



The Briar King (The Kingdoms of Thorn and Bone, Book 1)

By Greg Keyes

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Two thousand years ago, the Born Queen defeated the Skasloi lords, freeing humans from the bitter yoke of slavery. But now monstrous creatures roam the land—and destinies become inextricably entangled in a drama of power and seduction. The king's woodsman, a rebellious girl, a young priest, a roguish adventurer, and a young man made suddenly into a knight—all face malevolent forces that shake the foundations of the kingdom, even as the Briar King, legendary harbinger of death, awakens from his slumber. At the heart of this many-layered tale is Anne Dare, youngest daughter of the royal family . . . upon whom the fate of her world may depend.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The Briar King, Greg Keyes's latest elegant entry into the world of high fantasy, lays the groundwork for what promises to be a mesmerizing four-book series--the Kingdoms of Thorn and Bone. Keyes spins his tale in a meticulously crafted fantasy realm on the brink of apocalyptic change. The Briar King, a legend cobbled from children's stories and rural folklore, is waking from his slumber to an unknown but cataclysmic end. Dark agents are afoot in the land, stirring war and edging an ancient prophecy closer to fulfillment. In destiny's path are a king's woodsman, his headstrong lover, a bookworm priest, a cocksure swordsman, and the embattled (from within and without) kingdom of Crotheny. Keyes masterfully intertwines far-off courtly intrigue with the personal quest of the woodsman and his brave companions who seek to unravel the secret of the Briar King before all is lost.

Although *The Briar King* will suffer the inevitable comparison with George R.R. Martin's *Song of Ice and Fire* series, it should be said that Keyes's work is no mere rip-off. This is excellent world building, applied with a dark, powerful touch that should convince Martin fans to become Keyes fans, too. --*Jeremy Pugh*

From Publishers Weekly

The author of the bestselling *Age of Unreason* tetralogy (*The Waterborn*, etc.) inaugurates the Kingdoms of Throne and Bone quartet with this epic high fantasy. The inhabitants of this splendid and dauntingly complex parallel world, Everon, are mostly descended from folk magically transported from our world. This is not quite the land of Faerie, although the Briar King resembles the old Celtic horned god Cernunnos, while Keyes brings his expertise as a fencing teacher to the swordplay, here called dessrata. The Empire of Crotheny faces war with its arch-rival, the Hanzish, and magical intrigues aimed at preventing the land from having a born queen (as opposed to a king's consort). By book's end, Princess Anne, the daughter of the Crotheny king, is fleeing for her life with Austra, her maid, and Cazio, a young Vitellian nobleman, having earlier experienced the pains of discipline in a convent and the horrors of having her family butchered. With aplomb, the author employs one of the most classic fantasy plots: the heir(ess) with a destiny and a necessarily huge cast of supporters. Keyes mixes cultures, religions, institutions and languages with rare skill. The main theme may emerge with formidable slowness, but patient readers will find the rewards enormously worthwhile.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School--A high-level, high-fantasy novel from the author of "The Age of Unreason" series (Ballantine). Complex story lines and multifaceted characters are introduced deftly, detailing the multiple intrigues afoot across the world of Everon, whose populace may have descended from figures in our history, particularly the lost colony of Roanoke. (An influential area is called Virgenya, and a revered ancestor from antiquity is Virgenya Dare.) Strange and deadly events plaguing the kingdom of Crotheny seem to be inaugurating a time of terror long predicted in prophecy. As Crotheny faces war with its great enemy Hanzish, a murderous conspiracy involving the prime minister and a band of rogue monks moves to prevent the land from ever having a true-born queen of Dare descent. Human sacrifices are performed, a horrifying monster drives forest dwellers from their homes, and the powerful, mysterious Briar King begins to stir. The closing action finds spunky survivor Princess Anne on the run from assassins and sorcery, accompanied by her loyal servant Austra and by Cazio, a master swordsman who is infatuated with the princess. Meanwhile, a large cast of well-drawn supporting characters is left facing challenges that equal or surpass Anne's.

Drawing intriguingly on multiple cultural and religious traditions, Keyes employs his considerable storytelling skills to great effect here, creating an epic cliff-hanger that will leave most readers eager for the next installment.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Patricia Cockrell:

In this 21st hundred years, people become competitive in each way. By being competitive now, people have do something to make these individuals survives, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice by means of surrounding. One thing that often many people have underestimated this for a while is reading. Sure, by reading a e-book your ability to survive raise then having chance to stay than other is high. To suit your needs who want to start reading any book, we give you that The Briar King (The Kingdoms of Thorn and Bone, Book 1) book as starter and daily reading reserve. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

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