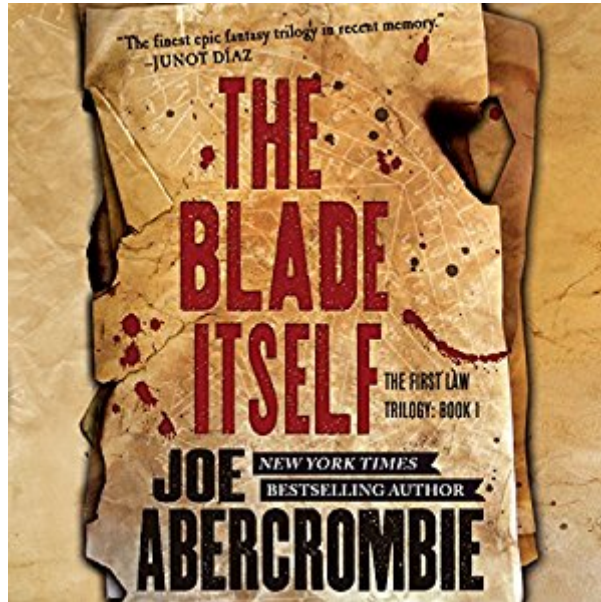


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# The Blade Itself



## Synopsis

The first novel in the First Law Trilogy and the debut novel from New York Times best seller Joe Abercrombie. Logen Ninefingers, infamous barbarian, has finally run out of luck. Caught in one feud too many, he's on the verge of becoming a dead barbarian - leaving nothing behind him but bad songs, dead friends, and a lot of happy enemies. Nobleman, dashing officer, and paragon of selfishness, Captain Jezal dan Luthar has nothing more dangerous in mind than fleecing his friends at cards and dreaming of glory in the fencing circle. But war is brewing, and on the battlefields of the frozen North they fight by altogether bloodier rules. Inquisitor Glokta, cripple turned torturer, would like nothing better than to see Jezal come home in a box. But then Glokta hates everyone: Cutting treason out of the Union one confession at a time leaves little room for friendship. His latest trail of corpses may lead him right to the rotten heart of government, if he can stay alive long enough to follow it. Enter the wizard, Bayaz. A bald old man with a terrible temper and a pathetic assistant, he could be the First of the Magi, he could be a spectacular fraud, but whatever he is, he's about to make the lives of Logen, Jezal, and Glokta a whole lot more difficult. Murderous conspiracies rise to the surface, old scores are ready to be settled, and the line between hero and villain is sharp enough to draw blood. Unpredictable, compelling, wickedly funny, and packed with unforgettable characters, *The Blade Itself* is noir fantasy with a real cutting edge.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I love this book and the series; the dark humor is refreshing, and the characters are complex and believable. They're all both loathsome and likable at the same time (particularly Sand dan Glokta!)

The only issue I have with all of the books in this series is how all of the characters - and I mean all of them - frequently say "huh". I assume this is supposed to be a grunt of some sort, but it's used way too much.

This is the first book of an enjoyable trilogy. The story follows a handful of key characters who each get their own point-of-view chapters, kind of like Game of Thrones. The characters are well-developed and change throughout the series. In other books, the main character tends to be nearly superhuman and great at everything. The characters in this series are exceptional, but also deeply flawed and not always likable. It makes them more relatable. These books go by pretty fast, so give them a try.

This novel puts Joe Abercrombie in the same league as K. J. Parker. And the second tier writers are not very close. Unlike so many working this genre, his stories -here and in subsequent novels- depend less on genre tropes than on memorable characters; it is their stories that drive the plot. If you're going to be tortured, be sure and ask for Inquisitor Glokta.

Glokta and Jezal kept me going. I would've liked more of Ardee - what was she up to? We know too little about her. I loved the female warrior. The story kind of dragged in the middle but the ending picked up nicely. It's not my favorite of this author's books and I am still debating whether I will continue with the series.

Thank you Mr. Abercrombie!! I'd recommend this book to anyone who enjoys fantasy and anyone who wants to try it out. The writing is easy and fun to read, the characters interesting and well developed and the story fun. Irreverent all the way to the end, at times funny and at times gritty. If you are looking for a stand alone book with a definite ending to its story look elsewhere. This book obviously ends with the story "to be continued" in the second book. I just bought the second book because I don't want the story to end.

The first half of the book was a tough slog, for me. The characters the author introduces are all very different and interesting on their own, but there was not really an overarching plot. The second half of the book remedies this. The slog went away and the book became the joy to read so many other reviewers mention. You will enjoy this book if you don't mind all the pieces not fitting together right away. You will enjoy this book if you enjoyed The Malazan Book of the Fallen series. Starting off, I

did not think this book was for me. Turns out I was wrong.

I'm going to come out and just say it, *The Blade Itself* kicks off with action from various point-of-view characters whose storylines intertwine in an interesting and believable way. Joe Abercrombie has created a world of fading, but still deadly magic with monuments from a legendary age made famous by legendary figures in which ordinary characters suddenly find themselves interacting with. The narrative covers locations over three continents of the First Law world, in which we observe or learn three distinct cultures thus further building up the world. But what most impressed me was not the book concluding with definite end, but instead "open ending" that made the reader yearn for *Before They Are Hanged*.

The storytelling is first rate. This book is definitely rated R|15|15+ just from the violence and language. I enjoyed the book, finishing it in spite of only really wanting to analyze the first few chapters. Joe Abercrombie's world is dirty, gritty, and touched with just a breath of magic. The characters grew far beyond their two dimensional trope. The bad guys oozed evil, the diamond in the rough gritty youth grew, the damsel in distress turned into a far to real woman, the iconic mysterious wizard had unexpected depths. The story consists of so many characters I lost count of the POVs but every character was uniquely interesting and memorable. I laughed at some scenes, I felt distressed in others, in some places the story snagged and dragged to an almost boring halt. Yet I was interested enough to keep going. The book does not end, or even come to a cliffhanger, the end is simply the conclusion of a chapter and that is it. I get the feeling this was really a larger book that was just sliced into thirds without considering the story enough to provide either a compelling ending transition to a new section/book or a fun cliffhanger. By the end many of the plot lines have started coming together nicely promising really interesting interactions in the next two books. That said, I will not read the next two books in this trilogy. My impression is that this is a dark fantasy, rooted in a muddy, gritty world, where the evil characters are more likely to win or get away without any comeuppance. The characters I'm rooting for are likely to die or end up miserable. I read the reviews of the last book to get a feel if I was right and from the descriptions, there with light spoilers I found my predictions are correct. I don't enjoy such stories. I read fantasy to escape to worlds where good eventually wins and things are at least a little fairer than real life. Therefore, I will leave the outcome in my imagination the way I want it and not find out how horrible things turn out in Joe Abercrombie's version.

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