The Trials Of Drizzt Dourden Continue

The second in a series of premiere hardcover editions of Salvatore's classic dark elf tales.

This stunning new release of the classic R.A. Salvatore novel continues the tale of the origins of Salvatore's signature dark elf character Drizzt DoUrden and is the first-ever release of this Forgotten Realms novel title in hardcover. Each title in The Legend of Drizzt series showcases the classic dark elf novels in new, deluxe hardcover editions. Each title will feature annotations by the author, all new cover art, and forewords written by those who have become familiar with Salvatore and Drizzt over the years.

My Personal Review:
The book picks up where Homeland finished. Drizzt DoUrden has fled his birth city of Menzoberranzan, home to many drow elves in the Underdark, hoping to escape the clutches of his wrathful mother, Matron Malice.

For ten years, Drizzt survives the dangerous wilds of the Underdark, with only Guenhwyvar (a magical black panther) as his companion. However, as he is constantly on edge, and has no social interaction, his sense of self, of identity, slowly regresses into the hunter - a primitive being who, while deadly, reacts out of survival instincts only. Recognizing the dangers to his sanity, Drizzt seeks out some svirneblin (deep gnomes) and throws himself at their mercy, in the hopes of finding sanctuary within their city. It is here that his attempts at releasing a deep gnome from a drow patrol many years ago will hopefully pay dividends.
In the meantime, his mother Malice, ruling matron of his house/family, seeks the dark Spider Queen Lloths aid in granting a powerful spell, called zincarla. The spell animates a corpse, and is wholly controlled by the priestess who casts it. For this, Matron Malice animates the corpse of Zaknafein, Drizzts father, and former Weapon Master of House DoUrden, probably the only one with the skill to defeat Drizzt.

So begins the game of cat and mouse, as Drizzt sets out from the svirneblin city of Blingdenstone with Belwar, a deep gnome, in an effort to draw away the attention of the dark elves from the svirneblin city.

Their journey brings them to encounters with a range of Underdark creatures, from hook horrors, to flying birdmen, to the powerful illithids, as the undead Zaknafein is urged closer by magical tracking spells.

I admire the job Salvatore has done in bringing many Underdark denizens to life, helping us to understand better the environment and the trials Drizzt faces. The only frustrating part is that the book does almost a complete circle, ending almost where it began. However, the book is less about the physical journey, and more about the spiritual/emotional journey that Drizzt takes. This is NOT a boring book dealing with long-winded questions of existentialism - quite the opposite, in fact. There is much action to keep the reader hooked throughout. Yet nevertheless, we find ourselves pulled irresistably along with Drizzt, and come to question the substance of a creatures spirit/soul.

Of importance is the development of Jarlaxle, the leader of a renegade drow mercenary band. He is one of my favourite characters, and will feature in quite a few books to come!

I highly recommend this book.

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