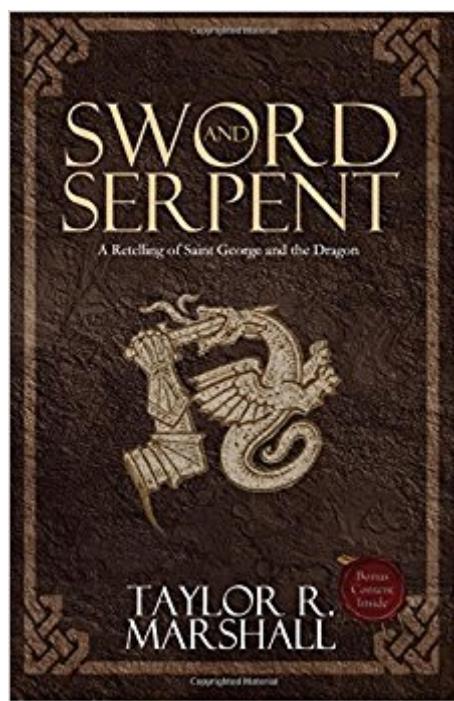


The book was found

Sword And Serpent



Synopsis

Every Legend Has A Beginning The year is A.D. 299. Diocletian rules the Roman Empire. And the gods have suddenly fallen silent. 17-year-old Jurian doesn't have time for the gods. He's trying to hold his family together after his father died in disgrace, and piety -- even to the Christ -- just isn't practical. But then a ruthless enemy targets his family, forcing Jurian to make a choice: will he pursue the glory he's always wanted, or will he sacrifice everything to protect a faith that was never really his own? On the other side of the Empire, the young priestess Sabra shields her people from the terrible vengeance of the old god she serves. But even as she offers the dark and bloody sacrifices the god demands, visions of desolation haunt her dreams. As suspicion tightens its stranglehold on her city, Sabra must unravel the mystery of the god's portents before everything she's ever loved is destroyed. Fear of the gods' silence sparks a bloody persecution that will soon consume the Empire. As the fires of suspicion and hatred ignite around them, Jurian and Sabra are drawn together by a mysterious prophecy...one that will set them on a journey to battle an evil beyond imagining. Saints aren't born. They are forged.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews Â (310 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Great read! I knew from the beginning Taylor Marshall's book would pass my litmus test of good literature where evil is presented as evil, and good as good, so I jumped at the chance to read it. And whilst I am reading it from a particular viewpoint (as my review will demonstrate), I truly believe that this novel will appeal to a huge variety of readers. Anyone just wanting to enjoy a tale adventure and mystery will not be disappointed. I was drawn in immediately to the time and place and to the

characters who were well developed and believable. There was a steady pace of action, adventure, mystery, challenge and tragedy, characters who vary in appearance and life circumstance but who are connected through faith or the events which unfold. Marshall's literary descriptions were not too heavy or convoluted (which often turns me off) but just the right balance of poetic description and simplicity, allowing me to visualize the scenes easily. Marshall does a masterful job of weaving together the two different journeys we read about that alternate in the chapters, initially very distant from each other in geography, plot and purpose. Whilst I vaguely sensed where it was heading there were still many great twists and turns that kept me absorbed, and which fleshed out the whole story well. What I really loved about it was being introduced to some historical events and characters like Diocletian, but especially those who we already familiar from the register of the saints, including those martyred for the faith in early Christian times. Whilst Marshall's novel is clearly fictional, and some connections are harder to reconcile than others (I'll not spoil it but I refer here to something about a sword and its origin...)

There is a real dragon out there and the parallels in this story to the world today are poignant. Just as importantly to any story, is how it is told. Marshall creates compelling characters and a pulsing plot line that draws in the reader and keeps him engaged. So why only three stars? (With a caveat.) Two issues: The main issue is editing. At some point I thought if I read that a character "flinched" one more time, I was going to throw the book at the wall. This really is a minor kind of quibble in a way; the poor editing was only a distraction, but the book itself and story are truly worthwhile. The second issue is that I was struck by passages that were improbable on a human level. I won't give away anything in my review, but let's just say some monumentally dramatic thing just happened. A moment later in the dialog, the characters are cracking jokes, or perhaps they have moved on with their life in a way that just seems unrealistic. It just didn't work. A specific example: one key character gives children "training" in their religion. Their lives revolve around this religion, yet this character does not explain KEY components to them until just prior to major events. There is just no way that the children would not have known about this prior to their selection for "training". A few things like this were cause for distraction. Finally, I do also think that this book may have been cut back a bit in length and been just fine. Some authors ask the question, "Is this WORD necessary." Here we have whole scenes which may not be. However, with that said, this is not a major issue and the text itself was still interesting. The caveat is that I may come back and add a star later, should future versions show improved editing - which I expect that they will.

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