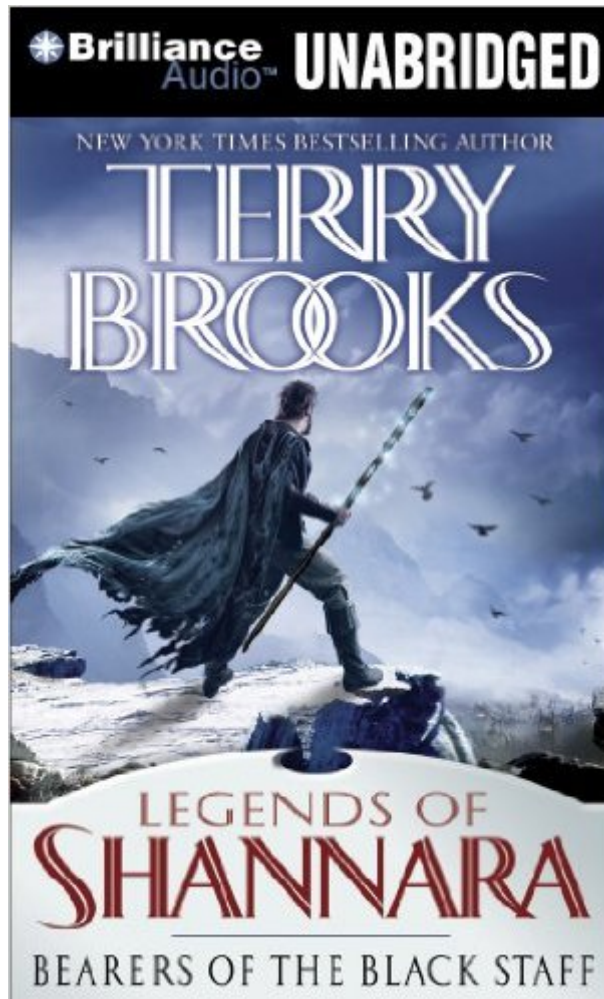


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# Bearers Of The Black Staff (Legends Of Shannara Duology)



## Synopsis

Five hundred years have passed since the devastating demon-led war that tore apart the United States, leaving nothing but scorched and poisoned ruins, and nearly exterminating humankind. Those who escaped the carnage and blight were led to sanctuary by the boy savior known as the Hawk • the gypsy morph. In an idyllic valley, its borders warded by powerful magic against the horrors beyond, humans, Elves, and mutants alike found a place they believed would be their home forever. But after five centuries, the unimaginable has come to pass: The cocoon of protective magic surrounding the valley has vanished. When Sider Ament, the only surviving descendant of the Knights of the Word, detects unknown predators stalking the valley, he fears the worst. And when Panterra Qu and Prue Liss, expert Trackers from the human village of Glensk Wood, find two of their own gruesomely killed, there can be no doubt: The once safe haven of generations has been laid bare and made vulnerable to whatever still lurks in the wasteland of the outside world. Together, Ament, the two young Trackers, and a daring Elf princess race to spread word of the encroaching danger • and spearhead plans to defend their ancestral home. But suspicion and hostility among their countrymen threaten to doom their efforts from within • while beyond the breached borders, a ruthless Troll army masses for invasion. And in the thick of it all, the last wielder of the black staff and its awesome magic must find a successor to carry on the fight against the cresting new wave of evil.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It's been five hundred years since the Gypsy Morph, Hawk, led a diverse group of survivors out of the destruction of the Great Wars into a safe haven hidden by magic. Since that time the magic has kept the Men, Elves, Spiders, and Lizards safe from the world beyond. Many have forgotten their roots and distanced themselves from the magic that saved them. Syder Ament is the last known Knight of the Word and he's just discovered that the magic barrier has been breached. Now he must team up with two Trackers, Panterra Qu and Prue Liss, to convince an unbelieving people that their safe haven is about to be discovered. The Old World they've forgotten is about to collide with their own and nothing can prepare them for the danger that waits. Continuing his massive undertaking to give us the full history of The Shannara series, Terry Brooks delivers another exciting installment full of new characters, trademark fantasy elements, and heartfelt emotion. Typically in Brooks' writing, characters don't last longer than a book or two, very few having lived through multiple series. This is to be expected since this series in particular takes place over thousands of years. Nevertheless, Brooks continues to craft characters that readers can't help but fall in love with. Syder, Panterra, and Prue certainly fit the bill and readers will be moved and captivated by their journey. We're also treated to some strong supporting roles throughout that would make fascinating main characters themselves. As a long time fan of Terry Brooks it has been fun to see how the Shannara history is built, and Bearers of the Black Staff feels more like the Shannara books of old and less like the apocalyptic Genesis of Shannara novels that came previously.

This new series certainly has its work cut out for it. The previous series, (genesis of shannara) could have been much better and left far too many questions unanswered (IMHO) about the elven & human demons, the knight's lady & the elves' elcrys. While I thought it was clever to merge the two book series, in the end I felt the author did not do justice to either series, let alone successfully merge them. This new novel is focussed on the last "major" event of the Shannara series - the survivors of the great wars coming out from their protected valley. Once we are past this, we're into the regular Shannara world. So, I was really expecting something epic here. This new series starts 500 years after the sealing of the valley and the destruction of our world by nuclear fire. The characters are very strong in this book, I felt Syder, Pan, Prue and Phryne were all well conceived. There were more than a few twists & turns and I was even surprised a few times by the events. That doesn't happen often. I look forward to the conclusion but surprised it's only a 2 book series as normally the Shannara series are 3 books. There were a even a few times that I felt a chill up my spine when characters from Genesis series are sort of reverently mentioned. Nice touch. "The Hawk", for example. On the whole it was a decent read, and I am curious to see how it all ends

up. On the negative side, the plot felt rushed and not "epic" enough. As normal, Terry spends (IMHO) too much time on mundane details that take up a lot of pages (eating, walking, thinking about teenage crushes, etc.) and not enough on the big issues - like the start of the brave new world that becomes the "Shannara" world (and the 20 or so books going back to the 1970's).

As a Terry Brooks fan for most of my life, I was eagerly awaiting "Bearers of the Black Staff." It arrived yesterday and I finished it early this morning, so I certainly can't say it didn't hold my interest! This is a world to which my attachment has grown deep - I have come to love and mourn for it in equal measure, and I am always so happy to revisit it and learn more about its history. To me, one of Mr. Brooks' greatest gifts has always been his ability to create history and political factions without being heavy-handed with his exposition or giving me \*way\* more information than I care to know (although there is certainly a place for that kind of fiction as well, a la Robert Jordan). That he is able to do so through a variety of rich, well-drawn characters is extremely satisfying for me as a reader. I'll skip the plot summary here, as the two reviewers before me did such a great job of it, and concentrate on the reasons why this book left me ultimately feeling somewhat disappointed. First of all, I \*know\* Mr. Brooks is an amazing, imaginative writer. I wanted something different than a repeat of "Character discovers mortal danger to his world, necessitating an upheaval of the life everyone has known for centuries, but when he tries to warn his people, nobody believes him." I thought this was handled much more deftly and emotionally with Kirisin and Erisha in The Genesis of Shannara series. Sad truth be told, I felt that neither book nor its characters pack the emotional punch I love so much and have come to expect from Mr. Brooks. I liked the characters well enough, but it just didn't happen for me.

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