

Running with the Demon (The Word and the Void Trilogy, Book 1)

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Twenty years ago, Terry Brooks turned fantasy fiction on its head with *The Sword of Shannara*, the first fantasy novel to make the mainstream bestseller lists, and the first in an unbroken string of thirteen bestselling books. Now, in *Running with the Demon*, Brooks does nothing less than revitalize fantasy fiction again, inventing the complex and powerful new mythos of the Word and the Void, good versus evil still, but played out in the theater-in-the-round of the "real world" of our present.

On the hottest Fourth of July weekend in decades, two men have come to Hopewell, Illinois, site of a lengthy, bitter steel strike. One is a demon, dark servant of the Void, who will use the anger and frustration of the community to attain a terrible secret goal. The other is John Ross, a Knight of the Word, a man who, while he sleeps, lives in the hell the world will become if he fails to change its course on waking. Ross has been given the ability to see the future. But does he have the power to change it?

At stake is the soul of a fourteen-year-old girl mysteriously linked to both men. And the lives of the people of Hopewell. And the future of the country. This Fourth of July, while friends and families picnic in Sinnissippi Park and fireworks explode in celebration of freedom and independence, the fate of Humanity will be decided . . .

A novel that weaves together family drama, fading innocence, cataclysm, and enlightenment. *Running with the Demon* will forever change the way you think about the fantasy novel. As believable as it is imaginative, as wondrous as it is frightening, it is a rich, exquisitely-written tale to be savored long after the last page is turned.

Terry Brooks's *Running with the Demon* is billed as "A Novel of Good and Evil," but he could've called it "A Novel of Here and Now." The fantasy master behind the *Shannara* series switches his focus from neo-Tolkien jungles to the woebegone steel town of Hopewell, Illinois. Though Illinois teenager Nest Freemark (where does he get these names?) looks like your average kid, she spends her free time in the woods asking her 6-inch pal Pick for advice in dodging the Demon and his creepy Feeders, spirits who gobble the souls of humans. Nest is also being tailed by John Ross, a shining Knight of the Word who wants to keep her from the Feeders' jaws.

Meanwhile, in the real world that dominates the novel, Nest Freemark is being stalked by a handsome, evil classmate who she has rejected, and a pack of surly, insurgent striking steelworkers plot a bombing at the company's Fourth of July picnic. The boy and the bombers are unaware that they're being subconsciously manipulated by the Demon. The book's matter-of-fact take on the uncanny is a bit like *The X-Files*. (And if you want to compare the two, check out Ted Edwards's *X-Files Confidential: The Unauthorized X-Files Compendium*.)

Brooks's plot has more strands than a plate of pasta, yet his mind is logical to a fault--he used to be a lawyer. There's something for everyone: gory monster attacks, a dread family secret, magical mind-game duels, even a (rather flat) teen-romance subplot. The setting has real grit and the countdown to the Independence Day bombing peps up the tale. Brooks sometimes prosaically explains things a better literary stylist would dramatize, and his minatory visions of environmental apocalypse are more fun than the obvious, nagging, don't-be-a-litterbug message they exist to convey. Brooks will never be as deep as Tolkien,

and many readers will find him less awesome as their adolescence recedes. Still, he's the genuine article, and with this book, he raises the stakes he's playing for.

"FABULOUS . . . A breathtaking run of near-catastrophes and revelations . . . His fans should embrace it as eagerly as they have The Sword of Shannara."

--Publishers Weekly (starred review)

"Running with the Demon is by far the best of Terry Brooks's many wonderful novels: darker, starker, classically written, and with a brand new mythos to fuel its contemporary plot. I couldn't put it down."

--JOHN SAUL

"A darkly tinged contemporary fantasy."

--San Francisco Chronicle

Other Books

Beyond good and evil.

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