



Title: *Shannara* Trilogy

Author: Terry Brooks

Publisher: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group

Reviewer: Vanessa Finaughty

In the words of fantasy author Christopher Paolini, ‘if you haven’t read Terry Brooks, you haven’t read fantasy’ – and I couldn’t have said it better myself. The *Shannara Trilogy* is a fantastic read. The books are quite thick, but if this seems daunting, don’t panic – each book will captivate any avid fantasy reader and keep you hooked until the last word. Brooks has developed a ‘fantasy land on Earth’ in these novels; a world where magic is explained logically and the reader is able to relate to characters and the environment, yet at no point was the ‘fantasy feel’ of the world and its inhabitants spoilt.

The trilogy begins with the story of two young half-brothers thrown into dangerous adventure. The protagonist, Shea Ohmsford, is sought out by the Druid, Allanon, who warns him that he is in danger before mysteriously vanishing into the night. Later that evening, Shea and his brother are forced to flee their home when a black monster with a skull-like marking on its body appears – the same beast that Allanon had warned of.

The previously naïve brothers discover that Shea is the key to saving the world from the ancient magic of the Warlock Lord – only a descendant of the Elven King, Jerle Shannara, is able to wield the one weapon on Earth that is capable of defeating the Warlock Lord – the magical Sword of Shannara – and Shea is the last living relative of Jerle Shannara.

Previously unaware of his noble bloodline, Shea must now make a choice – risk his life in an attempt to save the world, or give in to his doubts and flee for his life.

The trilogy then progresses to Shea’s descendant, Wil Ohmsford. The Ellcrys tree is dying, and the Forbidding that she protects is weakening as she does. Once she dies, the demons imprisoned behind the Forbidding will break free to wreak havoc upon the Earth.

A young elven woman, Amberle, is selected by the Ellcrys to search for the legendary Bloodfire – the only thing that can repair the magic of the Forbidding. And only Amberle can bring it back to the Ellcrys.

Again, Allanon turns to a descendant of Jerle Shannara for assistance. It falls on Wil to protect Amberle on her quest by making use of the Elfstones given to his father by Allanon, while the Druid attempts to protect Earth from the demons already beginning to slip through the weakened Forbidding.

The only problem, other than the Reaper demon stalking Wil and Amberle, is that Wil is convinced that the Elfstones will not respond to him in the same way they did to his father.

The trilogy ends with a twist and a bang, and follows the adventures of Jair and Bryn, son and daughter of Wil Ohmsford. The Ildach, the book from which the Warlock Lord acquired his power, is still on Earth and is intent on destroying mankind. Anyone who uses the book has the potential to become as powerful an evil as the Warlock Lord once



was, and Allanon beseeches Bryn to use her natural-born magic, the wishsong, to destroy the book.

Against her father's wishes, Bryn agrees. Jair soon learns of the danger that his sister will be in upon reaching the book, and sets out after her in a heroic attempt to save her from not only the book, but also herself.

Can Jair save Bryn, and will Allanon succeed in his attempts to access the old Druid records and destroy them once and for all in order to prevent evil from reigning over the land again?

If you ask me, Terry Brooks made the right move by quitting a career in law to write. Brooks has a way of drawing you into his world in a way that makes you feel almost as if you are actually there with his characters, and once you're hooked, there is no escape. But trust me – you won't *want* to escape.

Although these books can be read in any order and still make perfect sense, I found it quite rewarding to wade my way through all three in the correct sequence – *Sword of Shannara*, *Elfstones of Shannara*, and *Wishsong of Shannara*. These books will appeal to fantasy lovers of any age.