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Empire Of The Eagle (Central Asia Series Book 2)



Synopsis

The young Roman soldier Quintus shares the dream of every man in the Imperial army: to grow old and honorable in its service, to earn his wooden sword and land at life's end. But Quintus is also driven by a stronger need-he longs to reclaim his family's honor that was torn asunder, caught in the bloody arena of Rome's politics. But dreams can turn to dust on the tides of battle, and when his commander Crassus and his legions are defeated at Carrhae (with the might of Rome in disgrace and the golden Eagles - Rome's most honored symbol of power-captured), Quintus is left with little hope, either for his family's salvation...or a lengthy survival. As the struggling remnants of the Roman army are sold as slaves, Quintus (and the Eagles) are destined to go East "forever east as token pawns, tribute to the distant Han Emperor in the far off Land of Gold. Quintus will do as a Roman must - his honor gone, he will follow the Eagle...and strive to somehow recapture the honor that Rome has lost. And so onto the East, out of the logic and honor that is Rome...and into the mists of legend. To see visions of wonder unknown to any Roman, and learn that the Eagle has a power and magic all its own.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Very confusing the way it keeps switching from normal historic story-telling to scenes including mythological-magical characters. Haven't been able to keep focused on the storyline long enough to finish it. About 2/3 the way through it.

The book starts off on an interesting story - the real life capture of Crassus' Roman legions. As soon as they hit the desert, the book goes down hill fast. The overall plot is the stock story of a confrontation between good and evil, with a hero who must learn his supernatural powers. If the story isn't to be banal, the author has to bring the world and the characters to life, to make them so involving that reader finds them compelling and urgent, not just a rehash of a cliché. Except for Quintus, most of the characters didn't interest me. There isn't enough character development to engage my sympathies. The allies that he meets up with are rather boring people, given to gnostic sayings. Drapaudi postures rather than lives, and she and Quintus have no chemistry. Norton and Shwartz have turned to Hindu myth and legend, the Mahabarrata, which ought to be a refreshing change. Unfortunately, they don't use it very well. Their allusions to it strike me as rather too elliptical for the presumed audience. How many Americans or Europeans are truly familiar with the Mahabarrata? I don't think that the authors can rely on a few words conjuring a lengthy episode for their readers. It is a vast work, and the authors have not confined themselves to the parts that are more familiar to the West. It is like listening in on a conversation between two old friends talking about a distant shared past; they may know what they mean, but bystanders who have no context or familiarity with the subjects of the conversation are baffled. Further, the walk through the desert becomes incredibly boring. In the first place, it is hard to believe that they decided to cross an uninhabited desert. The Chinese, who presumably have already made this journey in the opposite direction, certainly didn't plan well; did the commander give no thought to how his troops were to be provisioned? What is now known as the Silk Road has numerous towns, oases, etc.: it was a major trade route, for heavens sake! Wouldn't that be the sensible path to travel? This is rather like describing I-95, the Federal highway that runs across most of the East coast as a animal track through a desolate wilderness. But having decided to cross Asia the hard way, the story is a monotonous account of the struggle to survive: food, water, exhaustion. A skilled writer ought to be able to convey the miseries without endless repetition. Of course it is part of their experience, but this is a novel, it is supposed to have a compelling narrative. Blinking is certainly an important part

of the human condition, but I really don't want to read a chronicle of eyeblinks. There should be some point to telling this tale. I think that most readers already know that deserts tend to be hot, dry and barren. A tedious trip for characters and readers alike.

I am so used to Andre Norton using just the right amount of details to stimulate my imagination and then leaving it up to me to fill in, that I found this book very draggy. It wants to tell you everything and leaves nothing to the imagination. I have never read anything by Susan Schwartz but if this is her effect on Andre Norton's work I don't think I will. Sorry, I like Andre Norton's style. And, while she collaborates well with some people, I don't feel that this is one of those times.

I think the subject matter is fascinating . However one cannot help but be somewhat disappointed by the amount of time spent describingthirst in the desert. I agree that tragedy and suffering are an integral part of this story.....but only part. Having suffered through this morbid tale I was forced to finish the story because I purchased the book. The scenario promised an exciting tale by a master storyteller, unfortunately the delivery was disappointing.

Andre has strayed from her usual space epics and this is a thoroughly enjoyable read. I was unable to put it down and went from cover to cover in a little over three hours. The story is very authentic and adheres to the known history of the roman legions. I felt as though I was another of the warriors in the battles and the camps. I have almost every book that Andre has written and this one was another of her best.

I have loved all Andre Norton works in the past. This looked like another good book- I was wrong. The book rambled and was just about the worst book I have ever read. I'm not sure why I finished it, it was a waste of my life. I have not read anything by Susan Shwartz but if this book is indicative of her work it does not bode well.

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