

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Ayesh knows that danger lurks in the Miritiin Mountains, and danger is just what she wants. With her beloved cities of Neah turned to dust and rubble in the goblin wars, with even their memory fading to legend, what reason does she have to go on living? She's ready to die--as long as she goes down killing goblins.

But the Miritiin minotaurs have plans for Ayesh, plans that don't include her death--yet. And as Ayesh becomes entangled in the intricate web of Miritiin politics, she realizes that allies can be even deadlier than enemies.

Ashes of the Sun Details

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From Reader Review *Ashes of the Sun* for online ebook

Kaitlynn says

I always hesitate to re-read a book I loved as a kid, out of fear that it won't stand up to an adult's consumption and retroactively diminish my childhood enjoyment. But I remembered a few odd things about the book and wanted to re-visit it.

I still love it. This is, hands down, the best Magic novel. It isn't as blatantly Magic as, say, *Arena* is. (Not that *Arena* is bad, it is also the best Magic novel in its own way.) There's maybe one paragraph that references specific cards explicitly (aside from Hurloon minotaur).

A bit of the plot: (view spoiler)

The characterization is solid. There's very few characters I'd peg as having little depth - of the 10 goblins, only 2-4 are really fleshed out, and one minotaur, (view spoiler) is decidedly one-note. Ayesh is fantastic, beginning the novel as a self-hating, nationalistic, obsessed individual with a (at least understandable) hatred of goblins. Her arc is realistic and satisfying, without being some cheesy and unbelievable 180 change in all things. The goblins that are developed have satisfying arcs as well, though not all are necessarily happy. There's a special type of horror to some of them, like (view spoiler)

The action in the novel is well-written, easy to follow, with emotional impact. The temptation with fantasy action, especially fantasy action with martial arts, is to name every single move as if giving it a name like Break Lion or Thousand Leaves makes it understandable, cool, or believable. Instead, we are given actual movements. Its refreshing.

The minotaur culture is well-done, though I would have liked to see it a bit more fleshed out. There's plenty of thoughtful details that emphasize the author actually thought about the physiology of the creatures in a way few fantasy writers seem to do- no, they wouldn't use traditional human-style chairs with that sort of knee articulation. The cast/country does seem a bit sparse - we are given that this is an entire country living in the mountains, but rarely see more than a dozen named characters. This is explained away as the labyrinth is dark (minotaurs require much less light to see than humans) and minotaurs are largely secretive, tucking themselves away in the tunnel equivalent of alleys and backways and peering through secret peepholes.

I can't review the book without noting the mindfulness theme within it. Ayesh could have been a great ACT therapist. The lessons she gives the goblins could have been ripped right from the ACT textbook I'm reading. Goblin mind, diamond mind? Sounds like self-as-content and self-as-context, and the mind labeling exercises. She alludes to the leaves on the stream exercise for clearing thoughts, of the exercise in which a pain or other aversive experience is imagined as a separate physical object, at mindfulness of one's present moment, starting with the sensations from sitting in the chair, at breathing, at acting appropriately towards one's values despite feeling 'negative' emotions. It was so neat to discover this new connection from a childhood love to an adult love.

If you are only going to read one Magic novel, let this be the one.

Shase Lindell says

Really interesting in the context of the mtg universe!

Chip Hunter says

Ashes of the Sun is another quick and fun early MTG novel. Hanovi Braddock's novel takes place in a land of Minotaurs and Goblins and Humans, where each race believes itself superior and none understand the others. The story has a pretty good plot with danger and excitement and (as with nearly every fantasy book) plenty of fighting. The characters in this book are what really stand out though. Not your typical heroes here, but characters with their own unique personalities and flaws. Ayesh is a stubborn human who knows that she is right about everything in the world and will not back down from anyone. Tlik is an educated goblin who sees fault in everyone but himself. Zhanrax is a powerful minotaur who could never accept equality with others races or creatures. Throughout the story, these characters make decisions and act in very believable and realistic ways. By creating these characters, Braddock has made a point about real life human behavior and politics that will make you laugh and cringe.

Josh says

I ended up really getting into and enjoying this story, quite unexpectedly. In the beginning the characters are pretty bland but about a third of the way in I was hooked. This was a very solid story, surprisingly realistic in the way things play out.

One question though...why is there no magic in this MTG book?

David says

Reading this book was more about nostalgia for me than anything else. I played Magic a lot in the '90s, and this is one of the earliest Magic novels; I'd read many of those (some pretty decent, most pretty bad), but never this one. My coming across this copy is itself is a neat story.

I stumbled upon this book while visiting my hometown and showing my wife around. She's a librarian, so of course we had to see our local library. They were having a book sale (naturally), and this is where I found Ashes of the Sun. "Cool," I thought, "brings back memories." But I wasn't swayed to actually buy it until I saw that the half title page is signed by the author (with a personal message "For Marsha," if you're out there). That made the book neat enough for me to take a real big shine to it.

And so I read it, and it was a pretty decent story--interesting, good action, all of that. It does have some holes, though ... well, maybe just this one copy does, because pages 87 through 118 are replaced with a repeat of pages 55 through 86! This binding error, the signed nature of this copy, and the fact that there are numerous typos but only on the back cover blurb (proper names misspelled, but consistently) all make me wonder if this is in fact an author advance copy. That's the kind of quirk that gives this book a special place in my heart.

Though, if I ever met Marsha, I would gladly return the book to her if she desired. And if I ever meet Hanovi Braddock (pseudonym for Bruce Holland Rogers), I will kindly ask for a summary of chapters 10 through 14.
