

Michael Moorcock's endorsement helps my argument that *Warbreaker* is not only Sword & Sorcery, but that it is *very good* Sword & Sorcery. A scoffer might say, "they only got Moorcock to blurb the book because there is a magic sword in it." Yep, there is a Stormbringer type sword in the book. How cool is that?

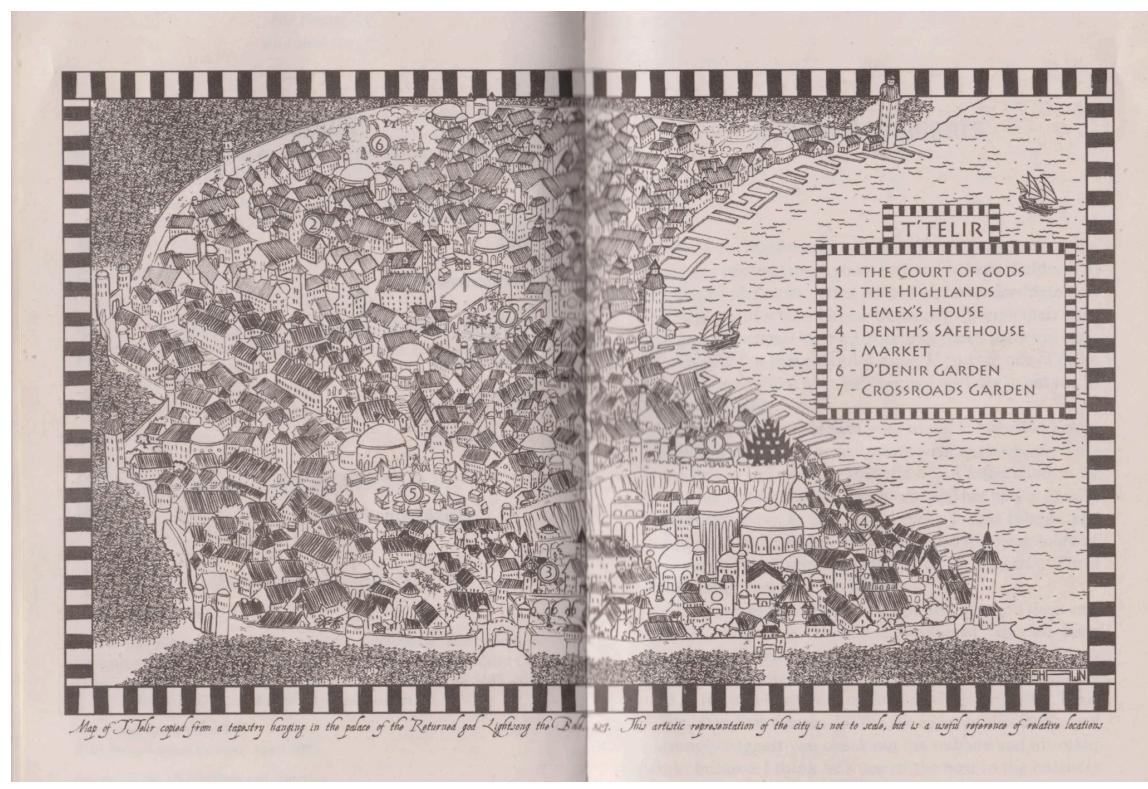
Very cool. First, I'll do a very brief plot summary. The book is primarily about two princesses, Viveena and Siri. The nation of Idris contracted to send a princess to marry the God King of Hallandren and produce an heir. Everyone assumed the king's oldest daughter, Vivenna, would be sent. But the king of Idris sends his youngest daughter, Siri, instead. Idris and Hallandren are economic rivals and tensions increase because of this switch, even though Idris kept to the terms of the contract.

A big part of the novel is a magic system of BioChromatic Breath. Breath can be given or sold to another person. The more Breath you have, the more magic you can wield. There are different levels of magic and different types of people. *Awakeners* can awaken inanimate objects. *Returned* are fully functioning people returned from the dead and restored with Breath. The *Lifeless* are *Returned* but without Breath and somewhat zombie-like. *Drabs* are fully functioning people who gave or sold their Breath. It is all very fanciful, but it makes sense and creates great drama along the way.

Other important characters are Vasher, who carries the sentient blade, Nightblood. Vasher and Nightblood have humorous as well as violent moments together. Opposed to Vasher are two mercenaries, Denth and Tonk Fah. Denth is a particularly devious character. Likeable until he reveals his true nature. He is a great Sword & Sorcery character. Lightsong is a sometimes-hilarious *Returned* deity. Hallandren has about two dozen living deities who are *Returned*. They have no memory of their previous life. Lightsong is uncomfortable with his situation (he needs worshippers to give away their Breath to stay alive) and while selfishly accepting that also cynically challenges everything. Above all the deities is Susebron, the God King.

The story mainly revolves around Siri learning the true nature of Susebron and Vivenna ineptly trying to rescue Siri (who doesn't need rescuing) with the help of Denth and Tonk Fah, while Vasher tries to stop an impending war between Idris and Hallandren while discovering the manipulations behind the growing tensions.

It is hard for me to review a 600+ page novel without too much typing and without giving too much away. *Warbreaker* is full of twists and turns and plot surprises. All clever and none of them a cheat. Sanderson's forte is challenging his characters perceptions and making the reader realize their own mistaken assumptions. Sanderson makes you think. There is a subtle brilliance in the way he makes you enjoy every bit of the 600+ pages. I'm not kidding! I was NEVER bored and even when I thought the magic was too much, I realized it was, nevertheless, cool AF. I'm aware I'm not doing the book complete justice. BUT I LOVED IT.



Rather than taking place in a forgotten historical period of Earth like the Hyborian Age or Middle Earth this story takes place in the Cosmere Universe created by Sanderson in his Mistborn saga. Both settings have their strengths and weaknesses. REH got around the obvious fiction by inventing cataclysms where history was lost and only dimly remembered. Tolkein stated that Middle-earth is supposed to be the same world as our Earth, at a "different stage of imagination."

Either way works for me but sometimes the age-length of these imaginary kingdoms bothers me. In our world, technology proceeded quite rapidly once we reached the technological level of the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages are usually considered to be around 500 A.D. to 1500 A.D. A mere 500 years later we have space travel, atomic weapons, and cell phones. This story takes place in the Cosmere Universe on the planet Nalthis, which other than a complex system of magic, is roughly at a High Middle Ages level. There is no inkling that technology is progressing or has progressed from the time of dimly remembered past kings. REH's Thurian Age and Hyborian Age are both at a low Middle Ages level. Valusia seems only slightly less advanced than Aquilonia and there could be as much as a 100,000-year difference between them. Whether it's Earth or Nalthis, Cataclysms and Magic unnaturally hold back progress!