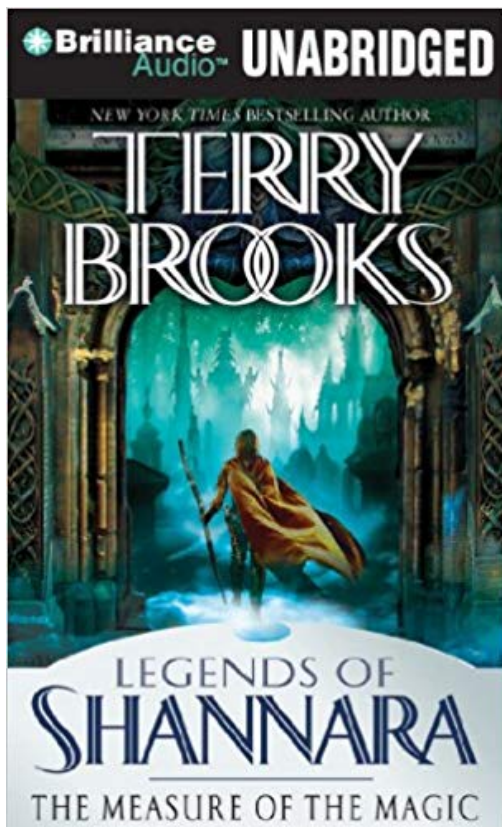


## The Measure of the Magic: Legends of Shannara (Legends of Shannara Duology) by Phil Gigante, Terry Brooks



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For five hundred years, the survivors of the Great Wars lived peacefully in a valley sanctuary shielded by powerful magic from the blighted and dangerous outside world. But the enchanted barriers have crumbled, the borders have been breached by predators, and the threat of annihilation looms large once more.

Sider Ament, bearer of the last black staff and its profound power, devoted his life to protecting the valley and its inhabitants—and, in his final moments, gave stewardship of the black staff to the young Tracker Panterra Qu. Now the newly anointed Knight of the Word must take up the battle against evil wherever it threatens: from without, where an army of bloodthirsty Trolls is massing for invasion; and from within, where the Elf king of Arborlon has been murdered, his daughter, Princess Phryne Amarantyne, stands accused, and a heinous conspiracy is poised to subjugate the kingdom.

But even these will pale beside the most harrowing menace Panterra is destined to confront—a nameless, merciless figure who wanders the devastated land on a relentless mission: to claim the last black staff...and the life of he who wields it.



## Reviews of the **The Measure of the Magic: Legends of Shannara (Legends of Shannara Duology)** by Phil Gigante, Terry Brooks

Adorardana

This, like the first book in this set, is required reading for Shannara fans. That's assuming that you've already read the first (6) prequels. You can find my review for that book for more in-depth look at how I feel it ties the series together, but in summary, I think you see foreshadowing of the druids as well as learning origin stories of the peoples of the four lands. You also see man hasn't changed much even after nearly wiping the species out.

The only thing that disappointed me is that a certain character never shows up. I won't give any spoilers, but if you've read "Gypsy Morph", at the very end, there is a statement about what happens to a certain character. Thinking about the timeline, I feel like there should have been some mention of them in these two books and it would have been cool. There could even have been just a cameo if they wanted to leave the new characters the stage.

This book is a must read, though.

Nikok

I have always been a big fan of Terry Brooks. The Shannara novels were amongst the first fantasy books that I read, and I have always turned up to the book store every August to purchase the latest offering from Brooks. There has been plenty of reason for optimism over the past 5 years - the new Landover novel and the Genesis of Shannara novels have been some of Brooks' best work, and my expectations for concluding novel in The Legends of Shannara series were very high. Unfortunately The Measure of Magic was a massive let down, a boring and uninspired conclusion to a series that failed to cash in on the superb foundations that had been laid previously.

Sider Ament has been killed. The magical veil protecting the valley has fallen, trolls have amassed outside the valley waiting for a chance to strike, and the responsibility for leading the inhabitants of the valley back into the wider world has fallen to young tracker, and newly appointed Knight of the Word, Panterra Qu. While this premise has the makings of a very exciting story, we were promised by Brooks that this series would clearly define the transition from the world of the Word/Void to the world of Shannara. It was a very bold promise that was not adequately fulfilled, and having invested so much of my time into these five transitional Shannara books, I feel like the series was cheated out of the ending it deserved.

Not only did we not get the story we wanted but the story we did get was well below par, something made more apparent given the quality Brooks has produced over the past five years. To put it a bit more bluntly I became very bored reading The Measure of Magic, which is quite concerning as I

don't think I have ever been bored reading a Brooks story. We get a generic coming of age story as Panterra Qu accepts the Knight of the Word mantle. We get a generic coming of age story as Prue Liss is called upon to make a personal sacrifice for the greater good. We get a generic coming of age story as Phryne Amarantyne accepts responsibility for the Elfstones. We get a generic coming of age story as Xac Wen strives to prove himself to his peers and his heroes. After playing with some heavy and controversial themes in the previous book, to see this book populated by such generic character arcs is a massive let down. The one redeeming feature of this book is it's villain, the Ragpicker. He is a cold, calculating and vile demon who hunts down Knights of the Word just for fun. His scenes are by far the most interesting in the book - he exudes an air made up of equal parts malevolence, power, and competence, and it is fascinating to watch how easily he can manipulate entire villages just by playing on their hopes and fears. In just one book Brooks established the Ragpicker as one of the most capable villains in the Shannara universe and it would have been nice to see how he would have developed over the course of an entire series rather than just the one book.

The writing here is pretty good, a style that has become well refined after twenty five years of Shannara. The world building is as strong as ever and the action scenes continue to be both vivid and exciting. The pacing is good, the story is easy to read, but it feels like there is far too much unnecessary prose here. This is a book that is twice as long as needed to be, which is a shame because there were so many sub-plots from the first book that were left untouched, and many more from this book that were left unresolved.

The Measure of Magic an uncharacteristically mediocre attempt at a novel by Terry Brooks. While there are some great scenes with some epic action sequences, they are interspersed by boring character development and relationships that refuse to evolve. It's not a bad read by any stretch of the imagination, and I have read much worse, but I expected more from Brooks on this outing. If you are looking for resolution of the various plot threads established over the past five years, you will end up feeling disappointed. However, if you can go into this story without expecting the overall genesis of Shannara to be resolved then I think you can glean quite a bit of enjoyment out of this book.

#### Zeus Wooden

Like all of the other books of the Shannara series by Terry Brooks, this one is well worth the read. It is the sequel to the 'The Bearers of the Black Staff', and follows the events in that book. It tells of how Panterra Qu, one of the protagonists of the previous book, takes up the black staff that had previously belonged to Sider Ament. It is his intent to follow in the Knight of the Word's footsteps, though he is still very young, and his relationships with the people he knows and love must change in some manner with his acceptance of this task. In particular, his involvement with Prue Liss, his 'adoptive' sister must change, since the tasks of a Knight must necessarily be performed alone to some degree, and he and Prue have always been partners in their former lives as trackers. He has to prove to both himself and others that Sider picked the right person to take up the staff and the tasks of a knight.

Although this is said to be the second of only two books in this series, Brooks never seems to write in anything other than trilogies, and the ending of the story is left open for Pan's further adventures, so I suspect that a third book will be forthcoming in the future. I highly recommend it to fans of high fantasy and to any Brooks fan who has not had the pleasure of reading it. You will not be disappointed. For those not familiar with the world of Shannara, I recommend that you at least read 'The Bearers of the Black Staff' before you take on this one so you will have a better understanding of the story it tells.

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