



The Eye of God

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Blaise tries to act like a good human, but someone always manages to ruin things for him. When the Emperor's most powerful weapon is stolen and its human vessel is kidnapped from the Arena, Blaise must choose between meddling in the affairs of mortals or remaining true to his duty.

To make matters worse, the Archbishop has betrayed the church and God by giving the Emperor the second piece of the Triad, the Heart of God. Should Blaise stand idle and leave the mortals to their own devices, the people of Erelith won't just lose their lives: Their souls will be destroyed by a power that was never meant to fall into mortal hands.

If Blaise can find the Eye of God, he might be able to save the humans from themselves. Unfortunately, his only hope for success lies in the hands of a slave who wants nothing more than to die. If Blaise can't save Terin and enlist his help, the Erelith Empire will fall.

The Eye of God Details

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From Reader Review The Eye of God for online ebook

Ronda Reed says

I enjoyed this book. The world RJ Blain creates is so unusual. It was a little hard to follow at first for me, but I think that was because the characters and the world was so very different. As I read on, it all became clearer to me, and I really began wondering which direction it would go next.

Disclaimer: I received this as an ARC and read it as such. I am looking forward to reading the final published book.

Edward West says

Writing: 1/5

Story: 3/5

Characters: 1/5

Style: 2/5

Cover: 3/5

Overall Score: 1/5

Disclaimer: These are just my thoughts and opinions on this product, and I urge you as a potential customer to forge your own through whatever methods you prefer.

Status: Refund pending – awaiting revision

Writing:

One out of five for writing seems a bit harsh, but in this case I couldn't honestly award anymore points. The errors within the text range from minor typos and formatting errors all of the way up to broken sentences. Seriously, at some points either the subject, object, or verb were dropped, forcing me to play some sort of “guess the word” game. Obviously this is not what I intend to do when I sit down to read. Given this I often found myself re-reading several passages, which ultimately made the read much longer than what it should have been. To add to this slowing effect, I felt that the pacing lagged every so often, which is weird because the transition jumps at times. They say conflict is important in crafting a story, but in this case we have the choppy, somewhat fast transition contrasting with slow pacing and blatant structural issues. Realistically, if the typos, dropped words, formatting, double words, repeated phrases and punctuation were polished then I could pump this up to a three. The pacing and transition? Those two will iron themselves out as the author gains experience in writing.

Story:

The Eye of God's story, it's core, isn't good or bad. It's average. At first glance I thought that this was another MacGuffin quest, but thankfully no, the plot device in question does have narrative explanation as to why it's important. I gave it a three because I've seen this story done before—in some cases better, and in some cases worse. Church conspiracies are always fun too, and this story is packing one, but once again: seen it done better/worse.

Characters:

Strawmen and redshirts withstanding, I'll just focus on Blaise and Terin here. The reason I put Blaise's name first and gave this section a one are related: Terin is the protagonist, but is infinitely less appealing than Blaise. I don't like this in anything I am viewing for entertainment, be it anime, videogames, movies, tv shows, books, etc. I'm all for forging unsung heroes out of people with potential, but Terin isn't for this. From the moment I met him I was struck with the kind of melodramatic and general malaise that just feels like self pity. It made me see him as a quitter who quit before the book even began, and that just isn't cool. I want to root for the underdog, but Terin doesn't even want to be the underdog it seems, which would be okay, but it's drawn out to the point where I question if Terin even wants to be in the book.

So what of Blaise? He's the bad boy. He comes out, guns blazing, and outshines Terin, which can be made to work, but once again Terin appears to have no intent, motivation or desire to even be a person. The idea is that by the end of the book, Terin eventually comes into his own and surpasses Blaise, but due to such a poor first impression I felt anything Terin achieved just wouldn't be enough. These kind of things only truly work for me if there are subtle hints at the protagonist's transformation from the start. Think of Terin's personal growth as a tree where there has to be a seed, and over the course of the story we water it through character development, and then bam—sycamore. Sadly, in Terin's case, there was no seed—just barren earth. A tree was later transplanted, much like the kind lining the streets of New York City, but it just doesn't feel right.

I digress: back to Blaise. I like Dante from Devil May Cry too, so Blaise worked. If he was one dimensional at times, then that's fine because he's a supporting character. Also, as I've mentioned, he largely serves as a comparison for the endgame version of Terin, so I didn't really place that much of a burden on his development. So why the 1 for this section? All of the badassery of Blaise simply cannot make up for the wet blanket downer that is Terin, and for that matter I really don't care for the backseat protagonist role of Blaise. What do I mean? When reading this I felt like I'd much rather view the entirety of the story either through Blaise's eyes or over his shoulder and not Terin's. This isn't good in my opinion.

Style:

This section came in so low due to purple prose. There are just too many sections where I felt the author was trying more to dazzle me with his/her writing mastery than to actually tell me a story. Couple this in with the sheer amount of errors and I am doubly turned off. It also lends to the pacing problems that I've mentioned previously, and I'll explain.

For the sake of preventing as many spoilers as possible I've decided to restrict a majority of this review to the preview that can be found on the author's Amazon product page. Purple prose in the sense that I've explained it becomes a problem when certain sections are overly wordy due to the above mentioned reasons. I noticed early in the text that the author took an unreasonable amount of words (and my time) to describe a rock wall that the protagonist was clinging to, down to the most minute detail.

“While most of the cliff was bare stone, the presence of a spring encouraged things to grow.”

He/she could have stopped here, but then

“Scrub[sic] clung to the rocks, cracking them and making the cliff unstable.”

Okay, I've got it. There is plant life on the cliff.

“Near the estate, gnarled roots protruded from crumbling stone, tearing at him as he sought to grip something that wouldn't break under his weight.”

Plants. On the cliff. I understand, can we go now?

“Too many of the mossy stones shifted and creaked when he brushed against them.”

Creaked—then oil them and let's be done with this!

Now I understand the need for world building, especially in works where the location plays a vital role in the overall story itself, but this feels excessive to me. When reading passages like this I ask myself “The plant life on this cliff; is it related to: Terin, The Eye of God, and Erelith?” and I come to this conclusion: not so much. So then I ask “Why so much coverage on this...scrub?” and the answer is: purple prose. If we were on a walking tour of The Eye of God, think of how smooth and fluid our journey would be if we constantly made stops so that the tour guide could comment on the floor tiles, benches, fluorescent lights, etc. It'd be an incredibly slow trip, and really—I just came for the art. I gave this section a two because this just runs rampant throughout the entire book. I think the author has a decent story to tell here, but in order to pump this up to a three or four: RJ Blain I'm really gonna need you to focus up.

Cover:

I usually have a hard time deciding how to start this section, so I'll just go with a wide view of it. We have greek architecture in the background, and some kid sporting a 90's haircut in the foreground. In his hands is what appears to be a hamidashi, and he is wearing a polo style t-shirt with far too many brass buttons. To be honest I'm not sure what era or location this takes place in. Is this a serious bookcover? What kind of serious—like Civilization V serious or Rifts World Book serious, because if this the case, then it's actually kind of silly. Then again I like both Civilization V and Rifts, so there you go.

The coloring used on this cover has a bland and muted feeling to it. I'm assuming that this was hand painted and then scanned, and the traditional aspect of this earns points. I'm big on craftsmanship. The thing is that it feels a bit blurry overall, and actually makes the cover seem low res—which is a turn off for me personally. I've seen drafts of this cover with an alternate typeface that pops, it seems to jump off of the cover, and then I find myself wondering why the final has such flat text. It melts into the cover and has a wallflower type effect on my eyes. If you view a bigger version and look too long, the text has the same smeary looking problem that the character and background share. To be honest this wouldn't offend me per say, but it surely wouldn't catch my eye. Once the book is in my hands? I'd hesitate to read it. Too safe, too neutral, too...bland.

Overall:

I wouldn't recommend this book in it's current state, but that's largely due to the sheer amount of editing errors going on underneath the cover. I'd feel embarrassed endorsing it.

Conclusion:

Anyone who knows me knows that I don't usually do reviews, but while I have not met this author, I felt compelled to return the favor. A while back the author featured my book on their blog, and was actually one of the first people to have done so. The reason why the status for this book is “Refund pending – awaiting revision” is because I have seen the author mention a revised edition being released sometime this fall. That being said I am absolutely certain that this review's score will not stay locked at a two, and I look forward to re-reviewing it when the time comes.

Heather Dudley says

I loved this book. Although the protagonist is theoretically young Terin, a slave with a deathwish who is cursed to do as his master bids by spelled gold, it's the ages-old priest, Blaise, who steals the show from the moment he waltzes onto the pages.

Blain starts out with a literal cliffhanger, and never lets the action stop. Each moment leads to the next tension, and Blain is not afraid to hurt these characters. Nothing infuriates me more than writers who hold their characters above harm and consequences.

She has no trouble hurting them at *all*.

The characters are well developed, with complex backstories you learn about over the course of the book. Terin remains an enigma to the end, beyond his need to survive and desire to die, but what we learn about Blaise is breathtaking, and hints at a vast world we've only scratched the surface on.

Conspiracy and betrayal, magic and gods, this is a fantasy book that isn't your standard sword-and sorcery. No thinly-veiled Catholic allegory here; this fantastic religion is very primal and dangerous to the core.

Pick this book up now, and you won't regret it.

Johanna says

I wanted to like the book, but I just could not get interested enough about the characters. I managed to read to the end, but still neither really spoke to me. Blaise was more interesting, but Terin I did not care at all about. I found it very hard to keep interested in the story either. Too much religion and gods in my opinion.

I like RJ Blain as an author, but this particular series is not for me.

Charlie Kravetz says

This review is for the Kindle edition ebook.

Disclosure: I was given my copy of this book by the author for a donation made through www.indiegogo.com/projects/ website.

An angel, the church, a bit of magic and fantasy all mixed together to create a good story.

The angel, Blaise, must prevent the most powerful artifacts in the world from being combined. If he allows the artifacts to combine, the power could destroy the world. This story follows a timeline similar to the Roman Empire, with slaves and masters.

I did enjoy this story. It is a different spin on what could be a drab repeat of magic and fantasy. While this book stands on own very well, I was left with some questions. What happens with Blaise and Terin? Who is the mystery woman that proves so helpful to them? Unfortunately, there were several grammar errors that

caused me to sometimes lose the flow of the story.

The reader should not have to work hard reading a book. This book flows very well, and is very entertaining to read. I found it allowed me to dwell on the story when I wanted to, but it written well enough that I did not have to strain to find enjoyment reading it. Even with the few grammatical errors, it is fun to read.

Having read this book, I would recommend fantasy readers grab it quickly. I am looking forward to the sequel, to get answers to some of the questions I was left with.

Amy says

Disclaimer: I received an ARC of this book, but I read the final version I received as part of my contribution to the IndieGogo campaign.

Terin is a suicidal slave who gets abducted during a to-the-death arena battle.

Blaise is a thousand-year old otherworldly creature disguised as an allergy-ridden human. He serves as a Bishop in a religion built around several magical artifacts, namely the Eye, Hand, and Heart of God.

The two of them are pawns in an evil emperor's thirst for power -- a desire to have all three artifacts and the people who serve as "vessels" for the artifacts.

It's hard to decide how to rate this one. The premise was great and several parts of the world-building and magic were highly interesting. The use of Speech to control various elements was cool, although the power wasn't fully flushed out and I sometimes wondered why the people who could use it didn't use it all the time.

The religion was an interesting blend of world religions, with references to various belief systems and mythical stories thrown in. I thought it was handled well.

Things that made this book lose stars:

There are a lot of mistakes in this book, mostly of the grammatical variety. Dropped words and added words litter sentences every few pages. Often times, I'd have to stop and reread a sentence several times over in order to understand what was wrong with it and figure out what words were missing. I didn't notice many misspellings, but I did notice several cases of errors that wouldn't be picked up by spell-check. Noun forms of words were used as verbs. Past tense verbs showed up where a present tense verb ought to be. This made the reading less than enjoyable, although others with less tendencies toward grammar-nazism might enjoy it just fine.

The treatment of women and children in this book bothered me. The arena scene near the beginning includes several brutal killings of children as young as 5 or 6. This may disturb some more sensitive readers. It disturbed me more than I thought it might, and didn't seem to serve much purpose in the story beyond showing that things sucked for slave kids.

There is only one woman who has a name in this book, and she plays such a minor role (and talks in such a terrible accent) that she's hardly a person. The other female characters are all "pleasure slaves" or children, owned by men for the use of men. At one point, Blaise tortures a nameless woman, cutting her and licking up

her blood, but decides at the last minute not to kill her. I don't consider myself a huge feminist, but I was somewhat appalled that there wasn't a single woman in this book who was treated as a capable human being. One was saved, but more out of guilt than because she was a person that anyone actually cared about (and we never learned her name).

It's a lot of war, death, and political power struggles. This isn't really my cup of tea, but someone else might really enjoy this story. It gets three stars, based on how I rate other similar books.

Melody Daggerhart says

Notes of Interest:

I got this book several years ago. I honestly don't remember the details of how or why. It has been in my "To Be Read" list far too long (I'm ashamed to say.), so I recently decided it was time to dust it off. However, when I started reading, I soon had to put it down to finish some other books on loan by deadline. When I picked it up again, I was lost. Normally, I can remember the major details with the plot and characters by simply continuing where I left off, as long as the break isn't more than a couple of months.

As I drafted this review, I looked up a few other reviews in hopes of clarifying a few questions. Like what, exactly, is Blaise supposed to be? Other reviewers apparently had trouble with this question, too, because while some referred to him as an angel, his true form is red, and he used to have a tail (not your usual angelic description). I thought he was a demon or fallen angel, until I was confronted with a reference to his beak. Did that mean he was a dragon? A griffin? Some beast unique to this fictional world? Other reviewers resorted to calling him an "otherworldly creature", so perhaps that is the best label, but it frustrated me that I couldn't get a grip on his species by name.

So, I have come to the conclusion that my break from reading is not what made this story hard to follow at some points. But I am noting the break in case I did miss something obvious as a result of my own inconsistency.

What could have made it better for me:

I've already mentioned the main thing that frustrated me: lack of clarity. It's not just with Blaise's true form. It's in the world building of the religion and empire, as well as with the artifacts being sought. It's not bad. I just felt it could have been better because the story left me with more questions than answers — questions about foundation elements more than what happens next.

Who is God? Is this the Judeo-Christian God, but in an alternate reality? Or are we talking about a different divine immortal? We are told what the artifacts are and a story about the spirits possessing them, but I'm still left wondering how they came to be what they are. They're important, obviously, so I felt a little more precision on describing them and where they came from and what they can do was in order. Who is Blaise's woman friend in the shop? She and her old language are notably different from everyone else, but with no solid explanation why. Is God's garden a literal garden in this world, like how ancient Greek's imagined Mount Olympus? Or is it a metaphysical place where roses are souls, unlike the roses of this world? Tarin was able to enter and steal an artifact, but he's mortal and alive. The world's physics feel undefined. Questions like this made me wish the author had spent a little more time on world building and descriptions.

Aside from clarity issues, there were a number of technical errors that pulled me out of the story. And with the exception of Blaise, the characters felt flat. Tarin is supposed to be the “chosen one” of the series, but Blaise’s complexity as a reluctant immortal pretending to be mortal is more interesting. We follow Tarin’s escape and mistreatment among his captors until he escapes again; but he is suicidal, and his agency is diminished by the more dominant characters around him.

What I liked about it:

In spite of the lack of clarity, the ideas in this story have potential. I like stories that involve conspiracies against religions and governments, and that is the core of what’s brewing here. If the conspiracy becomes the center focus, there is potential for intrigue and some good plot twists because that is the nature of conspiracies.

Quest stories are usually adventurous, so the search for the artifact thief makes up the bulk of the action in this book, and there is potential for the protagonist to have more agency in the follow-up books as the artifacts become more important to solving the problem of the conspiracy.

But perhaps my favourite device in this story is the use of the Scripture as a tool for magic. Because the plot encompasses an organized religion, adherents of the faith can literally recite a passage of Scripture to produce magic in the same manner one would vocalize casting a spell. The power that a mortal has to Speak the Word of God would obviously depend on how well they know the Scriptures by heart, and perhaps the strength of their faith. Immortals, like Blaise, have more power. This may seem like nothing new if you’re familiar with any of the literal-based branches of Judeo-Christian faiths, but on a fictional level this is unique because of how these sacred scriptures are literally grimoires full of very powerful, tangible magic. I love how this concept seems so obvious in the real world, and yet we hardly ever see it handled quite like this in secular fiction. I thought it was well done throughout.

Recommendation:

This is a tough book for me to reach a conclusion about. I view it the same way I view abstract art. I can appreciate it as something unique, based on colors and mood alone. But if I stare at it long enough, I see things that may or may not exist, because my brain defaults to needing a more solid picture in order to make sense of it. I see the potential in the world, the characters, and what’s going on with the artifacts, but I don’t enjoy rereading passages when I feel like I missed something important. The reader who prefers to know exactly what the author envisioned might have a more difficult time following this book than the reader who prefers to fill in some of the details himself.

Carole Tempest says

I struggled a bit at the start with the style of the writing, I had to back track a couple of times and re-read some bits I found a bit heavy on descriptions. By the time I reached the half way mark I was engrossed in the two main characters and eager to see what would happen to them.

By the end I was ready to start the next instalment, because at the end I did feel it was just a beginning not a whole story, as I still had questions and things I wanted to know about the world RJ Blain had created.

I did find a few typos and some bits which read a bit clunky, but it only slowed me down a touch when I had

to re-read those passages. But I still enjoyed the story and wanted to know more about the characters and hopefully in the next instalment we will meet some of the others which were only hinted at.
