



Wrath

John Gwynne

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Events are coming to a climax in the Banished Lands, as the war reaches new heights. King Nathair has taken control of the fortress at Drassil and three of the Seven Treasures are in his possession. And together with Calidus and his ally Queen Rhin, Nathair will do anything to obtain the remaining Treasures. With all seven under his command, he can open a portal to the Otherworld. Then Asroth and his demon-horde will finally break into the Banished Lands and become flesh.

Meanwhile Corban has been taken prisoner by the Jotun, warrior giants who ride their enormous bears into battle. His warband scattered, Corban must make new allies if he hopes to survive. But can he bond with competing factions of warlike giants? Somehow he must, if he's to counter the threat Nathair represents.

His life hangs in the balance - and with it, the fate of the Banished Lands.

Wrath Details

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From Reader Review Wrath for online ebook

Celeste says

Full review now posted!

Rating: 6/5 stars

This is the most satisfying finale I've ever read.

I just spent some time rearranging my bookshelves, because this series has become one I desperately want in my living room. I want it to be one of the first series people see when they walk in my house. It's now gracing a shelf with Harry Potter, The King Killer Chronicles, and Tolkien's Middle Earth books. The Faithful and the Fallen has truly usurped A Song of Ice and Fire in my heart and mind, and has relegated my copies to the study. Remember when I said, "Move over, GRRM, because Gwynne is here to steal yo' girl," in my review of Malice? That's literally what happened to my bookshelf. GRRM has been deposed, and has lost the game of thrones when it comes to bookshelf dominance.

"To my thinking, though, it's what happens before death that's important. All of us die. How many really live?"

This is a hard series to review without spoiling, so I'm going to refrain from mentioning any specific characters, though I long to do so. If you've read the books and would like to discuss, find me on Goodreads and I would be more than happy to discuss them with you. If you're just picking them up and want someone to gush and mourn with you as you read, I'm your girl. But in the hopes of convincing others to read this marvelous series, I'm not going to get into specifics so that I don't accidentally spoil them for anyone. I'll instead be writing about what the books, this volume in particular, have made me think and feel as I journeyed through them.

"You speak of truth and courage. Forgiveness can be the greatest act of courage."

What an emotional roller coaster this series was. I'm not exaggerating when I say that Gwynne made me laugh and cry and gasp as I read. I had actual nightmares about certain scenes; not because they were particularly scary or anything, but because I was so emotionally invested. There were so many characters that I cared deeply about, man and woman, beast and giant included. There were twists that I didn't see coming. There were losses that blindsided me and victories that made me cheer, startling my husband in the process. GRRM has become infamous for killing off characters who were central to the story, but Gwynne made me care so much more about character deaths, because he made me care so much more about the characters.

"All feel fear, both the coward and the hero, and all those in between... it's what we do about it that counts."

I don't know that I've ever read about a war whose outcome I cared more about than the God-War. This was the ultimate battle of good against evil, of courage in the face of overwhelming odds as others compromised their morals, of love and loyalty pitted against greed and selfish ambition. This final book was all about the final battle between the Ben-Elim and their Bright Star against the Kadoshim and their Black Sun. I won't tell you which side prevailed, but I will say that the final battle was one of the most brutal and intense battlefield scenes I've ever read. This might not sound like the biggest compliment but I promise that it is; I

was never, ever bored. During a battle scene that lasted roughly 150 pages, I never started skimming or wishing that it was over already. I was engrossed and invested and completely enthralled by every chapter of this book.

Within this book, we witness loyalties being tried and tested. Sometimes, loyalty is not enough once a person's eyes are opened to the truth of the one they follow, and those loyalties are broken despite the pain such a decision brings to someone with honor. Other times, loyalties don't shift so much as they expand to hold those whom they thought would forever be their enemy. When love is mingled with loyalty, it can't help but expand. Love broadens; it does not narrow. And the love in this book is palpably real. We watch romantic love blossom, the love between friends strengthen, and the love for one's home define. It's moving to behold.

"This is not who I am. One act of darkness, of treachery. But also many of loyalty, too. Judge me by the sum of my deeds, not just the one mistake."

Once again, I just have to say that one of my favorite aspects of this series is Gwynne's beautiful renderings of relationships between man and beast. The animals of the Banished Lands have big personalities of their own, and their loyalty to the humans or giants they choose to love is beyond reproach. And man, can they be vicious. Other series have tried to craft relationships between man and beast, and some have succeeded. But none have succeeded as well for me as *The Faithful and the Fallen*. I'll definitely never look at crows and ravens the same way again!

There is nothing Gwynne could have done differently to improve this finale, in my opinion. Yes, I would have loved for all of my favorite characters to still be living when I finished the final chapter, but their deaths added a poignant realism that would have been lacking otherwise. But this ending was epic and surprising and emotional and never felt rushed. I loved how humor and heartache and hope all intermingled in the final pages.

So far, I've recommended this series to eight members of my family. My dad is reading *Malice* right now, with my brother waiting next in line. I'm recommending *TFatF* to people who aren't even fantasy fans because it was one of the most phenomenal stories I've ever consumed. If you like stories about good standing against evil, you should read this. If you like your books with lots of heart, please at least give this series a try. I expect to have to buy new copies of these four books in the years to come, because I foresee them being tattered and worn from being reread and lent out. I have no qualms about proclaiming *The Faithful and the Fallen* my favorite completed adult fantasy series that I've read so far. And I hope that you pick them up and love them just as much as I have.

"Truth and Courage!"

Original review can be found at Booknest.

Paul says

Wow. Just...wow.

Almost 20 years ago, a friend and I went to the theater to watch "Saving Private Ryan." We walked out of the theater in awed silence, and drove 30 minutes home before either of us spoke.

I felt the same way after finishing Wrath last night. I closed the book and just stared at it for a long time. My wife asked me if I was ok; I didn't even answer her.

What a series! And what an ending! Some smiles, some heartache, some surprises; but nothing that pissed me off. And no loose ends -- I like that.

As I said in my reviews of the other books in the series, the character development is just incredible. I know these people (and other beings). I'm going to wonder about them for a while! But beyond that, the visuals were amazing; the action, the intrigue, the storyline were all top shelf.

Mr. Gwynne has definitely made my list of favorite authors.

TS Chan says

I am proud to stand beside you. I know that none of you fight for riches, nor for glory or for fame. We fight for those we love. On this day we will march out to meet our enemies, those who have slain our kin, stolen our homes and would take our lives, and we shall show them what drives us. TRUTH AND COURAGE.

It will be a dark day, a bloody day, a proud day, for this is the day of our wrath.

That was a *breathhtaking and truly satisfying* conclusion to John Gwynne's debut series, The Faithful and the Fallen. The finale was one long-drawn out battle between the forces of good and evil. Sounds cliché, unoriginal, etc etc? Perhaps, though it was such a wonderful ride that frankly who cares! And what is it exactly that makes it so good?

It's when you hold your breath during the battle scenes, and in particular, the more personal ones.

And when you scream in frustration as the despicable bad guy got away.

Or when you pump your fist in elation at the sweet poetic justice of vengeance delivered (and you wonder when you've become so bloodthirsty).

And especially when your heart breaks and you weep for the deaths of the characters you've grown to love so much during the course of the series.

What made a difference is how much you care about what happens, and believe me when I say that the author does not pull his punches. And that is what made this series so good.

Aside from the characters, the battle scenes are **superbly written**.

Mr John Gwynne, please take a bow!

Eon ?Windrunner? says

What a *superb* finish to this series. This is fantasy with *heart*.

Wrath continues the story exactly from where Ruin's...ruinous ending left everything hanging precariously in the balance. I kid you not when I call the closing chapter devastating. My poor heart was tested to the limit with a seriously heart-wrenching scene.

Pain shuddered through Corban's chest, as if someone were gripping his heart, squeezing and twisting it. He couldn't breathe; his sorrow was a physical thing that crushed the air from his lungs.

So does John Gwynne take it easy on us and just ease our troubled minds in the opening chapter? NOPE. Suffer, suffer, suffer, stress, stress, stress. **points out new grey hairs*. I would love to give you peace of mind that all is well with our loved characters if you have been through the same tumultuous ROLLER-COASTER OF PAIN, but sorry friend. **waves hand – this is not the review you are looking for*. NO SPOILERS. Muhahahahaha.

The story is so much of everything I love. Whilst continuing the story of right and wrong with lots of grey, Wrath is so much more than a fight between two sides with the future of the world in the balance. It is sum of the characters put to page and the relationships they build. The loyalty they both evoke and express and the lengths they will go to for one another, how they will fight when hope is but a dream. This is evidenced time and time again throughout this series and makes it a pure joy to read.

“And if there is no chance of victory, then what of vengeance? Do more than talk and whine: seek your vengeance for those fallen. Or would you rather wallow in self-pity than try to save your loved ones?”

The pace is relentless, and it does not falter at all – 700+ page book? Pfft, felt like 400 pages. There is humour, action, love, death, betrayals, surprises, lots of fighting with glorious battles both small and large and magnificent sword fights, angels, demons, magic, giants, wolves, draigs and much more! Bloodthirsty? Step right up!

It was the figure that was always surrounded by billowing clouds of flies. It paused before her, one fist grabbing her chin and lifting it to stare into her eyes, though there was nothing there; its eyes were black, soulless wells. A lunatic grin twisted its mouth and a black tongue flickered out from its mouth, thick and swollen, and slowly licked her cheek. She retched from its foul breath, but the Kadoshim held her immovable while flies crawled over her face, up her nose. ‘One day, soon,’ it whispered in her ear. ‘I will crush your skull and suck the jelly from your eyes.’

I loved it and I'm convinced most fantasy lovers will too.

My one dislike, was that so many of the good guys crossed the *Bridge of Swords*. That's Banished Land-ish for 'died' to those of you yet to dip your toe into the Faithfull and Fallen series. While very realistic and not unexpected with battles of this quantity and scope, I fervently wished for them all to make it through unscathed and was saddened several times in the closing stages. Like I said though, not unexpected.

Bottom line is John Gwynne has managed to write a satisfying conclusion with this thrilling finale of what is one the best epic fantasy series in recent years. Frankly it is a crime how many people are unfamiliar with it

and if this genre is your thing and you have not yet read this, *change* that ASAP.

This series is without a doubt Sword and Sorcery of the highest echelon! I cannot wait to read his next series set 150 years or so into the future of this same world.

James Tivendale says

If you follow the frequency of my reviews then you will be able to analyse that I have devoured the stories from John Gwynne's fantasy epic saga, *The Faithful and the Fallen* at an inhuman pace, and the reason for this is that they are spectacularly envisaged works of art. I always find the final book in a series that I have committed about seventy hours of my time into reading is the most difficult to write a review about. This is due to no longer being able to escape within and have my senses bombarded by the unpredictable, exhilarating action of *The Banished Lands*, which has an emotional impact on me, and also that a certain amount of what I have stated in the previous novels' reviews about characters, techniques, devices and editing are still prevalent here; however, I do not wish to recycle the same points written previously.

The book commences after the bloody battle of Drassil which can be seen at *Ruin's* finale. The Bright Star's band of varied companions seem to be beaten, battered and scattered following on from the events that were presented at the prior novels' climactic conclusion. Up until that stage, they were truly united by the undying hope that the God Elyon will return and that the macabre dark Satan-esque Asroth will not be made flesh to wreck havoc on the world. The opposing forces led by Nathair and Calidus are in control of Drassil now, the Giant erected magnificent fortress where the majority of the seven legendary treasures are currently kept guarded within their possession. However, an important issue that haunts both sides as the book begins is the question, worrying all involved because of the impact it could have on the God-War is - where is Corban?

Similar to the previous striking spectacles in the series, there are sparring factions and confrontations throughout the entire landscape of the Banished Lands, however; all involved now seem to acknowledge that they are part of something larger than their own existence with the looming likelihood of a true convergence at an ultimate showdown that hangs the future of the world in a balance.

There are so many epic duals, showdowns, battles, betrayals and bloodshed that *Wrath* arguably contains more action than a Jet Li highlight reel. The pace is breakneck and constant too after the foundations are set at the start of the story. Family, loyalty, honour and respect are important aspects also. It isn't all dark and despondent. Some characters cross paths who met early on in *Malice* or *Valour* and I could relate completely to the emotions felt from the elegance of the writing and the journey that I had walked in the footsteps of these individuals. Whether it is Maquin crossing paths with one of his nemesis's Jael or Veradis meeting Cywen again, who previously respected but never quite understood each others' needs or views - some of the reuniting makes for amazing drama. I occasionally was given goosebumps. Although the world and cast are huge, until this story all the players and cities had not been introduced or frequented, respectively. This adds to the level of the excitement as there are still secrets and unscratched surfaces for readers to find out about. This time we are introduced to the Jotun giant race who are very important in Corban's narrative and we

follow a certain faction to the believed abandoned grassland plains of Arcona, with the ambition of finding the Starstone Torc. We meet a few people in confrontations that I truly believed were only the work of the world's fables or legends. The history is so well developed now that it is almost a living breathing entity in the pages here. In addition, I had a soft spot for the new addition, orphan forest-child Meg who becomes important to Edana and Camlin's storyline. Slightly off topic but I have to state that two of the most interesting members of the epic's ensemble are not human. Corban's Wolven companion Storm and arguably, one the best and most influential characters is Craff, the talking crow.

The warbands are now aligned and set in stone about halfway through this book. The people whose minds we have been floating within for three and a half books meet characters we have also known for that amount of time and their meetings happen prior to the showdown, yet are not always convenient, straightforward and without confrontation. As well as the above-mentioned character reuniting scenes; it is interesting when individuals who know each other often only by notorious, confused or opposing reputations meet. Corban meeting Veradis and Alycon meeting Balur-One Eye are just two fine examples. It is intriguing to see how these characters we have known, loved, hated and despised all intertwine and what effect it has on the overall outcome.

A feature I really liked about this series is that the majority main characters were present in all the stories; of course if they were still alive. So unlike, *A Song of Ice and Fire* or *Malazan: Book of the Fallen* where main protagonists are not featured in numerous tales in-between, such as Anomader Rake who appears in *Malazan #3* and then does not reappear until *Malazan #8*, I truly felt close to the created cast of *The Faithful and The Fallen*.

It is really interesting when points of view characters discuss in their mind people on the horizon, in the battle or in their peripheral vision and I found it quite gratifying being able to acknowledge who they are talking about. Putting the pieces of the puzzle together for the final sections of the series.

Another engaging factor too is that some highly influential characters whose actions and deeds were only presented by other points of view perspectives previously have their own point of view chapters here. Most notably in Nathair. It adds greatly to his already complex characters depth and I analysed that there is no such thing as either black and white or wholly good and evil within the human characters. Nathair's internal monologues about his mother, about his First Sword and his potential destiny, did make me sympathise with him, made me shout at my page to "wake up", "snap out of it", "you are better than this" and this side of his persona hadn't been presented before.

The final twenty-five percent is arguably one the best-composed battle sections I have read in fantasy and then the following on resulting events. It is like a game of chess but unlike the Ancient Greek Gods, the human's are the characters that are predominantly in charge, making the moves and the domino effect, ripples and repercussions of certain actions which take the adventure down highly ingenious and unpredictable avenues.

Please do not tell anybody, but I did cry at certain segments whilst reading this book. Occasionally from joviality, however, more often from utter despair. I told my housemate I had some dust in my eye so hopefully he still thinks that I am a cool person. I found the end sequences highly engrossing, satisfying, quite brutal and heartbreaking with some of the deaths but fascinatingly, so much could still happen in *The Banished Lands*. Gwynne advised me his next book *DREAD* is set there many generations later. I am intrigued to see if the characters we have followed here and in the previous three books become the new legends and mythical heroes embroidered in his future narrative.

Choko says

*** 4.65 ***

A buddy read with the Fantasy Fanatics at FBR Group...“Truth and Courage!”

"...“This day,’ he cried, shouting now, ‘we will live or die, but whatever the outcome, this will still be the day we avenge ourselves for those we’ve lost, the day we right the wrongs done to us, or die in the trying. It will be a dark day, a bloody day, a proud day, for this is the day of our WRATH!’”...”

Our little boy, our naive and carefree boy we met in the fields, playing with his friends and dreaming of adventures, our Corban has grown up to be a man of **Valor**, rejecting the rain of **Malice** and surviving through almost the complete destruction and desolation of **Ruin**, to emerge as one of the least prepossessing, but highly beloved young heroes of the Epic Fantasy Genre. And when I think how many times I resisted starting this last book in the series, because I was terrified of how things might go... I was at least partially right to be afraid - John Gwynne has no issues killing beloved characters off left and right, completely ignoring the pain and agony that might cost us, the readers... Yes, I am all for reality in my Fantasy, but sometimes, just sometimes, give us a break and let us believe that some of them get to have a happy life somewhere off page and we never have to worry about them again...

"...“To my thinking, though, it's what happens before death that's important. All of us die. How many really live?”...”

The Banished Lands is in the last throws of the God War. The sides are clearly delineated and the side of the Bright Star seems to be loosing on all fronts... The stronghold has been taken over by the Evil Black Sun and the minions of Asroth, who is the Big-Bad in the Otherworld, and they seem to have overtaken most of the kingdoms in the land. The rag-tag survivors are trying not only to gather themselves once again, but to find a reason to fight, a reason and a symbol to hang on to their honor and continue fighting for all the good and loving things we all cherish. It is very difficult to do so, when the people are debilitated by fear, overwhelmed by hopelessness, and panic has overrun their higher thinking, bringing everyone down to the level of self-preservation at any cost. But little by little, the broken pieces of the resistance begin healing themselves and some semblance of fighting spirit returns, letting them rise again.

"...“All feel fear, both the coward and the hero, and all those in between... it's what we do about it that counts.”...”

Let start by reminding everyone that this is Mr. Gwynne's first ever series. The writing has improved dramatically from the first book on and I can say, by this book he is a master of telling one dynamic and very engaging story. The multiple POV's make it seem like a movie made with multiple cameras and you can perceive the action and plot from all sides, giving you just enough room for surprises and little blind-spots, so you are constantly on your toes. As entertaining and emotional as the story is, there were some things I would have liked to know more about, particularly the seven treasures, which in my opinion, turned more into scavenger hunt objects, instead of real mythical objects with weight and history of their own. I also had issues with characters continuing their life span quite artificially, beyond their true usefulness as prominent players, since they had already made a very memorable mark, but I guess no one is perfect and the bad was

overwhelmed with degrees by the good , so I am not going to complain about it. Yes, there were characters I would have rather seen staying alive by the end of the book, but once again, I have to trust the author with knowing what fits best the story he wants to tell us. Once I actually started reading, I could not put the book down and I feel lucky to have stumbled across this series from the moment it came out, giving me the privilege to be able to follow this very talented author as he grows.

If you are a fan of Fantasy and Epic Fantasy with some dark realism to it, this is a series I would heartily recommend. For all the blood and gore, there are no gratuitous violence or unnecessary cruelty. This is another book in the tradition of Good vs. Evil and the readership is richer for its existence. Now I am going to go curl up with some tea and chocolate and cry for the characters I loved ... Maybe I will feel better later...

"...“So much emotion wrapped up in weakness, leading you to attempt the impossible, lying to yourself, time and time again. Hope, I think you call it.” ..."

Now I wish you all Happy Reading and may you find what you Need in the pages of a good book!!!

Orient says

An awesome BR with Craig and Michael :) Best comrades ever!!!! You are the best ;)

What a book, what a series with an epic finale. The Faithful and the Fallen is a series, which started quite slow for me, but it was a struggle only with the first part of book one. Overall it's a great mix for readers stumbling into fantasy genre anew and a wonderful journey for those, who consider themselves "Old Wolves" of this reading genre. I just can't forget the characters, I followed from the very first book. It was amazing to see them reach the peaks of their character development, doesn't matter villain or goodie. Ban, Cora, Craff (the twin of Crone <3), Cy, Veradis, Maquin and many others will always be in my heart. Not forgetting the wonderful Storm <33333

Let's return to "Wrath". It's the final book and I knew that I'll be mind-blown, I sure was and also impressed with a perfect blend of subtle politics, true to life and complex characters, and..... quite a lot of blood. And the baddies, oh my, great ones!

(view spoiler)

Each of the book in the series had a share of these parts, but the strongest I felt, was in "Wrath". The writing is smooth, gripping, full of tension. It left me on the edge of my seat, craving for more. Complex world, fragile alliances, betrayals, scheming, intense descriptive prose, battles for survival. Some felt expected, some not, but nonetheless the touch of greed, cruelty and evil was always there. Does it mean that the great Good was forgotten? Not at all. I think the narrative clearly shows that the larger good can be compromised too easily and can lead to self-justifying evil as well as bad – turn into good. The balance is always changing and engulfing all the characters in a great place of myths.

"Wrath" shows a risky path – there's more than one unexpected or well-deserved twist. More than once my

heart broke and I was so angry to see some rascals, still living through the cruelest battles. Oh, the battles – there was always gore and fighting through the series, but what I got in “Wrath”..... Oh boy, grim, intimidating and explicit, with screams of the dying, clash of the armies, cruel duels..... REAL for sure.

The best part. The characters. Some of my favorite characters finally met up and what a meetings it were. Heart-warming, heart-breaking and so awaited for sure. “Wrath” presented the great development, maturity and depth of the characters I came to love from the very first book. I’ve watched them mature, change, become scarred and broken by events, deaths of their beloved ones and now they are my family.

You’d probably think that I’m insane giving 4 stars after such praise? Maybe I am. I found two flaws which struck me as unbelievable at first as to find such holes, small ones, in plot in the fourth book..... it was unexpected and it made me angry.

(view spoiler)

I just can’t forgive such things to find in a great series :O But

To sum up and despite these two flaws, “Wrath” is a great, gripping book, a wonderful finale to the series, wrapping it all up in a great treat.

Haïfa says

An infinity of stars to shine upon this little gem !

This was **one of the most epic, emotional, bittersweet and satisfactory Fantasy series** I've had the pleasure to read !!

Add glasses and long darker hair, and that's my face while reading this series !

~~Let me gather the scattered pieces of my heart first and I shall return soon with a decent review !!~~

Nope, going through my notes and quotes didn't help me gather my thoughts!! If anything, it only stirred and amplified the feelings I had developed reading Wrath !! And honestly, I finished this book a week ago and

all I want to do is to curl up and re-read this series because I still can't say goodbye !!

"It will be a dark day, a bloody day, a proud day, for this is the day of our wrath."

I would like to start by thanking John Gwynne for delivering such a **powerful, moving and yet simple, story** and for being the humble and nice guy he is !

Now to go back to the book, Wrath has finally glued back together all the pieces of my heart its predecessors had blasted! I'm not saying that this was a light or fluffy read! It definitely wasn't ! And the tension was almost unbearable at times ! But there was more relief than in the previous books and I was fist pumping half of the time! The book alternated between happy and heartbreaking moments, and I often found myself torn between laughter and tears.

In such dark times as these it was heartwarming to see such love.

Wrath, and The Faithful and the Fallen in general, was a magical journey ! Emotional without turning melodramatic. Filled with :

* amazing characters that I grew to love (or hate, depending on their nature) and ache for,

'Because you saved my life, even though it put yours at risk. Because you stayed for your friend, when you could have run. Because these people here ran through the length of Forn to find you, (...) risked death, all for you. That speaks a thousand words. Because there is something about you.'

* precisely depicted, exciting, mind-blowing battles scenes,

* a multitude of life lessons and acts of valor that reminded me that everyone, no matter their sexe or position or age or size, can make a difference and is capable of excellence,

'I'll never walk that path, not for oath, love nor friendship.'

* humour, in the darkest times and most unexpected places !

Says a lot when you've come to trust a crow on matters of life and death.

Gwynne wrote memorable and despicable villain characters with the same talent he wrote honorable and lovable characters ! All human passions were represented and this book was filled with reflections on human duality, on what it means to grow up, face hard choices and live with those choices, on the importance of trust and loyalty and friendship.

'All will die, but not all live.'

Halfway through the book, so many plots needed closure and I was seriously wondering if this book was indeed the last of the series!! However, John masterfully wrapped up things in the most satisfying way (for me) and the last 200 pages were a fantastic ride!!

Conclusion

In a sentence, this was exactly what I want my Fantasy to look like !!

1. Malice ★★★★★
2. Valour ★★★★★
3. Ruin ★★★★★
4. Wrath ★★★★★

And, this is my friends, another rare series that joins my **perfect-5-stars-series** list, including Stormlight Archive, Mistborn and Harry Potter (and nope, I'm not counting HP and the Cursed Child! That book has never happened for me)!

Samir says

Actual rating: 4.5 stars.

A glorious ending to a masterful series! Well, it is, but that wasn't the first thought that crossed my mind as I closed the book. Actually, my mind was something more like this: "Fucking hell!", and not in a "This was so awesome!" way but in a "I want to punch something!" way. I was so angry that I almost knocked off a star but I couldn't because I love this series too much. It's like waking up next to your partner and thinking; "I could smother her/him with a pillow or I could make breakfast. *Sigh* Pancakes it is".

It's hard to explain why I was so angry without spoilers so read the next section at your own risk.

SPOILER

The main reason for my anger is Lykos and not because of the fact that he was an evil fucking bastard but because I had to read six hundred fucking pages to see him dead. This asshole managed to slip from being killed too many times and that was really annoying but I wasn't mad solely because of that. The last time he kidnapped Fidele was really unnecessary but I can understand the Gwynne wanted to give Maquin the reason to follow him to the island of Kletva but that should have been the end of him. Maquin could have killed him there and save Fidele and one of those Kadoshim could have escaped with the torc. Instead, Fidele died because of this slippery fuck. I felt sorry for her but I wasn't mad. I was mad because of Maquin. After all the shit he's been through, he even returned from the dead for fucks sake, he deserved a better ending. After

Fidele's death he lost the will to live and sacrificed himself to save Haelan so he could be with her beyond the bridge of swords and have a poetic ending. Fuck that, I say! Even the death of Krelis could have been avoided but because Lykos escaped death, AGAIN, he was another pointless victim.

I had issues with Rafe as well. He also escaped death too many times and because of that Halion died, but my main issue with him is that he had his final fight with Camlin instead of Corban. He even drank from the starstone cup and became Captain Ardan and wanted to use those newfound powers to kill Corban and avenge his father's death. He and Corban were rivals from the beginning and their rivalry should have ended with their final Court of Swords. Don't get me wrong, I'm glad Camlin killed the annoying bully but I would have been much happier if Corban did it.

END SPOILER

With the negative stuff out of the way, I should explain why I loved this book/series so much.

I'm a big fan of Tolkien and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy so whenever I finish reading a series such as this, I always find myself comparing it with LotR and this series is the closest thing I've read in terms of the epic proportions of the story. Great story doesn't mean shit without great characters and this series has an abundance of great, compelling and diverse characters and it was hard for me to pick the favorite but if had to, I would pick Maquin and Camlin because their progression had a great impact on me and it showed that Gwynne has great talent when it comes to the characterization.

This book is all about the final showdown so if you enjoy reading about sword fighting and similar close combat encounters, this is a book for you because there are myriad of battles here that will keep you at the edge of your seat. There is a plethora of small details used to vividly express each fight and make them believable and the attention to those details is simply astonishing.

This was a long journey that ended in a satisfying way and I'm very glad I was a part of it. This series now takes place in my top five and Gwynne has cemented himself on my favorite authors list. His next book *A Time of Dread*, which starts the new series *Of Blood and Bone*, has the number one spot on my most anticipated books list and I can't wait to once again roam the Banished Lands and experience another epic journey which I'm sure I'll enjoy as much as this one.

Petrik says

Masterpiece.

Mark my words, if this series ever gets adapted into a television series with the same production value given to *Game of Thrones*, it will create a myriad of fan bases all over the world. Watch out George R. R. Martin, while you're waiting for the breeze from the *Winds of Winter* to come, John Gwynne has appeared out of nowhere and he has conquered the genre; the apprentice has become the master.

Wrath is, in my opinion, the best out of the four books in the series, which means the series always got better with each installment and with its completion I've decided to include John in my list of favorite authors of all time. That makes him one of my very few auto-buy authors; along with Brandon Sanderson and Joe Abercrombie, I'll be content with buying every book they write.

“It will be a dark day, a bloody day, a proud day, for this is the day of our wrath.”

I'll start off my review with two simple questions.

1. Does this series provide something new to the genre?

No, almost every single plot device here has been done before.

2. Is it good?

No, good is a really huge understatement. **It's damn near perfection for its genre.** The series is written in a way that will hit home for most every epic fantasy lover of the Good vs Evil theme; it triggered a strong sense of nostalgia and reminded me why I love the theme in the first place, but with a slight changes that this time: the undertone is darker in a sense that it's quite similar to GRRM's *A Song of Ice And Fire* series.

I won't go into any details on what the plot is about; so don't worry, you're safe to read this review if you haven't started the series. I'll let you know some basic outline of the series, such as the entire series revolves around the concept of 'Good vs Evil', which grows in complexity as the series progresses. The entire story spans around five years and during this period of time, a lot of characters development and monumental events transpire. After the bloody cliffhanger of *Ruin*, *Wrath* starts off right where the story left off and manages to conclude everything that was initiated in *Malice* with a satisfying and emotional ending. It's a fantastically written culmination of the entire series and if that still doesn't convince you to read it, please continue reading this review.

Although throughout the series the story only gets darker as it progresses, I must remind you that this epic fantasy never goes into the 'grimdark' territory. The main reasons for this are because all the main characters are really compelling and lovable, other than one or two characters, and none of them has a gray moral code. Once you reach the second book, it's really clear who belongs to which side of the coin in the story.

The entire series is really massive in its scope with *Ruin & Wrath* being the biggest. It's the only series I read so far that uses the entire map; literally ALL locales are visited throughout the series, and it's also filled with a uniquely huge cast of characters. I'm not exaggerating, there are literally more than one hundred characters to remember. This may intimidate some readers but don't be afraid, John's writing makes it really easy to remember all of them once you managed to get through the first book. Plus, starting from the second book and so on, there's a glossary of characters right at the beginning of each book with a brief summary of what happened to each of them in the previous installment. Although we follow more than fifteen perspectives throughout the entire series, it's amazing that none of the narratives ever sounds the same, but are all unique and intriguing. ALL of these characters will evoke all kinds of emotions in the readers; you'll love the protagonists, you'll care about them and fear for them. And as for the villains, you'll hate them and you'll look forward to seeing vengeance poured upon them. They are all so well written that it's almost impossible to be unconcerned about their fates.

“To my thinking, though, it's what happens before death that's important. All of us die. How many really live?”

The Faithful and the Fallen contains tons of action spread throughout the series and all of them are superbly written. Now, sometimes when there are too many action scenes in a series, it gets harder to connect with the characters. This is what the first book is for: it's a foundation, it provides nourishment for the rest of the series. *Malice* is a really slow-paced and character-driven book, exploring every important characters' backgrounds and personalities and everything else that makes us truly care about them. We see the growth of the surviving characters, and there are plenty of amazing developments lying in store for them. *Valor*, *Ruin*, and *Wrath* are really plot and action-oriented with the characters' development on the secondary pedestal. This means that the pacing becomes faster and faster as the series goes by; not only did chapters end with cliffhangers most of the time, it's practically war after war from the second book until the conclusion of *Wrath*, making for an addictive read.

The greatest praise I could give towards *Wrath* will have to be regarding its climax sequences. The final war in *Wrath* literally involved all of the armies in the entire world of the Banished Lands in one single location. Humans, animals, giants, and mythical creatures all clashed, and the rapid POV shifts between both opposing sides resulted in a phenomenal manifestation of chaos and destruction. As I said before, the whole series has always been full of action sequences with a great climax in each installment, but *Wrath* managed to take it up to a whole new level within its mind-blowing 160 pages of climax sequences. **A myriad of coup de grace was delivered to both good and evil sides.** It's relentless, brutal, poignant, savage, and epic in the true meaning of the word. It's one of the best actions sequences I've ever read in my whole life. It's pretty obvious that John's knowledge of close quarter combat is really vast, because the battle details are superb, intricate, highly imaginative and exhilarating, providing a rich and immersive experience.

John's writing has always been impeccable since the first book and it always improves with each installment. During multiple circumstances, the words actually transformed into literal scenes in my head. It's like I wasn't even reading anymore; I was actually living inside the letters. I watched all the scenes play out from the characters' POV vividly. I was actually inside the story and that is one of the best senses of immersion I could ever receive as a reader. It's the kind of experience I'm looking for in a book.

For the past nineteen days, I spent most of my life in the Banished Lands. Other than working for my basic needs of consumption, I literally spent all of my time reading this series and it was totally worth it. It's bittersweet, really. *Wrath* wrapped up everything with a really satisfying and emotional conclusion. I'm filled with gratitude for getting the chance to read this series, and even discuss it with the author himself as I progressed through it. However, I'm left with sorrow that my time in the Banished Lands is at its end (for now), and it's really depressing to know that a lot of other underwhelming series are famous as hell, while here we have a work of excellence which is highly overlooked.

It's time for me to say goodbye to the Banished Lands, at least for now, until John's next series *Of Blood and Bone* get published next January. *A Time of Dread*, the first book in the new series, will take place around 130 years after the events of *Wrath* and I can't wait to read it already. The nostalgia factor that this new series will hold will be huge and judging from the time gap, I envision we will get to see all our beloved characters as legendary figures.

For those of you who haven't read this series, do yourself a favor; it's time to catch up and enjoy this emotional roller-coaster. ***The Faithful and the Fallen* provides one hell of an experience and there's absolutely no reason why you shouldn't read this series if you love the epic fantasy genre.** I'm going to recommend the shit out of this series to every fantasy reader I know as right now, in my opinion, John Gwynne is one of the kings and the most underrated author of all time in the genre. *The Faithful And The Fallen* managed to go down not only as one of the best epic fantasy series I've ever read but also as one of my **top three best series of all time.** Welcome to the big leagues, John. You deserve it, completely. Truth

and Courage!

Series review

Malice: 4.5/5 Stars

Valor: 5/5 Stars

Ruin: 5/5 Stars

Wrath: 5/5 Stars

The Faithful and the Fallen: 19.5/20 Stars

You can also find this and the rest of my Adult Epic/High Fantasy & Sci-Fi reviews at Booknest

Deborah Obida says

Truth and courage

Astonishing, amazing, beyond all expectations, this series is just the best, love all the books in the series. The battle scenes were just amazing! The different POVs made it even better, don't even get me started on the depictions, I still can't believe that this is a debut series, I can only think of a few authors that write this great. The friendship and loyalty of the characters is the best I've ever read. All but one of my ship is now sailing.

World building and Writing

I've already mentioned in my reviews of the other books in this series how great the world building is, yet the author still managed to wow me with its improvement, not to mention the amazing depiction of one new location in this. The book is still written in third person multiple POVs like the rest, just one new POV of an old character, the rest POVs are same with the previous books.

If you are spoiler sensitive or haven't read the first three books, I'll suggest you don't go further, because in as much as this is spoiler free, I'll still mention events that happened in the previous books

Characters

Corban my favourite in the whole series, his character development is just the best, we get to see him grow into the role of the Bright Star, he is such a great leader, one of the best things about him is that he listens, he is stubborn but listens to people around him when they advice him, he is not a pushover and always do what is in his heart as long as it is right.

Cywen his elder sister, I love her so much, she is so skilful with knives and now she has added the skills of a healer into the list of things she can do, she is not bossy nor try to pull elder shit with Corban but listens to him, their love for each other is boundless.

Coralen is the badass female character here, one who I also enjoy her character growth, she started off as standoffish but now she has adapted into the inner circle of Corban and friends, they plot and execute the plans together.

Veradis is a gem, he abandoned everything he ever knew when he realized he was on the wrong side, mind you wrong not the losing side, he is indeed a true heart, I really love how events turn out for him in this.

Nathair, I actually felt bad for him at first, but now I don't. He killed Aquillus when he thought he was the Bright Star cause of greed, he is too desperate and cause of that he sold his soul to Astroth, now that is a step too far.

Camlin another gem heart, he started off bad but found his way and haven't lost it since then, he stayed with them when he could leave, he is not even from Ardan but from Narvon. I love his relationship with Edana, love that she and the other men don't judge him for past but for his present actions, don't even get me started on Meg that he adopted, him and that girl is the perfect companion, they need each other.

Lykos the only bad guy that I love his POV, his internal monologue is crazy, he knows he is evil and has accepted that.

Dath and Farrell, the kind of friends I need, I remember them in the first book and I can't believe how far they have come, they are loyal AF, and also selfless.

Storm is as amazing as ever! Same as Craff and Buddai, her cubs are just like her, I'll not want to be Corban's enemy.

I'll just mention the rest characters that I love, they are just too many to discuss individually, Brina, Gar, Edana, Halion, Vonn, Maquin, Fidele, Krelis, Tahir, Haelan, Javed, Laith, Alycon and a host of others.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

I'm prepared for everything to be set to rights and for me to have my happy ending in this book. Not!

The beginning bits of this book and other parts of this book made me so freaking happy I thought I was going to fall over!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Thank you, Brina! I love you, I love you, I love you! And for certain people dying!!!! Yessssssssssssssssssss!

And then there were the moments toward the end that you couldn't even speak to me. I was too angry and heart heavy.

Our heroes and EVIL ones battled on until their last breath through-out the book, well last breath for some! It

was all freaking epic. All four of the books in this series are nothing but EPIC!

We got to watch Corban grow from a boy to a warrior through-out these books as well, with his wolf, Storm, by his side.

And Corban had the most wonderful friends. I loved them all, the ones that lived, the ones that died. Cywen: his sister. Gar: his father figure, trainer, best friend. Brina: the healer and friend. Dath: his best friend. Coralen: his friend & his love interest. Look, there are just too many people to name.

If you love epic fantasy that will rip your heart out this is the one. It's filled with bloody battles, giants, cool animals, awesome warriors, great friends and a whole lot of evil and cray.

Book 1 : Malice

Book 2 : Valor

Book 3 : Ruin

Book 4 : Wrath

These books were so awesome. Kudos to John Gwynne for this debut series. I hope more people read these books and loathe and love them as much as I did, they are truly worth it. Just don't love any characters too much - **you have been fore warned**

Even though more people died, I am very happy with the ending and I shed tears through the whole book from all kinds of feels. That's what makes a book a book - the feels.

And trust me, you will find those feels in this book!

FIN

MY BLOG: [Melissa Martin's Reading List](#)

Paul O'Neill says

TRUTH AND COURAGE!

A truly satisfying ending to one of the best fantasy series ever. Seriously, why isn't this series getting more hype?

A great cast of characters, twists and turns to rival GRRM, a vivid setting and some unforgettable moments. A must read for any fantasy fan.

In today's world of grimdark fantasy I found this to be refreshing but it's definitely not worthy of the 'old fashioned' labels I've seen describing the series.

'It will be a dark day, a bloody day, a proud day, for this is the day of our wrath.'

I can't wait to read this series again and jump into the next one.

Bentley ★ Bookbastion.net says

See this review on www.bookbastion.net

And so ends the most epic journey in fantasy fiction I've been on so far this year.

In terms of sheer fantasy awesomeness, this book has it all: battles to the death, memorable character moments and a culmination of 4 books worth of material that I won't soon forget. John Gwynne has solidified himself in my mind as a powerhouse name to remember in the fantasy genre, and I will forever keep an eye out for books for future offerings from him. As I'm fairly certain he reads his reviews, I'd like to say: **You do great work Mr. Gwynne! I'm a big fan!**

Thematically, *Wrath* hits all the right notes in the way it sets about closing out the storylines that have been spun since page one, when we first walked into the Banished Lands alongside a young Corban. While the battle between Good and Evil isn't a new concept, **John Gwynne's strength in crafting realistic and human characters that you want to root for - or to root against - makes this book stand out as a must read.** I was never for an instant bored as I watched the characters I had grown accustomed to set off on their final journey against the forces of darkness.

Everyone comes full circle in this book. As those of you who have been following my reviews will know, I hate spoilers, so I'm going to avoid naming characters specifically for fear of spoiling who lives and who crosses the bridge of swords. Still, **regardless of who lives or who dies, the endings to each character's story aligns beautifully with the people they were in *Malice*, years before the turmoil and war began, but also compliments all of the beautiful character growth that they've experienced over the years.**

Through all the death, heartache and strife, these characters retained their emotional heart and my connection to them is still so strong that I hate the thought of their story being over.

I would happily take another 4 books set in the Banished Lands, following up on the events here just so I don't lose out on seeing my book babies keep growing and changing now that this particular story is over.

As always, the battle scenes are the real crowning glory of this series, and in fact it just keeps getting better and better with each book. It's clear that John Gwynne is quite familiar with close combat battle practices - whether it be via research or the careful study of other works of fiction, I'm unsure as I can't speak on the technicalities of it all. It all flows and works beautifully to paint tense and always moving fight scenes that have only increased in scope as the story moved along.

The last quarter of this book is centered around the final battle in the war for control of the Banished Lands, and it does not disappoint! It's epic in scale, and involves every single character, kingdom, giant clan and species of creature that we've come across in an epic battle to the death. The scale of this final skirmish is just enormous, and only a tactical mind such as this author could handle drawing all of those threads together over the scope of 4 books to see things to their close.

My emotions ran the gamut while reading this book! I was laughing one moment, cheering in the next breath only to be brought to tears a few pages later - and I wouldn't have it any other way. The emotion is right there in the characters, within their interactions and the ease with which the reader can relate to their worries, goals and cares. **I can easily see this series holding great appeal for fans of series like Game of Thrones, who want strongly built characters but also aren't afraid to say goodbye to some along the way** as John Gwynne is another author who isn't shy about culling the herd when the story calls for it.

One thing I really wanted to point out as my absolute favorite aspects of this series is the way things evolve and change over time. **Characters grow, and their hopes and desires are influenced by the things that happen around them.** It's delightful to think that things are going to go one way for a certain character, or for two characters you think are going to clash, only to have a plot event impact that course of motion and set them off on a new journey. It kept things fresh and allowed the plot and characters both to grow organically without seeming forced forward on rails like some plots certainly feel like at times when authors forget to let characters guide them.

Again, if you're a fan of tense, action-oriented epic fantasy, this series needs to be on your radar if it's not already! Get going and start the journey today!!

???? = 5/5 Perfect Stars from me! A new favorite series for my shelf!

Image taken from my bookstagram @bookbastion. Follow me there for more snaps of the books I read and review!

?Luna? says

Another buddy read with my besties at BB&B

5 BRIGHT STARS ★★★★★(? •?_•?)?

**'DEATH TO OUR ENEMIES,
TRUTH AND COURAGE'**

'I'm coming for you, Lykos,' Maquin bellowed through cupped hands, 'and neither demons from the Otherworld nor flesh and blood will stop me.'

Seriously how does one right a review for such an incredible book? This book has changed my life and this review will be emotional mess with a lot of word vomit.

This book was so brutal I can't even believe I got through it, do not read this book unless you are a blood thirsty little petal like myself, it is hectic and probably the most brutal/badass book I have ever read in my whole entire life.

So here we go for a debut series, I am so impressed. John Gwynne is an amazing author & an amazing person. He had everything in this series; awesome characters, awful bad guys, Giants, wyrms, draigs, wolvens, demons, Angels so basically you name it, I bet it was in the story. He definitely has a fan for life and I'm proud to say I'm one of his biggest fans. Yay. But I must say you have killed me and it hurts so much.

'This day,' he cried, shouting now, 'we will live or die, but whatever the outcome, this will still be the day we avenge ourselves for those we've lost, the day we right the wrongs done to us, or die in the trying. It will be a dark day, a bloody day, a proud day, for this is the day of our wrath.' *'WRATH,' the cry went up, ringing and echoing through the branches.*
'WRATH.'

One of my most anticipated books for the year and I was not disappointed at all. and it was basically just one big battle. I literally wish I could give this book one thousand stars, seriously what a fantastic ending to an awesome series, I am so impressed by this book I can't even breath when I think about it. I am going to try my hardest to not burst out crying while writing this review, this book was an emotional rollercoaster to say the least and it did kill me. I have never felt so hurt after reading the last book to a series, normally the last book is rainbows and kittens. This book certainly wasn't, everyone I love either died or was badly hurt, there were points were I couldn't even keep reading because my heart was so heavy and I literally had no more tears left to cry. I have never been so emotionally drained after a book in my life. But in saying that it was FUCKING EPIC & I don't have words to tell everyone how much I LOVED IT. That ending omg, I just want to scream and cry tears of joy/sadness.

'Yes. So don't go getting carried away and running off to stab people.' *'This is a day for stabbing people.'*

This book is definitely going on my favorites shelf, I found this book to be the best of all four and probably my second favorite book ever, so YES I LOVED IT THAT MUCH. I had no issues with the writing, I did however find five spelling mistakes but I'm going to totally let them slip because the story was so amazing, I also didn't like the overuse of the word 'Ach' it annoys me but it was still so brutal and badass. Wrath was extremely fast paced and all questions us readers had were answered. The last 30% of this book is seriously probably one of the best endings to a series I have ever read and the greatest thing I've ever read aswell. I'm not going to go into details because the whole review would be spoilers.

'The enemy of my enemy,' Corban shrugged, remembering Balur had said those same words to him in Murias. 'That's no answer,' Ildaer rumbled. 'What do you fight for, if not Elyon?' 'For my kin and loved ones. So that we will not be enslaved or murdered. I've seen the Kadoshim, seen only a brief glimpse of what they would do, and it is terrible. I fight against that. I fight for my freedom.'

I love all the character development in this book, especially Corban. I honestly can't believe how strong his character has become. All he cares about is his friends and family and I love that. I found Corban less childish in this book and feel like he finally fits the boots of the Bright Star.

The warrior's face filled her mind, beaten and scarred. Proud. Fierce.

Maquin & Fidele, I don't want to say too much but I love them so much. They are my favorite book couple ever and Maquin is one of my favorite male characters ever, my old wolf <3 he did a complete 360 in this book and turned into a fucking psycho I loved it so much. I could literally write my whole review just on Maquin. Like seriously how many warriors can kill everything and everyone even with their bare hands.. None except for my old wolf. Aah Maquin *dreamy sigh then bursting into tears*

In half a dozen strokes of his sword four men were dead or bleeding out on the floor. Maquin screamed wordless joy as the battle-rage took him and he strode through them like death itself, parrying, chopping, stabbing. He left one of his swords stuck in an enemy's spine, drew a knife and fought on .

My favorite part of the whole book; *heart eyes*

You are precious to me,' she finished, her courage fading at the last, her eyes dropping away. A silence settled on them. The chattering of the stream, the sounds of Veradis' warband making ready for their expedition, all faded around her. Maquin moved, suddenly close to her, a handspan between them, and her heart was racing. He leaned closer and kissed her lips, a soft caress. 'I came back from death for you,' he said, his voice a whispered tremor. 'For me it was always forever, however long that may be. And those words you just spoke, they are the greatest gift I've ever been given. They are written upon my heart and soul.' 'Then let me give you another gift,' she said, smiling, her heart soaring, grabbing his leather jerkin

Thanks for melting my heart and making me cry tears of blood (pun intended)

Coralen impressed me throughout the series and it's safe to say she's so badass.

Cywen is another character who impressed me from beginning to end. She's so fierce, passionate, caring & badass. She's the whole package.

I thought I felt sorry for Nathair ... Turns out I didn't haha.

'Nathair considered his allies. A drunken pirate. A demon-possessed attraction to flies and a half-burned Kadoshim. How have I sunk so low?'

Brina was so amazing in this book, she's an incredible character that I will never forget and Craff <33 he was so polite in this book lol.

'Brina, are you sober?' 'What?' 'You don't usually appear to like anyone, is all.' 'I like Storm,' Brina said and poked him with a bony finger. 'Make the most of it,' she added, 'I doubt it'll last.'

There was some EPIC battles in this book, like some of the best I've ever read in my life. Move over George RR Martin you are no longer king of writing battles that title goes to John Gwynne now :)

If you guys wanna no more I suggest reading the series because my lips are sealed on this one :D

Right now I'm just going to go and ugly cry for eternity. Yep seriously. Bye.
