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Two kingdoms, five centuries, one destiny.

In a world where the Sojourners, a nearly extinct race with preternatural abilities struggle to preserve their faith and heritage, destiny thrusts two youths from opposing nations into the heart of a centuries-old conflict.

Render, an orphan from the outskirts of the culturally enlightened Kingdom of Valdshire Tor, escapes slavery and seeks the truth about his true identity only to discover a web of conspiracies. This quest leads to the revelation of his uncanny ability to wield the destructive forces of nature.

Ahndien, sole survivor of a heinous raid on her peaceful village in the Eastern Kingdom of Tian Kuo, embarks on a journey to find her father, now a captive of Torian troops. What she uncovers surpasses anything she can imagine as she masters the ability to manipulate fire.

Guided by shape-shifting spirits, Render and Ahndien's fates collide when first they meet as mortal enemies. However, to save their people from annihilation, they must unite both kingdoms against a terrifying enemy that threatens to destroy both realms.

But how can a young slave and a peasant bring sworn enemies of half a millennium together?

ONCE WE WERE KINGS: The first book in a saga of destiny and redemption, in a world of dying hope.

## Once We Were Kings Details

Date : Published March 1st 2011 by Dawn Treader Publications

ISBN :

Author : Ian Alexander , Joshua Graham

Format : Nook 1073 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Young Adult, Epic Fantasy

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# **From Reader Review Once We Were Kings for online ebook**

## **Sara Jo Schmidt says**

This one didn't tickle my fancy much. Overdone fantasy...dragons, fire, lightning .....glad it's over.

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## **Allison says**

This was an awesome book I can't wait for the next one to come out. I recommend this to anyone who likes things like Harry Potter and Narnia etc.

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## **Kristy Jewel says**

This was an amazing book. It gripped my attention and I could barely put it down. The only downside to the book was that it was slightly predictable. But other than the predictability it was amazing!

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## **Matthew Coiner says**

I had trouble connecting with the characters in this book. I had two problems. The dialogue wasn't very good and the timetable for events was hard to accept. After two months of being brought to the capital, the characters are suddenly conversant in literature, art, science, mathematics, and combat. It was an OK book, but I was glad to finish it and move to something else.

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## **Sheryl says**

great story with hidden agenda's as well as great messages from beyond.  
this book will keep you wondering what's going to happen next and will the Orphans find each other again, and a welcoming home to grow and learn from, a good fantasy to fall in love with the sharp minded Characters.  
great read!

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## **Heidi Tan says**

Nicely paced and an interesting read.

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## **Rachel says**

Until about 60% this book was wonderful! The author did a GREAT job of creating the world of the story and characters and it had a very epic feel to it. Everything was great until a mysterious entity named Valhandra shows up, who quotes exactly from the Bible and proceeds to give the entire history of the fall and sin of man and all in a very very long dialogue form. I am a Christian and believe in the Bible. I just had a hard time stomaching this whole plot turn because it seemed like too much preaching was getting in the way of the story (This is a common folly that we as Christians have; we are afraid to not have enough preaching.) I DID like the element of God (as Valhandra and going by other names) working in other worlds and dimensions, such as the one in this story.

I decided to carry on since I liked the first part so well. But a few chapters later, after the heroes battle with his sinful self in the form of a dragon, I reached the end. (around 70%). The chapter ended with: He (the hero) didn't know what the future held, but he knew who held the future.

Obviously talking about Valhandra (God). I have heard this quote a million times in my life and for me it was just the end to hear this trite expression thrown into an epic fantasy.

So great story but I think there was too much obsession with preaching through the story instead of letting the story itself speak the truth.

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## **Shayna Gier says**

What I Loved:

Other reviews have said it, and I must agree that the imagery in this book is absolutely wonderful. Several times when reading I could practically smell or taste the action that was happening, and many times I cringed in reading a description. I Also really loved the ending. The last 30% or so was absolutely phenomenal. I struggled with the first half, mainly because of it's length, but I read the last 30% without stopping, and barely noticed that about 7 hours had passed.

What I Didn't Like:

The length. It truly is epic- in content and length. Probably this wouldn't have hit me so bad if I had a paper copy, but as I was reading an e-book, it messed with my mind when I'd read 3 chapters, and the corner of my e-book says I've only read 2-3% of the book. Having finished it, I can see what good all those words did for the story, and I think if I'd been warned even that would have helped, but to go in blindly the length of the book was a tad overwhelming.

My Overall Review:

(4 of 5 Stars) Epic- In Many More Ways Than One

Ian Alexander has definitely penned an epic fantasy that fans of The Chronicles of Narnia will absolutely love. The imagery is rich and descriptive, and the story itself takes place in a foreign land with kings and queens and fantastical creatures. If you can think of anything that would make something "epic"- Dragons, phoenixes, fights to the death.. this story has it. Honestly, I would have made it a 5-star, but the length just was too much for me. Again, you have all been warned so it shouldn't be too much of a problem for you.

Disclaimer:

This book was provided for me at no charge, nor was I given compensation of any kind for this review. This review only reflects my personal opinion.

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### **Kathie says**

awesome book - very Lord-of-the-Rings-ish, but got a little sluggish during the battle segment which got a little long

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### **Divya says**

I know that many people have probably used this word to describe *Once We Were Kings*, but I can't think of anything else that would fit it so perfectly: EPIC! *Once We Were Kings* was bookishly epic! I have to confess that I did stay up late to finish the book in one day instead of going to sleep last weekend, but this book had that kind of an influence on me. Don't worry, I didn't pull an all-nighter, I'm not that crazy, but I sure got close to it reading *Once We Were Kings*. The fantasy, the...poetic language, and the characters pull you in hook and sinker.

Something that really proved to give the book its style was Alexander's writing. The book was kind of predictable, but I liked it like that. Though the plot itself lacked complexion, overall the story was incredible. I would love to pull an actual all-nighter and read this book from Page 1 to 1186. Though it seemed a bit long, sometimes books longer just give you a better plot.

The character development was off the top, and the evil, the romance, and everything else was like it actually happened. Render and Ahndien were masterpiece characters that were truly gripping to read about. If I could, I would award them a gold medal. Ian, your novel is another fantastic book that deserves an incredible amount of praise, I would never be able to accomplish!

Cover Thoughts:

The cover is gorgeous and artistically done with immense attention to details.

Rating:

4.5/5 Stars

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### **Misty Rayburn says**

*Once We Were Kings*, is an epic fantasy tale of pure delight as we follow the story of two young people from warring kingdoms. When they first meet, it's as mortal enemies but they find that there's an even greater evil threatening both realms and that to defeat it, they must join together. But how can a slave and a peasant bring sworn enemies of half a millennium together?

Joshua Graham transitions from writing suspense and thrillers to the fantasy realm as Ian Alexander with

flying colors. *Once We Were Kings* invokes awe in the reader that I've only felt with J.R.R. Tolkien, David Eddings and before them both, C.S. Lewis. The story is a page turner with a very driven plot and the Christian overtones feel like they're there to spark religious conversation, much like Philip Pullman did with his *His Dark Materials* trilogy.

What doesn't this book have? Magic, shapeshifters, powerful deities and characters that you love and love to hate, all of this will stay with you long after you've gotten to the end and leave you wanting more. This is one of those books that you cannot miss in 2011 if you're a fantasy lover.

Thank you to Ian Alexander for a review copy of this book. It in no way influenced my review.

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### **Dan says**

I'll give the author credit for an interesting story . . .

. . . but that's it.

There is ZERO imagination in the writing. I felt like I was reading a high school writing assignment.

The book tries WAY too hard to be allegorically Christian.

There is implication that this is the first book in a series, but I'll never know for sure. I'm not going to be reading any more from this author.

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### **Kaytee says**

Great epic novel! The story is well written and the characters are unique and interesting!

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### **April says**

*Once We Were Kings* is an amazing epic adventure that will take the reader on an unforgettable journey like no other.

As I settled in with my Kindle and it's newest arrival, *Once We Were Kings*, I was not truly sure what to expect. I knew it was dubbed an "epic fantasy", and of course the synopsis, which caught my intrigue. Previously, I had found myself in a bit of one of those horrid reading slumps (nasty things), which I was looking to be released from. With that in mind, I clicked to the beginning of *Once We Were Kings*...

Nasty reading slump... BE GONE... I was immediately sucked into the story, it's words absorbing me and surrounding me with amazing imagery, emotion and distinctiveness like none other I had ever read before. The language that Mr. Alexander uses is truly poetic and beautiful, as well as enduring to the time period for which the dialog and tale is written.

The tale of a young boy, Render, whose life has been one of strife and heartache, as well as a young girl, Ahndien, who finds herself alone, after her family and village has been brutally raided, held me entranced from beginning to end. *Once We Were Kings* begins by telling the story of Render and Ahndien, each in their own settings, each believing the other's people are evil, vile and bloodthirsty. Circumstances soon bring the two youths together to bring peace to a warring and unforgiving realm. After centuries of battles, it is time for the two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Valdshire Tor and the Eastern Kingdom of Tian Kuo to join and become one Kingdom in peace. It is up to Render and Ahndien to make this peace a reality and overcome the evil that is trying to overcome and prevail.

*Once We Were Kings* is a story of Heaven vs. Hell, goodness vs. evil. This is a tale that is truly a generation bridging epic fantasy that is sure to span and hold strong through the test of time as well as our ever changing society and circumstances of readers everywhere. In *Once We Were Kings*, there is no geographic, sex, class, religion or race focus, rather it is a story of focus on belief, forgiveness and redemption to those who truly believe and seek goodness and truth.

Ian Alexander brings before readers a tale of fantasy and humanity. *Once We Were Kings* will appeal to a vast and endless audience range, from young adult to adult, males and females. Encompassed within these pages is action, adventure, intrigue, romance and even shape-shifting spirits. Beneath the superb story lies the lessons of faith and the battle between God (Valhandra) and the Devil (Malakandor), told in a way that will not put off those who do not enjoy religious-based fiction. *Once We Were Kings* is the first in a series by Ian Alexander and the ending is the perfect segue into future books.

Last night, I clicked the final page with a smile upon my face and eagerness in my heart for future endeavors with Render and Ahndien. *Once We Were Kings* is a magical and emotional tale (I often found my heart gripped within sadness, as well as bursting with joy). I was truly blown away by the magnificent of the story and truly cannot recommend it enough. Compared to *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis, I found myself agreeing with this likeness. Though *Once We Were Kings* has a delightful and wonderful uniqueness all its own. A true classic in the making.

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### **Louisa says**

Great book, really complex, and I loved the characters being together, all their fights and such that lead to love!!!

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