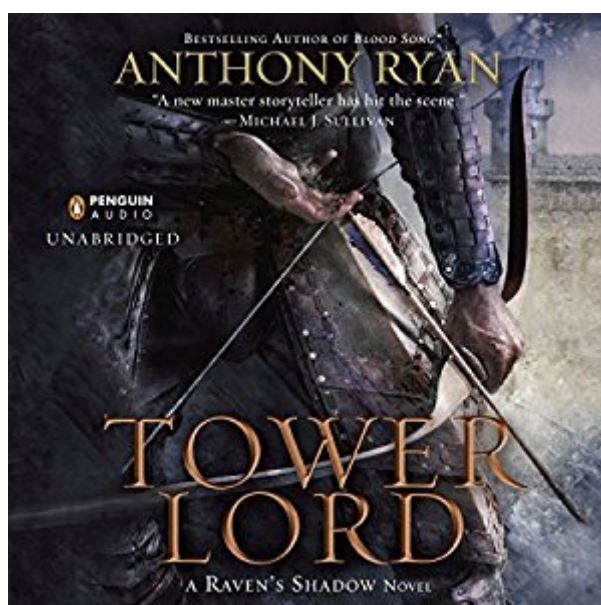


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Tower Lord: Raven's Shadow, Book 2



Synopsis

Vaelin Al Sorna, warrior of the Sixth Order, called Darkblade, called Hope Killer. The greatest warrior of his day, and witness to the greatest defeat of his nation: King Janus' vision of a Greater Unified Realm drowned in the blood of brave men fighting for a cause Vaelin alone knows was forged from a lie. Sick at heart, he comes home, determined to kill no more. Named Tower Lord of the Northern Reaches by King Janus's grateful heir, he can perhaps find peace in a colder, more remote land far from the intrigues of a troubled Realm. But those gifted with the blood-song are never destined to live a quiet life. Many died in King Janus' wars, but many survived, and Vaelin is a target, not just for those seeking revenge but for those who know what he can do. The Faith has been sundered, and many have no doubt who their leader should be. The new King is weak, but his sister is strong. The blood-song is powerful, rich in warning and guidance in times of trouble, but is only a fraction of the power available to others who understand more of its mysteries. Something moves against the Realm, something that commands mighty forces, and Vaelin will find to his great regret that when faced with annihilation, even the most reluctant hand must eventually draw a sword.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have a lot of the same criticisms, and share the same bafflement as just about every other reader. The practically unanimous consensus is that this book is NOWHERE near as good as the first. I thought Blood Song was a cut above story, and it really ended strong with great promise for more

story to come. But to say Tower Lord is not as good as Blood Song is to miss the real story here. Tower Lord is such a steep fall as to simply astonish you that it's from the same writer. This was not a story that had to be forced; Ryan ended BS with a lot of world to explore and seemed to have a clear handle on the pieces moving beyond the reader's vision. Yet, Tower Lord almost entirely avoids these pieces, and if anything, reveals less about the real threat to this world, the history, or the magical elements than what was explored in Blood Song. Things that don't get satisfactory treatment: the Seventh Order, the story of the One Who Waits, the Ally (same as One Who Waits?), the Ally's henchmen (3 of them?), the story of Vaelin's parents and what they were really up to with Vaelin being sent to the Sixth Order, what the Alpiran Empire did with Vaelin for five years, Vaelin's trial there (OK, pretty much anything with Vaelin), the deal with Frentis and his scars, etc. It's all very cursory, but that's what we all came here to read about. Not the endless marching through the forests. If Ryan wanted to write the next Game of Thrones, he has succeeded only in writing a pale imitation to Dance With Dragons. This entire book is about characters traveling from one place to another, just like Tyrion, Brienne, Jaimie and seemingly everybody else in ADWD. The four characters in this book are eternally on the move with seemingly no change or consequence.

Blood Song is my favorite fantasy book of all time. I loved it so much, Tower Lord was the first book I ever pre-ordered. I don't regret reading Tower Lord, but it is a huge drop in quality from Blood Song. Here's why:

Momentum: Blood Song is an epic tale that follows the life of Vaelin Al Sorna. As he takes a ship to his execution, he gives the royal scribe his version of his legendary accomplishments. We learn about his life, his friends, his first love, his powers, his trials, and the world. We grow with the characters and the story is full of mysteries and twists. The book ends with lots of momentum. We want to find out about the 'evil departed', Sister Sherin, the Blood Song, and the rest of the characters. By the time you finish that book, you really feel like you've grown up with Vaelin and the Brothers of the Sixth Order.

The first half of Tower Lord kills all of the momentum. The book begins with Vernier, the Royal Scribe, as a slave to the evil general who is attacking the realm. Then it skips backwards in time and breaks into five concurrent (but not interwoven) stories each told from a different point of view. Vaelin accepts the position as the Tower Lord in the north, where he must interact with the tribes. Reva a young girl brainwashed by a vengeful priest, is trained to assassinate Vaelin. Frentis, a pit fighter, is telepathically bound by a strange female assassin and must do her bidding. Lyrna is an ambassador to the northern tribes. Vernier must try to survive the whims of a cruel general as a slave. Even though the story arcs make sense, the story arcs are clumsy and switching back and forth hurts the pacing because they aren't interwoven.

I don't want to belabor the negative reviews and pile on this book. That I am posting at all is because oh how sorely disappointed I am. There was one review I read that struck to the heart of what is wrong with this book. If you bought this book expecting Blood Song #2 as many of us did and will continue to do so... Well that's not what you're getting. Blood Song was the haunting riveting coming of age of Vaelin Al Sorna. This book.. It's the story of Lyrna, Frentis, and Reva guest starring some guy named Vaelin. But don't be mistaken. It's not the same Vaelin from Book 1. This guy is some pacifist who spends the paltry pages devoted to him riding to and fro on a horse. Tower Lord? The name of the book is a travesty. Vaelin spent maybe 2 days as Tower Lord and made no meaningful contribution to being a Tower Lord except to leave the place soon after arriving. Blood Song #2? No that doesn't exist either as you have known it. It's now some Broadway tune you have to sing. Beware. If you do it too long, you die from a nosebleed. So don't expect it to be used in any meaningful way. If you don't want to read about this Vaelin Al Boring, then you won't have to. The majority of the book is devoted to Superwoman Reva. Who's that? Some character we don't know or care about who is forced upon us as the heroine of Tower Lord. The 6th Order trains boys over 20 years to become amazing warriors. Who needs that? 2 weeks with Vaelin and no more than 5 sparring matches and you've got yourselves the world's best swordswoman and master of the bow. So now we can follow her on her adventures tackling her daddy issues and becoming the hero of LGBT rights. If that's not to your liking you can read about Frentis and his relationship issues. Or maybe Lyrna.

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