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The Time Of Contempt (The Witcher)



Synopsis

The New York Times bestselling series that inspired the international hit video game: The Witcher Geralt is a witcher: guardian of the innocent; protector of those in need; a defender, in dark times, against some of the most frightening creatures of myth and legend. His task, now, is to protect Ciri. A child of prophecy, she will have the power to change the world for good or for ill -- but only if she lives to use it. A coup threatens the Wizard's Guild. War breaks out across the lands. A serious injury leaves Geralt fighting for his life..... and Ciri, in whose hands the world's fate rests, has vanished... The Witcher returns in this sequel to Blood of Elves. Witcher novels Blood of Elves The Time of Contempt Baptism of Fire The Tower of Swallows Lady of the Lake Witcher collections The Last Wish Sword of Destiny The Malady and Other Stories: An Andrzej Sapkowski Sampler (e-only) Translated from original Polish by David French

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a great addition to the Witcher books. It has more action than the previous book and some great dialogue. I am looking forward to reading the next one. ****IMPORTANT**** If you've read The Blood of Elves without reading the second short story book (The Sword of Destiny, never got officially published in English), Google 'The Sword of Destiny Fan Translation' and read it! They are super easy to find, and even come in a kindle friendly (.mobi) format! If you're a fan of the series and haven't read the second short story book then you're really missing out.

Just finished this today and the book was great. If you enjoy the Witcher setting, its video games, or just want a different wrinkle to the fantasy formula, this is worth a read. The middle was rather boring; for some reason, when Sapkowski describes banquets, balls, and the ridiculously named nobles who attend them, it gets hard to keep track of what's going on, and what is going on isn't all that fun to read. But outside of that, it was a delight to return to this world and the story had no issues picking back up once it got past the parts I had problems with. There is no deus ex machina here - the protagonists do fail and even when a savior-figure does come seemingly out of nowhere, it's usually just as helpless as the main characters are. There's a reason why this book is called *The Time of Contempt* and it's not just because of the Elder Blood prophecy. By the end of the book, things get so dark and gritty it's almost hard to look back at how comparatively light the book, and the series itself, was before the game-changing events that occur in this volume. I'm not convinced the new translator is doing a demonstrably better job than past entries, but English-reading Witcher and Sapkowski fans should be pleased.

I've enjoyed the previous two English incarnations of *The Witcher* series. Before, they were 'different' - I'm hard pressed to remember a similar plot and story-telling structure, while the use of Eastern European fairy tale creatures was unusual. As well, the earlier two books had a very unusual compositional structure. I'm not sure if it was from Sapkowski's original writing, or the translation to English, but sentence structure had a very lyrical quality. *'Time of Contempt'*, on the other hand, lacks nearly all of this. Very disappointing story, frankly, as it bogs down in personal and kingdom politics - reading it after the other two books was like watching the second (new) *Star Wars* trilogy after being raised on the original trilogy (I mean, who reads/watches this stuff for trade policy discussion!?). And, the writing (sentence structure) was very bland, even prosaic. In the end, it reads like a different author and a different series.

I will preface with this: the novel is excellent. If you are even a mild admirer of the *Witcher* series, this whole line of novels will suck you in. *The Time of Contempt* swiftly sets rolling the ball *Blood of Elves* positioned. It leaves you wanting more. In no way is this a bad thing. In fact, none of my complaints have to do with those things Sapkowski directly controlled, that which a translator can not alter: namely plot, pacing, and characterization. The grievances do start, however, when it comes to syntax. To some it may be a relief that Danusia Stok didn't translate this book, but rather the task was given to David French. I stumbled with his translation efforts. Many times throughout the book I had to reread sentences because they were composed in an especially unusual manner,

and even after looking them back over, a number of them made no sense whatsoever. To quote one of the less egregious missteps: "Lydia,' smiled Vilgefortz, 'thanks for your acknowledgement.'" It becomes clear further in the paragraph that Vilgefortz is speaking for Lydia, not thanking her as the syntax would imply. This blundering mistake could have been fixed with a simple word, added to the effect of 'thanks you,' but by some act of malevolence or neglect, it was left as is through the editing process. But as stands, this still is a coherent line, just with poor flow. What follows is something I still can't puzzle out: "The manhunters didn't touch Mistle, not once they'd checked she really was untouched." I really want to throw a copy of *The Elements of Style* at the translator and his editors, as I can't make head or tail of what this was meant to say. Danusia Stok may have struggled with Sapkowski's style and produced some prose that was stuttering, but I don't recall from either of her translations (*Last Wish* and *Blood of Elves*) such terrific errors as are in this book. But, these errors having been examined, it still stands that a translator is but a mirror, and no matter how smudged its surface is, light always reflects back. It is exceptionally fortunate that Sapkowski's original Polish work is very bright. Even such blatant disregard for grammatical rules essential for communication in the English language cannot mar entirely what makes Sapkowski's books so loved. The characters are voiced uniquely, and he brings them about in ways which we would expect, and even in some ways we wouldn't. Geralt returns partway through the book, and his reveal is just as momentous as it is akin to returning to an old friend. He is, admittedly, less bitter and sardonic than he was in the previous books, but perhaps that is because he takes a backseat in this novel. As the book progresses, it becomes clear that it is Ciri, not the headlined Geralt, who is the star of the novel, and in no way is this a bad thing. I can't say much in regards to why I am so excited to find out what she makes of the situation she is in by the end of the book without spoiling it, but her evolution throughout the tale almost put her above the Witcher as my favorite character from the series. Almost. The story arc of the Witcher and Ciri takes place in the backdrop of the politics and scheming of the north in the face of the Nilfgaardian threat. While a relatively minor part of the novel, it was very clear that large pieces were being moved on the proverbial checkerboard. I took great joy in the few clever twists Sapkowski threw into the book, carrying the same disbelief as did the characters. The book, in a summary, is intense and gripping. It involves us in the protagonists and their affairs. In true Witcher style, none of the sides are motivated simply. There is no right or wrong, and neutrality is still a narrow road to walk. I may have complained extensively about the translator, but that is because that is the only aspect I can truly critique. And even then, the book is a quick read despite the translator's staggered efforts. This is a book to be picked up by every fan who read *Blood of Elves* and enjoyed it, as it is more of the same and then some. And best (and

worst) of all, it leaves you wanting more. At this moment, I am considering the long wait to the next edition against the inconsistent waters of fan translations. If not obvious, I loathe badly translated works. If the fact that I am willing to resort to the unpolished efforts of fans in translating the sequential editions of the series, in lieu of waiting for Orbit to tumble out another official release, is not evidence enough of this series's compelling drive, then I am at a loss as to what else to say.

What a great experience. I personally want to beat the translators about the head and neck for being so slow. Work faster you lazy sluggards! How it has taken more than 10 years for these books to be available in English is a mystery to me. Geralt is an amazing creation. The story is fresh and new, but seems thorough and grounded. His side characters are given the time and dialog to fill the out rather than allow them to be soulless props.

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