

The Legacy of Ogma: Book One in the Weapons Trilogy

E. A. Rappaport

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Rappaport's first novel begins with a series of vignettes that sets this fantasy's plot in motion and introduces readers to the story's characters. The cast includes Halia a starving vagabond who also happens to be a skilled thief; Oswynn and Thulin who study various branches of wizardry under their teacher Minaras; Arwold the leader of a band of mercenaries struggling to defeat a skilled necromancer; and Ahriman a wizard on a mission who convinces the massive warrior Xarun to assist him in attacking an Arboreal fortress. After chapter four the plot lines converge as the characters meet one another and try to solve the mystery of the crystal spheres and deal with the consequences of their discoveries.

Cover illustrator Chris Moeller has a lengthy resume including extensive work in both comics and the gaming industry particularly for White Wolf and Wizards of the Coast. It is refreshing to encounter a sword and sorcery novel whose cover art doesn't feature a chain-mail bikini-clad warrior princess and the undersea setting (related to the plot) is nicely done.

The story is strongest when Rappaport describes action and writes dialogue but suffers when he evokes a setting or attempts to give his characters depth. His battle scenes and descriptions of Halia's use of her thief skills are well-written and believable despite minor syntactical missteps. This isn't a terribly original book—its plot and characters resemble those of numerous sword and sorcery novels *Dungeons and Dragons* scenarios and video games—but it is still entertaining. Spells with an old English flavor (*lyft bord* to summon a wind for example) recall the Latin-tinged incantations of Harry Potter and there's an interesting sequence when Halia's party is trapped within a magical item. The characters also have numerous well-described battles with a variety of creatures:

A second ogre using a bulky tree branch as a club swung at Arwold's head. He ducked and quickly jabbed the ogre in the side with his claymore but the ogre's thick hide deflected the imprecise blow. Arwold continued to parry attacks from both ogres holding his ground...even though the strong blows came closer to breaking his arm each time the hammer met the claymore.

Rappaport avoids many of the mistakes made by first-time authors such as over-description although his prose needs smoothing. A few loose ends will be difficult to tie up in the sequels the first of which is set 600 years before the events in *The Legacy of Ogma* and the second of which will be set 600 years after the events of this novel. Nonetheless Rappaport's first effort should prove entertaining for young adult readers as well as adults.

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