



A Foreign Shore: Rain of Fire, Rain of Blood

Forrest Johnson

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A Foreign Shore paints a fresh and vivid world sure to entertain any fantasy lover.

Forrest Johnson's *A Foreign Shore: Rain of Fire, Rain of Blood* is a high-fantasy epic following several separate yet intertwined story lines. Detailing the struggles of war and the intimacy of relationships, the book brings to life a fresh and unique world rife with magic and culture.

In this sequel to *A Foreign Shore: Clothes Make a Man*, Raeesha struggles with the discovery of her pregnancy, General Singer enlists the help of demons to fight his war, and Erika learns she's been tricked by the prince into a false marriage. All the while, war is brewing, and each character must prepare for the battle that lies ahead.

The story strings together a horde of different characters, and the onslaught can be a bit hard to follow. Each chapter follows one of nine different protagonists who experience complex plots and challenges. Characters like Raeesha and Erika are fully fleshed out and complex, while characters like Bardhof suffer from a lack of unique voice and interesting motive. However, each character provides a different perspective in navigating the complex story landscape.

Colorful and well-crafted world-building carries the story. From different demon races to working currency, the world crafted in *A Foreign Shore* is vivid and rare. While the story is driven largely by dialogue, sharp descriptors and painstaking action propel it forward. The characters navigate through a plethora of unique landscapes and dimensions, complex cultural events, and weighty political discussions.

The book also features an illustration per chapter. While these images are artfully crafted and tell a story on their own, they distract from the written narrative and rob some of the creative liberty involved in reading a high-fantasy tale. Nevertheless, they add a unique element to the book and provide some clarity to hard-to-follow, fast-paced scenes.

The novel suffers from a large number of grammatical errors and typos. There are several occasions of improper punctuation, omitted words, or other formatting mistakes like over-indentation. Because of the nature of a high-fantasy novel and the use of invented language and names, these errors do pose some threat to overall readability.

However, the book features a character glossary at the end to help navigate the named characters, their positions, relationships, and class standing. It's an extremely useful tool, though it does contain some spoilers and would have been more beneficial if it also contained the proper pronunciation of character names.

A Foreign Shore paints a fresh and vivid world sure to entertain any fantasy lover with interesting characters as far as the eye can see.

TIA SMITH (November 16, 2016)

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