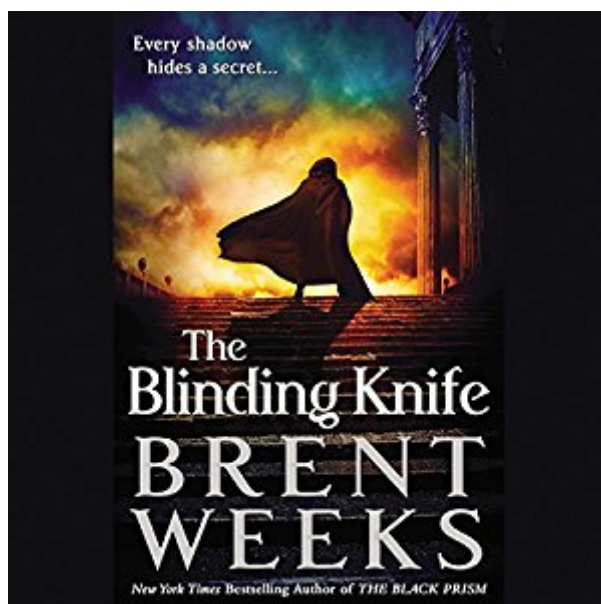


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The Blinding Knife: Lightbringer, Book 2



Synopsis

Gavin Guile is dying. He'd thought he had five years left - now he has less than one. With 50,000 refugees, a bastard son, and an ex-fiancee who may have learned his darkest secret, Gavin has problems on every side. All magic in the world is running wild and threatens to destroy the Seven Satrapies. Worst of all, the old gods are being reborn, and their army of color wights is unstoppable. The only salvation may be the brother whose freedom and life Gavin stole 16 years ago.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 24 hours and 19 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Hachette Audio

Audible.com Release Date: September 26, 2012

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B0098TV3UK

Best Sellers Rank: #28 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Men's Adventure
#69 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Action & Adventure #97 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fantasy > Epic

Customer Reviews

Brent Weeks has a blurb on Terry Brooks' UK edition of Dark Legacy of Shannara: Bloodfire Quest. I'm sure that's a surreal moment for Weeks who was aided by a blurb from Brooks on his debut novel, Way of Shadows: 'I was mesmerized from start to finish. Unforgettable characters, a plot that kept me guessing, non-stop action and the kind of in-depth storytelling that makes me admire a writer's work' -- Terry Brooks on The Way of Shadows On the back of that blurb and a brilliant marketing strategy from Orbit, Weeks' first trilogy was a huge hit (I'm sure it had something to do with it being good too). Since then, Weeks has been considered a rising star in the genre, further cemented by The Black Prism debuting at #23 on the New York Times Bestseller list. Despite Weeks' commercial success, I wasn't quite ready to coronate him one of the heirs apparent to the epic fantasists of the 1980's and 90's. I felt that, while a tremendous creator, he hadn't yet come into his own as a storyteller. After finishing The Blinding Knife, his follow-up to Black Prism and the

second installment in the Lightbringer series, I don't hesitate to grant him that status. His newest novel is a tremendous achievement and a logical next step for him as a writer. In the Lightbringer series, Weeks breathes life into a world that takes its cultural roots from the Mediterranean. Ruled by an alliance of the Seven Satrapies (one for each color) and bound together by the belief in a god of light, it's a government not dissimilar from the Holy Roman Empire. Like the Emperor and the Pope, the Satrapies are ostensibly ruled by the Prism and the White, a color drafter of unequalled power and a religious head of state, respectively. Weeks folds decades of history and context into this setting, a task that made *Black Prism* an occasionally cumbersome novel, including laying out color drafting, a magic system that converts light into matter. Nevertheless, *Black Prism* excelled. Beautifully drawn characters, particularly Kip, a fat adolescent thrust into events far outstripping his capability, carried the novel. Weeks twisted expectations with the typical hero archetypes failing more often than succeeding, and both sides of the conflict seemingly equally justified in their conviction. In that way, *Blinding Knife* is much the same as its predecessor. It picks up where *Black Prism* ended, telling the story of Gavin, Kip, Liv, and Karris, as well as a few new characters. Where *Black Prism* was a story about shortcomings -- Gavin's fear, Kip's insecurity, Liv's efficacy, and Karris' anger -- the new novel is about overcoming them. Additionally, politics become more prevalent as Gavin maneuvers in his nascent war against the color wights. Weeks is often at his best in these scenes, finding ways to generate passion from his reader even when the action ebbs. Recognizable throughout Weeks' work, is his use of short chapters, 115 in *Blinding Knife*. Despite their diminutive length, each chapter bristles with intent and never a word seems wasted. Freed from first novel world building, he uses these short bursts to layer narrative tension, releasing it and building it again, each time becoming more intense before finally bursting in a last two hundred pages that feels almost tantric in its never ending climax. The length of it risks the impact of those final pages as my tolerance for denouement was equivalent to my tolerance for beer after four years at UC Santa Barbara. That isn't to say I wanted any less, but I fear Weeks packed so much in that I became inured to the sense of wonder he so carefully cultivated. Still, I would happily have read another two hundred pages without batting an eye. There were a few narrative hiccups that didn't work for me. Occasional first person asides, in particular, whose purpose became clearer as the novel concluded, but never coalesced as I'd hoped they would. I suspect on a second, and more careful reading, they'd be more illustrative. Either way, they did little to dampen my enjoyment of this otherwise pitch perfect novel. Two books in now I feel comfortable asserting that the Lightbringer series is about nothing less than taking the measure of a man (or woman). What makes him good? It is his intent or only his action? Does duty come before all or is there a moral certitude

that must take precedence? And ultimately, is there a price too high to do what's right? It's riveting thematically, but more important it's indistinguishable from the story itself, blending and supporting it at every turn. I find it a testament to Weeks' talent that he succeeds in it so well. I've read all five of Brent Weeks' published novels and it's a certainty that he's evolving with every book. With *The Blinding Knife*, I believe he's entered a new stratosphere and one that puts him on par with anyone who's written these kinds of stories. It isn't only the best book he's written; I consider it one of the best epic fantasies I've read. Do me a favor and read it too.

It's now 6:50 am. I've been reading since 11 pm. I sadly have to put the book down to go to work, otherwise I'd still be reading. Yes, I stayed up all night reading. And yes, it was completely worth it. About 3/4 of the book read so far (I read really fast) and have not been disappointed yet. Can't wait for work to be over to finish reading. I'd recommend anyone who wants to start reading this book to start early on a morning where you don't have anything planned. You'll be busy for a while.

I had a really hard time deciding whether to give this book four or five stars. In comparison to many other books I have read, this is a five star book. I loved it, I love most of the characters, I love the world, I love so much about it. But I didn't like it quite as much as I liked *The Black Prism* or *The Night Angel* trilogy so I'm giving it four stars in comparison to his other work. Still, I think everyone should immediately run out and purchase this book if they haven't already. First, if you haven't read the first book, I don't want to spoil the ending of it for you, so please stop reading this review now. *The Blinding Knife* starts with Gavin Guile reconciling himself to the loss of his blue drafting ability. He also is worrying about the fate of all the Garriston refugees and trying to figure out what to do with Kip. He decides to have Kip join the Blackguard while he helps the refugees set up a new settlement. Kip goes back to the Chromeria and starts his training. I really enjoyed this whole part of the book. I liked seeing Kip handle situations on his own, without Gavin's help, and I liked seeing him learn about himself while he learns how to fight and use his drafting abilities. This book really advances Kip and it is exciting to get glimpses of how awesome Kip will be in the future books. Not that Kip isn't awesome in this book because he really was. I loved the scenes between Kip and Andross Guile because he has every reason to be terrified of him but he holds his ground amazingly well. And anytime Kip calls himself a "turtle-bear" I chortled happily to myself, excited to see him surprise people with his ability to take and give damage. Kip is a great character who keeps getting better. I look forward to all of his chapters and I was always impatient with other characters because I wanted to read more about him. Now, for the reasons that I didn't think this book was quite as

strong as the first one. I think this book suffers a very tiny bit from second book syndrome. It isn't introducing us to the world anymore and it has to set up the two final books by still holding a lot back. There are some really excellent plot advancements and I in no way mean to imply that this book doesn't have a lot of excitement and development. But it ties up most of the mysteries the first book left us hanging with (we finally get to see Kip's real Thresher testing rod and have confirmation on how many colors he can draft) and there aren't a lot of loose threads open at the end of this book. There are some surprises at the end, and many characters are left in precarious situations but I didn't have the same feeling of desperation because I needed to know what was going to happen next that I got after finishing the first book. I also really don't like Liv. It isn't even that her actions in joining the Color Prince aren't reasonable. I understand her frustration with the Chromeria. But half the time she is using superviolet to look at things dispassionately and the other half she is making really sketchy choices. I hope she makes better choices in future books so that I can get back to respecting her. The final reason that I thought the first book was slightly better is really nitpicky. There were a couple times in this book that Brent Weeks mentioned something that happens and it clashes a little bit with what we were told in the first book. An example is early in the book when Kip is reflecting on infiltrating the Color Prince's camp. He says he went to spy on the Color Prince and save Liv (page 26). But he went to save Karris. Just a couple little discrepancies like that kinda bothered me. Regardless of these tiny complaints there is a lot that I loved in this book. I really liked a lot of the new characters that are introduced and can't wait to learn more about them. I loved the character development of our old friends as Kip experiments with his new power and Gavin loses some of his. There are several of the good plot twists that I have come to expect from Brent Weeks. I also really liked the Nine Kings card game and how it is a secret source of knowledge wrapped up in a game. I will definitely be preordering book three (which, I read in an interview with Brent Weeks, is going to be called *The Blood Mirror* for anyone that is interested) as soon as possible and awaiting it eagerly. I can't wait to see what happens next.

Just got through with the book, and all I can say is WOW! For people who thought That Weeks would run out of twists for his characters and dark moments you would be very, very, wrong. The book is rife with them, and always at the most opportune times, when you feel the most safe and you think things will end well, (at least for a little while) Weeks will throw in a twist from left field that you don't see coming, but at the same time when you look back you always think you should have seen it coming. The characters are not left alone either, all of them progress and grow throughout the book, facing challenges both outward and inward that sometimes shake their beliefs to the very

bone. So to be brief, if you are not sure if you want to buy the book, or if it will hold up to Black Prism, all I can say that it stays true to its predecessor and expands upon it in ways that I didn't expect, but I did thoroughly enjoy. So buy it! Buy it now! It's worth it.--Side Note- Such a cliffhanger!!!!!! I cannot wait till book 3. :)

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