



The Golden Horn

Judith Tarr

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Constantinople, A.D. 1203: a great army camps outside the City of Cities, and threatens it with conquest. Within the City, a Greek witch and a renegade monk who is also a white enchanter do their utmost to hold back the tides of war. But even their great powers may not be able to save Byzantium's empire from the Western Crusade.

The Golden Horn Details

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Author : Judith Tarr

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From Reader Review The Golden Horn for online ebook

Helen says

A capsule review ported over from my old database drew a hateful comment.
Both have been deleted.

Kristyn Jensen says

This was so much better than the first one. I loved the story line. Ready for the last one

Kes says

Ok, so this is where the self-sacrificial aspect of the main character started weighing on me. He appears to have not learned any survival or self-preservation skills outside of emotional outbursts - which I didn't appreciate. The writing was still good; still fresh, I just didn't appreciate Alfred's actions as much.

Garnette says

This book is confounding. I appreciate historical novels because they show us how people in different times and places responded to the unique circumstances of their lives. And I appreciate fantasy novels which bring to life an imaginary society. But this novel is an odd combination of the two that doesn't work for me. The book vividly describes the shameful Fourth Crusade and the sack of Constantinople about 1200. As a historical novel, it works; both the Greek and Latin characters engaged my interest and I have a better understanding of the human impact of the war. However, the "hero" of our story is an elf, not the cute little Santa's helper kind but the handsome immortal warrior Legolas kind, The fantasy components detract from the history, because they're so implausible, but the book doesn't really work as a fantasy because, despite his extraordinary powers our hero is helpless to change the course of events. The author seems to have used him more as a device to link together events and characters from both sides of the conflict who would otherwise never have known one another.

TheRealMelbelle says

The 1204 sack of Constantinople and three day pillage and rape of the beautiful city and its inhabitants is never easy to read. The author is too fine a historian to gloss over the brutality of that terrible event. Despite its bits of magical fiction the history is solid and these battle accounts are not for the wee ones. Another good story of Constantinople is Jill Paton Walsh's *_The Emperor's Winding Sheet_* which gives a more thorough look at the intricate rituals of the Eastern church.

Knitwit Tarvin says

Alf's adventures continue in Constantinople at the time of the Fourth Crusade. I am continuing to enjoy the vivid picture Tarr paints with her words. Historical fiction/ fantasy is not my typical genre, but this trilogy has been well worth it.

April Steenburgh says

Alfred is a monk of St. Ruan's Abbey- devoted to his Brothers and his God, a scholar of rare talent, and very much more than a man. A foundling, he was taken in and raised by the Abbey as one of their own, and while his colleagues have grown to old men, he remains no more than a youth.

The quiet Abbey life that Alfred clings to is pulled away from him as he is sent out to the world, carrying a message of violence to the Richard Coeur de Leon. Once out of the Abbey's comforting walls, Alfred cannot help but acknowledge something other than human blood runs through his veins. His eerie beauty and otherworldly skills catch the eye of the Hounds of God, who swear to purge him and all others like him from the Church, as well as the world itself.

From the temperate north to the sweltering heat of the Crusades, the Hound and the Falcon trilogy is a magnificent journey. There is a beauty, an acknowledgement of the sublime, that swells through every page. Pausing and closing the book was like coming up for air, almost disorienting, definitely displeasing as I wanted nothing more than to keep reading. Rarely have I been touched so by a book, but there is something bare, brutal and honest to Alfred and his search for identity and meaning that I could not help but be moved.

All else, all grand crusading and conflict aside, it reaches down to the root of identity and poses questions there that inflict an almost sympathetic bout of introspection upon the reader. And it is perfect.

Ms. Tarr has woven a depth of history and cultural detail in her books that make the world breathe. The characters and settings are whole, believable, and obviously lovingly researched.

Highly recommended.

Emilie says

I know I read this near the time it was first published, and I know I really liked it, but the details are a little fuzzy this many years later. I'll have to read it again.

Margareth8537 says

Always enjoy books about Constantinople, although 'enjoy' is probably not the correct word. Perhaps 'fascinating' would be better. Thought this was the best book in the trilogy

Ita says

I found this book only so-so because Alf was a Marty Stu and didn't engage me *at all*. He was good, kind, patient, noble. Boring. The other characters, Jehan and the family he ends up adopting, were much more interesting.

And his burns? He's in a hot dry climate and he forgets to protect himself? This was just an excuse for him to be "rescued" and meet the other main characters.

I will start the next book for the sake of completeness.

Heather Wickett says

I've realized that Alf is an interesting character in terms of who/what he is and his actions but he has a dull personality - what he says and what he thinks are sometimes are big ol' yawn fest. I found the other characters much more interesting but Jehan seemed a bit more different to my taste.

KA says

Heartbreaking account of the Sack of Constantinople in the 4th Crusade. Good story with believable characters and character development; really well-researched.

Maya Morikawa says

Constantinople

While this one, mostly history, the building of the characters moves on. Getting to know the new people and the parts they play.

Marian says

A gripping story.

I was worried at first because the book started out with a fraught quarrel, and I was afraid this was going to be angst. I shouldn't have worried. This was a gripping story and I look forward to the next installment.

Julie says

The problem with a continuation of an Alf-centered storyline is that I don't like Alf. He's not a good, interesting character and I want him to get struck by lightning.
