

# ForeWord Reviews

## FANTASY

### **Antiquitas Lost: The Last of the Shamalans**

Robert Louis Smith

Geof Isherwood, illustrator

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With the loss of an extremely powerful weapon known as the Antiquitas Trident, a great tragedy has befallen the Shamalan Empire of Pangrelor, the one true world. The benevolent Shamalans have been betrayed and nearly wiped out, and Princess Sarintha has been captured by the brutal warlord of the ogreish Serpans. Only an ancient prophecy of the sudden appearance of a powerful warrior on the eve of their destruction gives hope to the remaining denizens of fabled Harwelden, the last Shamalan bastion not yet conquered by its evil enemies.

Teen-aged Elliott knows nothing of Pangrelor or the impending doom of its greatest city, but when he and his ailing mother move to New Orleans to live with his grandfather, the strange old man leads him to a mystic portal that only Elliott can cross. When he emerges on the other side and is immediately rescued from the jaws of a ravenous beast by two dwarfish men, Elliott begins an incredible adventure that will not end until he has to make a terrible decision that may have tragic consequences for both his home world and his mother's life.

This debut novel is a far-flung quest through a world of nightmarish creatures and epic conflicts in the spirit of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, but what makes the story truly wondrous are the many personal touches that the author provides in creating his multi-faceted characters. For example, the reader never forgets that Elliott is not the ready-made hero that the legends foretell, but is scarcely more than a boy, with a youth's self-doubts and fears; surely, he protests, the prophecy of a great warrior coming to the defense of Harwelden could not apply to him! But as he discovers marvelous abilities he never dreamed he had, he must also learn to accept the faith of his newfound friends if he hopes to help the beautiful princess save her homeland.

Complementing the fast-paced narrative are brilliant illustrations by Geof Isherwood, well-known by fans of Marvel comics *Conan the Barbarian* and *Spider-Man*. Though this book is directed toward the young adult reader, it will appeal to lovers of fantasy and adventure sagas of all ages.

*Alan J. Couture*