



Stalking Darkness

Lynn Flewelling

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With the Leran threat laid to rest, Alec and Seregil are now able to turn their attention to the ancient evil which threatens their land. The Plenimarans, at war with Skalans, have decided to defeat their ancient enemy by raising up the Dead God, Seriamaius. The early attempts at this reincarnation—masterminded by the sinister Duke Mardus and his sorcerous minion Vargul Ashnazai—once left Seregil in a sorcerous coma. Now, an ancient prophecy points to his continuing role in the quest to stop Mardus in his dread purpose.

Seregil's friend and Mentor, the wizard Nysander, has long been the guardian of a deadly secret. In a secret, silver-lined room hidden well beneath the Oreska, he has served for most of his 300 years as the keeper of a nondescript clay cup. But this cup, combined with a crystal crown and some wooden disks, forms the Helm of Seriamaius, and any mortal donning the reconstructed Helm will become the incarnation of the god on earth.

Nysander holds the cup and Mardus the wooden disks—one of which was responsible for Seregil's coma—but the crown must still be located. Threatened under pain of death by Nysander to keep his quest a secret even from his loyal companion, Alec, Seregil is dispatched to find the last missing piece of the Helm so that he and Nysander can destroy it. But this is only the beginning of one of his deadliest journeys ever, for the prophecy also holds that four will come together in a time of darkness, and gradually all that Seregil values is placed at risk as he, Alec, Nysander and Micum are drawn into a deadly web of terror and intrigue.

Stalking Darkness Details

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From Reader Review *Stalking Darkness* for online ebook

Jennn says

I like the characters, I do. They change and develop. I also like how Flewelling will revisit things, too, like the death of Alec's father. Things aren't just swept under the rug and I appreciate that.

I also appreciate how Seregil and Alec's relationship isn't the focus of the story that unfortunately happens too much in romance, especially homoerotic. The book is more dedicated to the story and in doing so, makes their relationship realistic and believable.

The biggest complaint I have is making the villains, well, too villainous. There's no semblance of humanity in them. They hunt, torture, kill and do little else. I was really hoping that there would be much more depth in her villains because I appreciate The Antagonist and a strong antagonist makes a stronger protagonist. However, these were bad, bad men and their actions seemed over-the-top, like she was trying to convince her reader of how nefarious they truly were. I ached to see instances of weakness, and quiet contemplation. Maybe even a relationship (non-romantic) form between her two leading villains. But unfortunately they struck me as flat, and although terrifying, remained uninteresting.

As a small note, Thero is becoming a fantastic character and I'm excited to see more of him in the next book.

Kirstine says

The heartbreaking and thrilling conclusion to the story started in *Luck in the Shadows*, and whoo boy, does it not disappoint!

It has a little bit of everything: Necromancy, strange rituals to try and bring back evil gods, heartbreak, true love, heroic sacrifices and some good, good kisses.

Really, it's everything I wanted and so much more. It gives us the answer to the prophecy that has haunted the story since the first book, and the answer is... not excellent. In fact it broke my heart. Very, very much. I finished this book and then I spent a day in a sort of daze, where I just felt numb. I was that ruined.

It's not only that it's heartbreaking, it's that it's so well written. This series is not perfect, not at all, but Lynn Flewelling has seriously poured some heart and soul into it, into the universe, the characters and the story she hopes to tell. And it shows. It shows in the way I got attached to these characters lightning quick, and the way I breathlessly prayed they'd all make it out alive.

The intense desire I felt for them to be okay, to be happy, to be together, is honestly the most compelling thing about these books. As much as I love the world and the plot, it's the characters that draw me back in. This bond they share that goes beyond mere friendship and romance. It takes different shapes between each of them, but it's unbreakable.

It's what gives the series heart.

I was completely and utterly blown away by this story and the conclusion to the things Flewelling started in

the first book. These two can be read on their own, but I'm still extremely excited to return to the series and Alec and Seregil. (view spoiler)

Anyway, all this to say: Read this series. It's great. It's excellent. It's all blades and swagger and roguish charms. With a little dash of magic, saving the world and true love. I'm still head over heels for it.

Igor Ljubuncic says

I just realized I forgot to add a whole bunch of Lynn's books to my shelf. WTF!

This is my favorite Alec & Seregil book; also the first one I read; also the one I read the most. Probably a good solid dozen times, if not more. It has all the right ingredients. A noble rogue, an innocent coming-of-age youth with a hidden streak of a rake, all sorts of sex, an ancient evil with some rather disgusting elements, magic, both good and dark and twisted, proper chase and adventure, warfare that is realistic and cruel, a colorful balance of main characters, wizards, geography, history, culture, hidden identities, court flair, and then some.

I think it's also better than Luck in the Shadows, because our two heroes are well established, and they are comfortable in their guise, wealth and modus operandi. The never-ending war between Skala and Plenimar serves an excellent backdrop to the story. As it turns out, Lynn writes in a style that could be defined as borderline-YA, however, she excels when she goes dark magic as she did in this book and the last installment (see my review).

In a way, it's the 90s Locke Lamore with a twist. Lynn definitely has a unique style and she did an all-male cast (in the true sense) way before it was popular in the fantasy genre, and not because it was needed, but because it gave her story a special depth and scale. You might find it naive at times, but then, it surprises you with sudden, unexpected, morbid delight.

Extremely recommended.

Nightrunners are back in town,
A hidden letter, a silken gown,
Blood in a bowl,
A piercing howl,
Seriamaius must not wear his crown.

Igor

April says

Deserves lots of GIFS!

Better than the first, in my opinion. Maybe it's just because the story is more engaging for me this time round ...and I've grown more attached to the characters, which, I know, is
Though the writing isn't necessarily what I would usually read (I find it kind of heavy sometimes), it's well

suited for this type of book. It's just colossal amounts of fun. The world Flewelling has spun is wondrous and enchanting; a pleasure to dive into. This series is seriously underrated.

But specifically about this book; I experienced a wide variety of feelings. (Slight spoilers follow)

ALEC BEING TORTURED

NYSANDER

THERO

SEREGIL

AND FINALLY

SEREGIL AND ALEC

Fantastic.

..And now I wait for *Traitor's Moon* to arrive.

Lia says

Okay, okay, okay. Der zweite Band war definitiv anders vom Gefühl her und irgendwie weniger flauschig, dafür aber super spannend. Mehr als das letzte Drittel war so aufregend, dass ich kaum aufhören konnte zu lesen. Ich bin immer noch sehr begeistert von allen Charakteren und deren Beziehungen zueinander. Es fühlt sich einfach echt an, wie sie reagieren. Auch gefiel mir, dass es Kapitel über Beka und ihre Truppe gab. Beka ist großartig und so stark.

Was mich ein wenig erschreckt hat: Ich konnte sogar eine Beziehung zu Mardus aufbauen und kann ihn nur bedingt hassen, auch wenn alle seine Taten danach schreien, ihn schrecklich zu finden.

Alles in allem gefiel mir der Teil noch besser als der erste.

Devann says

This is probably more of a 3.5 but I did like it a lot more than the first one so I decided to round up. Also I literally stopped in the middle of reading it to go read fanfic instead and as I've said before, in my backwards-ass mind that means I really like it lol.

I am still mildly creeped out by the age difference, but so far it's not like ...I mean it's the end of the 2nd book and they've literally JUST kissed at maybe the 90% mark so it's not as creepy as if I was reading, say ...an Anne Rice book or something lol. And they are super cute together, but it's just like okay whyyy did you have to make Alec so young???

Also still kind of side-eyeing the lack of main female characters. This book was better than the last one because Beka was much more prominent and also had some POV chapters so I'm hoping that is a trend that is going to continue as the books go forward. There's really no point making a fantasy world where men and

women are equal if you're still going to have all your main characters be men, but both high fantasy and M/M romance historically have a problem with women so I guess this narrative is fighting doubly hard to get out of that.

But overall I really liked this. I apparently retained much more information than I thought from the first book because I actually found the plot to be very easy to follow and also pretty exciting. I'm excited to see what happens in the next book because it seems like these first two books were kind of one story line that is now more or less closed so maybe they'll be doing something completely different next.

Jesse says

[A little darker than

Soukyan Blackwood says

It's a long book, as I said. The start of it is so different from the middle, and the end, that I can't describe it in earnest without spoiling the living hell out of it. What I can say is that while slow paced it was intense, and had the edge-of-the-chair moments by the handful. Descriptions are down a notch, so it's easier to read. But be aware, it is a mistake to think this is a light goodnight read. It's too hard to put it aside for it to be a good bed companion. I'll give it a full 5 out of 5 this time. And on to the next one! And the rest of this is at [**NightModeReading**]

Troy G says

I'm of two minds about this book.

It is good fantasy adventure. There is a good pace to the adventure, and while some of the world may have been a bit foggy than other books in this genre, I did enjoy the quests, magic, and intrigue.

HOWEVER, I was really, really bothered by the romantic relationship between the two main characters. It isn't about the homosexual part of it (though that did surprise me when I was 16). The problem I had with this was the age and social maturity difference between the coupling. When I was 16 first reading this I denounced Seregil as a pedophile, guilty of emotional incest, and felt personally betrayed when the hero who I'd been cheering on for 2 books turned out to be a sex offender. To explain the incest thing, I always felt that Seregil had defacto adopted Alec as a surrogate brother.

I'm nearing 30 now, and I reread the books recently. I'm less quick to denounce Seregil, and am able to feel a little more, to-each-his-own about it. But, there remains something wrong about the relationship. If I were friend to the people involved I would council them to give it more time for their maturity levels to normalize before jumping into a relationship with such a dramatic imbalance in the power dynamic.

I know that the current hot trend is age-old vampires sexing up teenage girls, and that is somehow considered acceptable, but I will continue to question any relationship based on such unstable initial footing.

Would I recommend this book? Yes, but only to mature readers. Those who have a firm grip on the difference between right and wrong.

? Irena ? says

This is definitely the most underrated series I've come across so far. The first book is great. This one? I can't even begin explaining why I loved it so much. I spent the last sixty or so pages (maybe more) crying. From the start till the very end of this book I've gone through so many feelings: from annoyance through astonishment and speechlessness, deep hatred, despair and gloating to bitter-sweet happiness. Add any other you can think of in between and you can find it in this story.

What started in the first book ends here. While the Leran threat was removed in *Luck in the Shadows*, Alec and Seregil made enemies stealing from Vargul Ashnazai and Duke Mardus. Mardus is trying to make Helm of Seriamaius whole and make himself a god. Nysander sends Seregil to get part of the Helm to him and forbids him to tell Alec anything about it. I was afraid that would ruin the story and it would if it lasted longer. Fortunately, the retrieval of the crown lasts only a few pages.

As in the previous book, they are facing a very dangerous opponent (more dangerous than the Lerans) and it is up to these two and their friends (both old and new, and some unexpected) to deal with it. It is impossible to say more without spoilers. I would suggest to be careful when reading reviews since some things will ruin your reading experience. I didn't know anything about the plot except the basics from the blurb, so certain events left me stunned.

Kaitlin says

Trigger: There is some female-on-male rape in this book although it's not in explicit detail

This book is the second in the series and picks up not too long after the ending of the first. We see that our characters have grown more since the end of book one and settled into routines and life in Rhimane, but there's still many mysteries to uncover, both about each other and to do with what they found out in book #1.

In this instalment I really did connect more to the character of Seregil and I think, besides Lysander and Micum, he's my favourite in the book. I do really like Alec and there are moments I really love him, but Seregil is just such an interesting character and his thoughts about life and love intrigue me. Seregil also has the added bonus of a very long life to live and so he's been through much and he's still living and experiencing new things too...

What I did really like about this one is it felt a little more like a storyline rather than just happenstance. Sometimes in book #1 I felt as if the characters were just trundling along without too much *life-threatening* stuff forcing them into tricky situations. This book had a little more action and there was more to play for which meant it kept me interested and excited throughout.

Overall this is a very solid continuation and it again made me want to just keep going with the series (which I

have done) so I would highly recommend it. Fantasy with bisexual characters and super fun plot...why, yes please! 4.5*s overall.

Nancy says

This is the second installment in the Nightrunner series, and I enjoyed it even more than the first. Lord Seregil of Rhiminee and his apprentice, Alec of Kerry continue their undercover work, meet a new circle of friends, and get embroiled in a new set of adventures and intrigue. The characterization is excellent and the story continues to be riveting. A series well worth reading!

Mimei says

I AM SO INVESTED.

Noah says

It's been approximately 10 minutes since I finished Luck in the Shadows, and here I am, immediately starting book 2....

6/24: I finished the book and my emotions are spinning like crazy and I cried a lot and yelled a lot and it was just really good okay. Don't expect a proper review for this one because it's just gonna be me screaming the entire time. if you liked the first one, you'll like this one. That's all I have to say that isn't just AAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH.

Ayanna says

I'm guilty of breaking off in the middle of reading and coming back to this one a lot later.

It made reading awkward. I was no longer into the whole intrigue thing and just waiting for Alec and Seregil to become lovers.

Still, I kind of got back into the whole web of intrigue that was happening. It's exceedingly well-crafted. I like that it's not so explicit I can't walk around with this and not be afraid some kid might accidentally read over my shoulder or pick this up.

Welp. Onto bk 3...

Fatima says

Fey says

I enjoyed this second part, much better than the first book in the nightrunner series.

I believe I was let down by the first book because I wasn't at all drawn in by Seregil's character, he appeared too perfect to me; he had fame, money, knowledge, skills, charisma, good looks, loyal friends etc. It seemed nothing could go wrong for this character, he was too well set up. And poor Alec was continually left behind by Seregil, I always feel resentful when a main character in a book is blinded to the happenings of the wider world, I feel like it's putting blinkers on your eyes while you're reading his point of view..

Having said that about the last book.. this second one was much better for me. Seregil was still almost too perfect, but he had his flaws and his problems, nothing to make him unlikeable at all, but still problems nonetheless! And Alec was brought into the know a little more, becoming a bigger part of the espionage. Although there was still a fair amount of secrecy between all the characters, it wasn't unexplainable, there is a reason why some spys cannot be told the whole secret!

Also this book was a lot darker in places than the first, a lot more gritty and grisly, there were several scenes that were just downright horrific, and I wasn't expecting this level of darkness, but when theres warfare, evil and torture, I suppose it must be depicted!

Shortlatte says

This review covers the first three books in the Nightrunner series. For those who haven't yet read these books, be warned that there are spoilers ahead.

Every year I seem to stumble upon a series that seemed innocuous enough on the shelf, and I take that series home, unwittingly committing myself to a week in which all my waking thoughts will be consumed by this new world and its characters. Last year, I was lucky enough to happen upon this phenomenon twice, first with Karen Marie Moning's Fever series, then with Anne Bishop's Black Jewels Trilogy. I flew through these books at a feverish pace, desperate to find out what would happen to the characters that I'd grown to love yet unwilling to let them go when I'd finally turned the last page. They haunted me for months afterward, and every few months I still flip through to revisit favorite chapters. They are the books that I compare all others against, not in terms of quality per se, but in terms of emotional investment they set the bar.

It took approximately a page and a half for me to realize that the Nightrunner series would be my new series obsession.

Lynn Flewelling achieves that rare feat of balancing complexity of worldbuilding with character development, yet she accomplishes the latter in a most intriguing way. Alec and Seregil have skyrocketed to the top of my list of all-time favorite characters, yet even after three books there is still so much we don't know about these two, and it's not for lack of description or purposeful concealment. Well, the latter does contribute, particularly in the first two books, for Seregil portrays one of my favorite character conventions: the spy, the thief, the rogue, perpetually situated on the outskirts while secretly immersed within the intrigue,

he gives away little about himself out of necessity and reluctance. Alec, though he suffers from ignorance of his own ancestry, is likewise hesitant to share more of himself early on, though that hesitance is borne largely of confusion and self-denial. We learn more of both characters as the series progresses, yet it is a slow chipping away rather than a large revelation, as each character has good reason to be cautious of giving away too much of himself. Perhaps it is the scarcity of true insight into either character that makes their connection in the first book, *Luck in the Shadows*, so compelling, for despite how little either knows the other, their friendship forged on a spur-of-the-moment impulse never feels artificial or unfounded. It's obvious that Alec and Seregil should be as close as they are, though neither character nor the reader discover the why of it until much later on.

The *Nightrunner* books are a sort of epic/high fantasy hybrid, yet what struck me most about the worldbuilding was the fact that, particularly early on in the series, the fantasy elements take a backseat to the *Nightrunner* hijinks. Make no mistake, magic is an integral and essential element of the story, and it provides an ever-present backdrop for the events that unfold, yet I never felt overwhelmed by a landscape that seemed otherworldly as with so many books of this genre. Flewelling has stated that she doesn't want her characters to have an easy-out just because of the presence of magic, and this philosophy really shines in her worldbuilding. The focus of the first few books is really on Alec and Seregil's escapades, honing the skills of an occupation that takes much practice and a little luck, yet is no more improbable in a world devoid of magic than in one inhabited by wizards, necromancers, and dragons. True to her word, Flewelling never lets her characters become complacent with the ease of magical ability, and in fact our two leads possess very little in the way of magical skill. Their trials, successes, and failures are a testament to the abilities they have earned rather than the serendipity of the world in which they live. Likewise, even wizards as powerful as Nysander and Thero are far from invincible; their talents are similarly won of hard work and practice, and they don't possess endless reservoirs of power. They must choose when and how to use what they have, with real consequences for overworking themselves and, more personally, for merely possessing their magical blood.

Though not all the characters in this series are strictly human, Flewellyn again chose the road less traveled in creating the different races and cultures. While there definitely exist cultural differences, which become painfully apparent in the third book, *Traitor's Moon*, the biological consequences of being born with magical or 'faie blood bear only one great distinction in that their members are long-lived. Yet, they possess no cliched physical features or healing powers to set them apart from humans (and land them squarely in the camp of overused fantasy tropes). While they have physiological distinctions as would any member of a distinct race, they look, act, and are as fragile as any other. Our main characters come near to death more times than faithful readers would like, and they have only their own wits and talents to aid them most times (along with a little well-placed magic, but then without it it wouldn't be a fantasy at all).

As wonderfully intricate and adventurous as the plot arcs are, what really makes the story for me are the characters, and what wonderfully drawn, complex characters they are. The progression from unlikely allies to friends to partners to lovers occurs so naturally, and greater still, it occurs between two equals, no matter their respective ages or experience. They might make the occasional misstep, but they never fail to respect each other, and they both learn to consult with each other before acting unilaterally (though perhaps Alec is a bit more astute in that regard than Seregil). While each character grows, neither outgrows his own humanity. There are no perfect characters here, and growth occurs in the true sense of the word, not continually striving toward something better, but rather learning from mistakes and adapting. Alec's confidence and assertiveness come into fruition, yet he still relies on Seregil for guidance, rues his own careless errors, and struggles to shed the Northern reserve bred into him even after accepting his ultimate deviance from his cultural norm. Seregil, for all his flourish and bravado, isn't above making serious miscalculations and dwelling self-consciously on past blunders. I found the gradual shift in his personality entirely consistent and

appropriate with the events that he endures, and though he is more reserved and solemn in Traitor's Moon, I never lost sense of his humor and lust for life.

Flewelling's secondary characters are equally complex and have the potential for much growth in future books. I'm particularly interested to see how Thero, Beka, and Klia fare in upcoming installments, as I felt that Flewelling has thus far laid the groundwork yet none has quite reached their full potential.

Overall, I can't recommend the Nightrunner series enough and am eagerly awaiting my receipt of the next few books. I've found a lifetime keeper, and I couldn't be happier.

<http://abookandashortlatte.wordpress....>

Ingenue says

Ok srsly guys, who took my homoerotic devil-may-care caperfic and replaced it with melodramatic fantasy yaoi? D: D: And I have nothing AGAINST fantasy yaoi melodrama, I am all FOR melodramatic fantasy yaoi; but I need mental preparation for the shift from "We are snarky lovable rogues who steal things and touch each other in good dirty ways!" to "We are in secret ethereally beautiful, angstily immortal elves with magically prophesied destinies who weep as we kiss in the moonlight, stroking each other's glossy hair!"

Kathryn says

I can sum this up in essentially the same way I did with *Luck*: They have lots of adventures and kick lots of butt. And they also fall in love with each other, but Seregil has a crisis of conscience because Alec is still pretty young, and Alec is just plain confused by what he feels for Seregil, so neither of them say anything.

Saying anymore than that would spoil it if you haven't read it, really.

There's no real social commentary going on with the two main characters falling for each other, unlike with Mercedes Lackey's *Last Herald Mage* trilogy. The society of Rhiminee is very liberal and accepting of just about everything. For example, not only are same-sex relationships considered perfectly normal, but there are male prostitutes who service both male and *female* clients (and female prostitutes for female clients). So, in matters of sex, at least, the people of Skala are very open minded. The reason Alec is confused by his feelings for Seregil is because he still doesn't hold himself on equal standing with Seregil; they still have a very much master/apprentice relationship (which again, is why Seregil is determined that nothing should happen between them; he doesn't think it would be honorable. And frankly, I agree, Alec is still in some ways a not quite grown up yet, despite what he's been through.)

Again, it's the characters who make this story compelling, although the action picks up quite a bit in this one.
