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Seattle Author Allan Batchelder!



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ALLAN BATCHELDER
 AUTHOR OF THE IMMORTAL TREACHERY SERIES

History tells us that William Shakespeare died in April of 1616.

Or did he?

What if the "William Kemp" who set sail from England for the New World in April of 1619 was actually the bard in disguise?

How would he adjust to life in the Virginia Colony? How would he interact with the Powhatans?

And what if he was forced to do battle with a monster out of legend?

This is the story of Shakespeare's second life.

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This Thing Of Darkness by Allan Batchelder.

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Review by C.T. Top Contributor: Star Trek. 5.0 out of 5 Stars. William Shakespeare, Frontiersman. Reviewed in the United States on May 3, 2022-Verified Purchase. THIS THING OF DARKNESS by Allan Batchelder is a high concept novel if I've ever heard one: What if William Shakespeare faked his death and tried to make a new life in Jamestown? It's an interesting promise that I am arguably spoiling a bit of a reveal but is the chief reason to pick up this fascinating novel. Its title and events certainly give this the appearance of a horror novel, but it also works very well as a character study. I am happy to recommend it without further bringing any elements of its plot in on the basis of its research and authenticity of human feeling. Which is not something I normally say about a monster stalking a bunch of English settlers.

The premise, as quirky as it may be, is something that is grounded by "William Kemp" whose true identity is something that the story eases into but leaves plenty of clues to from the beginning. William has his reasons for wanting to fake his death and flee England that we gradually discover through the judicious use of flashbacks, but the point is that he is not someone who easily fits into the ranks of the new colony.

Partially due to the reasons that he fled, partially due to his high intellect, his irreligiosity (mostly expressed in a lack of interest in regular churchgoing--a horrible offense then), and his fear of being discovered, he lives at the edge of the community. He makes association with other outcasts, though, and forms his own little community that leaves him content for a time.

There is something out there in the woods, though, and William's imagination draws parallels between Grendel and his own Caliban, especially when signs that it's a kind of cannibalistic monster. Is it a werewolf, 16th century serial killer, troll, or something wholly new? The locals, as you can imagine, are quick to blame the local Powhatan. Even William is skeptical of his own mind at work when he notes that a perhaps more likely explanation is some of the released criminals at work in the colony combined with the victims' bodies being feasted on by animals' postmortem.

If I were to make an odd comparison, this reminds me a bit of the John Cussack Edgar Allan Poe movie, The Raven, except much better. That movie suffered from making its titular celebrity the center of the murders as well as forced into their investigation. Here William is a reluctant detective and doesn't have any skill at it but is moved by the fact it personally threatens him as well as those people he cares about.

I appreciate all the effort Allan Batchelder takes to humanizing the Bard with his regrets over his failed marriage, relationship with a prostitute named Luca, and the jokes of plagiarism made about him.

This is the rare book I state is just extremely good from start to finish and is one that benefits extremely from its prose. While not William Shakespeare himself, he manages to create a believable enough man that could theoretically come up with England's greatest plays. A somewhat roguish man but never so much as to be unbelievable for the time period. A somewhat darker and more morose version of SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE's take on the Bard perhaps. The supporting cast is solid too and I cared enough about them to want to see whether they became monster chow.

Highly recommended.

Review by Felix Ortiz: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. A truly engrossing tale. Reviewed in the United States on August 29, 2023. Verified Purchase. This book shows how a good story doesn't need to have epic proportions. To me it felt like a love letter to Shakespeare within a horror mystery.

One of the things that I enjoy the most in a book is great prose, and Allan's is top notch. I loved his writing voice, wit, and pace. His characters are believable, and their relationships are one of the biggest highlights of the book.

As soon as I finished it, I jumped to his other books right away (which I'm also really enjoying!). Highly recommend it.

Review by Matt: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Batchelder Does It Again! Reviewed in the United States on May 31, 2022. Verified Purchase. I was a huge fan of Allan's Immortal Treachery books and had been idly wondering when/if he'd have a new book coming out when I got a Kindle notification informing me about the release of This Thing of Darkness. Talk about timing! If you liked Allan's previous books, you're going to like this one...while sharp-eyed readers probably didn't have much difficulty spotting all the Shakespearean references sprinkled throughout the Tarmun Vykers books, here the Bard takes center stage in a grand adventure combining alternate history with a few dashes of horror and folklore. Though this one leaves the world of epic fantasy behind, it has all the other trademarks of a good Batchelder book: strong and unique characters, witty dialogue, and plenty of action. Can't wait to see what kind of 'Brave New World' the author will head to in his next book!

Review by MJB: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Shakespeare fun? Yes! Reviewed in the United States on August 27, 2022. Verified Purchase. Other than taking a Shakespeare class in college (40 years ago) and enjoying some good summer stock plays, I haven't pursued Shakespeare more. I'm glad the author, Allan Batchelder, has. I loved how he humanized Shakespeare in such a delightful way. The book was fun, intriguing, and did not ever drag. The plot line is clever! You know the question, "If you could have anyone at your dinner party who would you invite?" By the end of the book I would answer, "Will and Margaret." Oh, and Allan Batchelder.

Review by Robert Herold: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. A First-Rate Tale. Reviewed in the United States on August 12, 2022. Verified Purchase. This Thing of Darkness by Allan Batchelder is a wonderful tale of Shakespeare (incognito) coming to Jamestown in 1619 and having to contend with brigands and a Grendel-like monster who enjoys gorging himself on settlers. Batchelder has a gift for words and historical details that brings the period to life. He also keeps things moving at a brisk pace which makes for an exciting read. Excellent!

Review by James: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. X-files Monster Of The Week Meets Literature-Centric Colonial Period Piece. Reviewed in the United States on July 4, 2022. Verified Purchase. 'This Thing of Darkness' is a fun page-turner by epic-fantasy and grimdark author Allen Batchelder - known for his Immortal Treachery series. Fans of Immortal Treachery and new readers will appreciate this new tale that chronicles William Shakespeare's attempts to escape fame for a new chance at life in the Jamestown Colonies. However, thieves, bigots, and even a monster aim to cut that new life short.

Review by Schoolteacher: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Great fun! Reviewed in the United States on June 21, 2022. Verified Purchase. Batchelder's prodigious imagination is on display again in this exciting, teasing, and satisfying story.

Review by Austin Tichenor: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Historical Fiction + Monsters / Shakespeare = Totally My Jam. Reviewed in the United States on May 21, 2023. FULL DISCLOSURE: I gave Allan developmental feedback on an early draft of "This Thing of Darkness" because I was so excited by the premise alone: What if Shakespeare didn't die, but traveled to the New World to reinvent himself? The resulting book is page-turning historical fiction grounded by impeccable research and – much like Shakespeare's plays – enlivened by humor, great relationships, and the supernatural. A highly recommended beach read...but also perfect for the autumn months when the leaves begin to turn and darkness falls.

Review by Shannon Penrod, Host of Autism Live: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Brilliant!! Great Read! Reviewed in the United States on December 22, 2022. Wow! What a great read! It's a real page turner. I loved every aspect - it's such a great story, so clever, so funny! Another great one from Allan Batchelder. I am a huge fan!

Review by Nathan Evan Tepp: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Great Read!! Reviewed in the United States on December 20, 2022. I have been a fan of Allan Batchelder's writing for years and his latest is another great read! Highly recommend!

Review by S. E. Britten: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Must-Read, this Book is Fantastic! Reviewed in the United States on June 24, 2022. Having faked his death in 1616, an aging Shakespeare flees for the New World with his illegitimate son where he faces a monster out of legend that is slaughtering pilgrims. What a concept! This book, however, completely surpassed my expectations and was such an absolute and genuine pleasure to read.

I've covered plenty of Shakespeare but in all honesty, I was here for the monster, and the setting is one I find really fascinating. But so much of this book's charm comes from Shakespeare and his companions adjusting to life on the frontier and engaging with their new surroundings. The monster plot is almost an afterthought, but one that is weaved consistently throughout the story and provides plenty of tense and gruesome moments.

In a book like this, obviously you expect it to be peppered with references to the Bard's works. But Batchelder goes far beyond mere quotation, he engages with Shakespearean language and wit, playing with words constantly and to a much, much greater degree than expected - it is exactly crafted, and the writing absolutely sparkles as a result.

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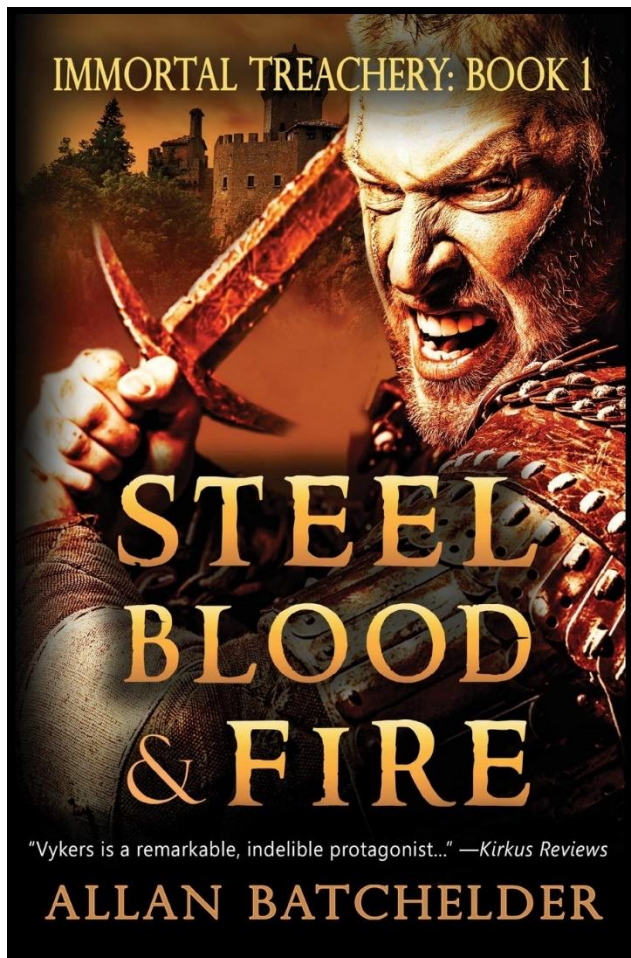
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IMMORTAL TREACHERY: BOOK 1

STEEL BLOOD & FIRE

"Vykers is a remarkable, indelible protagonist..." —Kirkus Reviews

ALLAN BATCHELDER

TARMUN VYKERS
Is an artist of death. He uses his sword to paint with the blood of his enemies. His awestruck opponents call him The Reaper, an iron-willed man with no memory of his past, a ruthless champion who has risen to the level of death incarnate.
But The Reaper has collected a legion of enemies as he cut a bloody swath through the greatest of heroes and villains. And these dogs have finally had their day, exacting a revenge both cruel and creative.
Wandering lost, horribly disfigured and unable to fight, Vykers stumbles across the bones of a half-buried skeleton that can transform his ruined body in an inconceivable way. But first he must make a devil's pact with...

ARUNE
A secretive, ghostly sorceress with ambitions of her own. If Vykers wants to wield a sword again, he must surrender to Arune that which he holds most dear. But can he trust this ethereal enchantress to hold up her end of their dangerous bargain?
Vykers has few good choices, and he must make them quickly, for an impossibly talented and savage wizard has arisen to threaten all of humanity...

THE END OF ALL THINGS
Once an autistic boy hardly able to speak, The End has evolved into a supernatural terror bent on extinguishing all life. A fearsome and unequalled tactician, The End is the only person who doesn't fear "The Reaper."
To have any hope of defeating this bloodthirsty mage, Vykers must gather the strangest, most dangerous cohort of killers ever assembled. Then he must find the only weapon capable of defeating his enemy, a sentient sword full of wicked surprises.

Not recommended for anyone under the age of seventeen due to violence, mature language and themes.

For important news on the Immortal Treachery series, go to [Facebook.com/SteelBloodFire](https://www.facebook.com/SteelBloodFire) and click "Like."

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Steel, Blood & Fire by Allan Batchelder.

Immortal Treachery Book 1.

TARMUN VYKERS: His awestruck opponents call him The Reaper, an iron-willed man with no memory of his past, a ruthless champion who has risen to the level of death incarnate.

But The Reaper has collected a legion of enemies as he cut a bloody swath through the greatest of heroes and villains. And these dogs have finally had their day, exacting a revenge both cruel and creative.

Wandering lost, horribly disfigured, and unable to fight, Vykers stumbles across the bones of a half-buried skeleton that can transform his ruined body in an inconceivable way. But first he must make a devil's pact with...

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To have any hope of defeating this bloodthirsty mage, Vykers must gather the strangest, most dangerous cohort of killers ever assembled. Then he must seek out the only weapon that can defeat this terrible adversary...

THE EPIC BATTLE: Behold the greatest clash of men, monsters, and Fey that the kingdom has ever known. Vykers, at the head of his outnumbered contingent, launches a desperate attack against The End, with the fate of the world hanging in the balance.

But The End is a creature worthy of his name. He has forged a secret weapon, a wicked and terrible instrument that will break through Vykers' defenses and exact a devastating toll.

Only one thing is certain, this extraordinary battle will end in a way that no one could have predicted!

Are you a fan of: Grimdark, Joe Abercrombie's First Law series, Steven Erikson's The Malazan Book of the Fallen, Glen Cook's Chronicles of the Black Company, or Patrick Rothfuss' Kingkiller Chronicle? If so, grab your copy of Steel, Blood & Fire now!



5 Stars: This book has a very well thought out plot engaging the reader in unexpected twists and turns including love stories and epic battle scenes involving twenty-four well developed characters.

Steel, Blood & Fires opens with unspeakable violence as Tarmun Vykers, A.K.A, “the Reaper” a legendary warrior is in the stocks (in bonds, under guard). One must be warned that this is a work of dark fantasy, horror and mythology with adult language and graphic violence.

Author Allan Batchelder has done very well laying out this book with easy-to-follow headings (much like the way a play production might be laid out). The story pivots back and forth from what is happening with his main characters: the legendary warrior named Tarmun Vykers, Aoife Cestroenyn (An A’Shea or “Mender,” sister of Anders), D’Kem (a washed-up Burner), Janks & Company, Long, A.K.A, Long Pete, Spirk Nessno (An idiot and friend to Long), Anders Cestroenyn (the self-proclaimed “End-of-All-Things) and Arune (A spectral Burner who shares Vykers’ body).

I would like to share a quote from this book that will help draw you in without spoiling the story. This quote come from one of the chapter four headings titled ‘The End, On the March’.

...After seeing his general off, Anders climbed a small hillock and surveyed his host. What they lacked in training and skill, they more than made up for in numbers and ferocity. Either his magic had worked especially well upon his unwilling draftees, or humans were all more savage than they cared to admit. Looking out upon them, he saw them huddled in large, teeming masses around myriad bonfires. They were always ravenous for food, of course, but also for sex and violence. The End-of-All-Things would be happy to destroy them all, once they had served their purpose.

...Pivoting to his left, he held out his arms and a slave laid the infant into them. It was a funny looking thing, this child. And would get funnier still, by the time Anders was through with it. He had decided, after some thought, that it was time he created something for a change. He would be the end of all things presently in existence, but this child would be the first of his new race, beings made specially to serve and obey him. Worship would not be required, as he felt he would probably kill large numbers of them whenever he got bored. Perhaps he should also create a competing race and pit them against one another!”

A must read for those who want to remain on the edge of your seat.

Editorial Review (Book Marketing Global Network).



Review by The Bookwyrms Speaks: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. An instant Grimdark classic. Reviewed in the United States on December 2, 2018. Verified Purchase. Sometimes you get recommended a book by a friend that you are kind of on the fence about. I admit my friend's description of this book was a bit vague, and I just kind of forgot about it. I came across it a few months later and decided, why not, I have a hole in the TBR list. After reading the paper version and listening to the audio version, I am beyond glad I did. Otherwise, I would have missed out on what is one of, if not my most favorite, fantasy characters. Tarmun Vykers is just one of those characters that even though they are in no way a hero, they still appeal all out of proportion to what they should. With that, let's get this review rolling.

Tarmun Vykers. The Reaper. death on two leg's, who's sword has killed whole peoples if the legends are to be believed. Unstoppable warlord. Kingdom conqueror. Right up until that all ended when he ran up against the Virgin Queen's army and was defeated. Captured, tortured, having his hands and feet cut off, the stumps healed, then dumped in the woods to fend for himself, dying a slow, painful death. Only the Reaper won't die that easy. After months of crawling around, barely surviving in the woods, Vykers comes across a cave with a skeleton in it, the skeleton of a mage named Arune with the spirit still attached. Offering Vykers the chance to be whole again if he agrees to let her bond with him until she can find a body of her own, Vykers agrees, and the history of the world changes with that decision.

So begins the next chapter in Vykers's story, as Arune forms hands and feet of magic for Vykers, and he heads towards civilization again. After running into a patrol of the Queen's soldiers, Vykers is brought before the monarch, who offers him a chance for life, as a threat to existence is currently rampaging across the continent, killing everything it comes across. That threat is called The End of All Things, a mage of immensely vast power, who revels in the death and destruction his army creates. He is literally trying to live up to his name, and the Virgin Queen's kingdom is next on his agenda. Tarmun must, with some new allies, retrieve an item that just might turn the tide, if it even exists.

While Vykers and his companions go on this quest, the End's sister, a healer named Aoife, is on her own journey to try and end her brother's reign of evil. Meeting unexpected allies along the road, she brings her own magic to the fight against her brother. On another road, a small group of mercenaries, led by Long Pete, ends up in the Queen's Army, only to be split up and captured by The End's army. This leads to some revelations about a few of the parties' members that have world shaking repercussions.

As Vykers returns from his quest, the End has all his pieces in place to make his move. This leads to an amazingly well written penultimate battle scene, with so much action it's amazing he kept it all straight! He did, though, and it leads to some fantastic action, loss, betrayals, heroics and huge magics. The final showdown between the Reaper and the End is just brutal combat poetry, and leaves plenty for another book in the series.

While the worldbuilding with this book is definitely strong, and the plot really keeps the reader engaged, the characters are what makes this book shine! Tarmun Vykers, vulgar, amoral, ruthless, but still strangely

likeable has a lot of secrets that are slowly being revealed, and he is just a fantastic character. The main secondary characters like Arune, Aoife and Long Pete also had a lot of time lavished on their character development, and even characters like the Queen have some interesting developments. The villain, The End of All Things, is the perfect Grimdark villain. Ruthless, merciless, and completely insane, he is just such a larger-than-life character with secrets of his own, slowly revealed throughout the book. I think this is the kind of dark fantasy gem that can appeal to a wide swath of fantasy readers.

The narration is handled by Christopher Selbie. I was unfamiliar with his work before this, but I found him to be a very good narrator. He has excellent pacing, and never drags into monotone. He uses a variety of tones and accents to create individual characters you want to listen to. Definitely a top-notch effort I can heartily recommend.

Review by Chanticleer Book Reviews: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. A rollicking fun and seriously addictive read! Fairy tales, myths, and folklore collide and with a twist and adroit humor. Reviewed in the United States on September 20, 2017. Verified Purchase. Tarmun Vykers, the central character in Allan Batchelder's accomplished fantasy, has many epithets: "The Scourge of Empires," "The Reaper," "The Merciless One," and sometimes just good old "Vykers the Vicious." He's very aware that he's widely feared but not admired, and that's just fine with him. He's not the sentimental type.

On the other hand, he's darn likable. Why? Well, he's smart, witty, and often sarcastic, but he's also able to laugh at himself and the many predicaments that befall him. And he's not the worst guy around.

No, that would be Anders, better known as "The-End-Of-All-Things." The-End is not likable. Far from it. When one's goal in life is taking enormous satisfaction and delight in the destruction of everyone and everything, you don't have friends, you just have people who do your bidding because they're terrified of you.

Of course, a showdown between Vykers and The End is going to happen – and Batchelder has lots of fun getting us ready. In this world, the very weapons used have almost as much personality as characters who wield them. Along the way, we meet the cast, many of whom will prove invaluable to Vykers on his quest.

And what a cast! Batchelder provides a lengthy list at the novel's conclusion but they're all so memorable, the reader doesn't have to consult it often. For starters, there's Arune, a shapeshifter who has taken up residence in Vykers' mind where she reads his thoughts and responds with zingers of her own. Some of the most memorable scenes in the book, in fact, take place with Vykers seemingly talking to himself, but really, it's Arune matching his wit, sentence for sentence. There is so much more to explore and fall in love with, we won't ruin it for you here.

If this all sounds like a lot of fun, it is. It's easy to imagine Monty Python fans reveling over many of these scenes. This fantasy, however, has more to offer. The humor is adroitly balanced with darker chapters concerning primal fears and terrors.

"Steel, Blood & Fire" will appeal to a broad group of readers. Although primarily a fantasy, the classic themes of fairy tales, myths and folklore are woven into the narrative. Good versus evil, the gaining of self-knowledge while on a quest or a journey, transformation through enchantment - it's all here but with a twist because Batchelder so deftly juggles ribald humor and unexpected poignancy. He also allows the reader to view these themes through several lenses. This is particularly true in the battle scenes, the

author giving us the individual experiences of several of the male characters. While there are fewer female characters, they are quite strong, fully realized, and residing in the forest and the castle, the folkloric motifs of the poor and the royal in play.

The great news is the book is the first in the series Immortal Treachery. Batchelder concludes "Steel, Blood & Fire" on a tantalizing note and there's clearly much more material to be mined. If it's as fully realized as this book, the entire series is a must read.

Fairy tales, myths, and folklore collide in Batchelder's first book in the Immortal Treachery series, "Steel, Blood & Fire," a rollicking fun and seriously addictive read.

Review by JIM: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Great Book. Reviewed in the United States on December 11, 2023, Verified Purchase. Has a lot of the same angles as a lot of sword and magician books; however, has some very nice twists to keep it interesting.

Review Camera Guy: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. A Fantastic Read! Vykers and Arune are the new dynamic duo! Reviewed in the United States on July 23, 2015. Verified Purchase. Most fantasy novels I've read pit the virtuous hero versus the evil villain. These novels are satisfying but highly predictable. This novel pits evil against the lesser of two evils. Tarmun Vykers is the lesser of two evils. He would make a fine villain in most stories, but he is called upon to be the savior in this tale against a far greater threat, "The End of All Things". There are some fine virtuous protagonists as well. Aoife is a healer who has powers hidden even to herself. Her steady presence as the story continuously returns to her balances out the dark dealings of both Tarmun and "The End of All Things". Another force for good is Arune, a disembodied spirit that finds Tarmun as an unwilling host. Her moderating influence eventually tames some of his more abhorrent behaviors. I am reminded of the movie "All of Me". Steve Martin desperately wants to be rid of the spirit of Lily Tomlin but eventually grows to care about her.

There are other equally engaging story lines as we follow the adventures of Long Pete, Janks, Spirk, Rem, and D'Kem, mercenaries turned soldiers for the Virgin Queen's army. Some of their escapades are reminiscent of Shakespeare's Henry VI and the common soldiers in Henry's army, and they include Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph from the Henry IV plays. The army also includes a Scot, an Irishman, an Englishman and Fluellen, a comically stereotyped Welsh soldier. I love all of the Shakespeare references. It is fun to pick them out. The author also borrows from Robert Frost, my favorite poet... "the woods were lovely, dark, and deep."

There are a couple of love stories woven into the story. The most unusual of which is Long Pete and the giantess Mardine, a ten-foot-tall fighting machine. His eventual devotion to her is quite touching. I also enjoyed the five "chimera" that accompany Tarnum Vykers on his quest to gain a magic sword. As grotesque as they are described their loyalty is very endearing. Equally engrossing are Aoife and the "fey folk", creatures of legend that are one with the ancient forest.

The battle scenes are epic to say the least. The battle strategies are fascinating to follow as they unfold. The ebb and flow of the final battle keeps the reader on the edge of whatever they are sitting on. Powerful magic is unleashed on both sides with some surprises coming at important junctures. If I had to pick a favorite character it would have to be Spirk. He provides comic relief when times are their darkest.

Overall, this novel is reminiscent of some of David Eddings best, particularly the Mallorean series. I highly recommend it to any adult who loves fantasy and a good tale of magic!

Review by Amazon Customer: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Great stuff. More people should be reading this. Reviewed in the United States on April 16, 2016. Verified Purchase. I am a huge fan of grimdark books, but even I can be put off here and there by their solemnity. While I'm often drawn to the harsh language, the over-the-top violence, and the moral ambiguity, I can be downright miffed by the insufferable doom and gloom of authors like Martin or Abercrombie (my favorite author). Enter Allan Batchelder and his Immortal Treachery series.

These books answer that veiled prayer. These books are dirty, grimy, brutal, but they're also quite funny, often lighthearted, and overall, immensely entertaining.

Steel, Blood, and Fire immediately draws you in, thankfully, as I am so often put off by slow starters (looking at you, Erikson), and frankly, with a full-time job, a wife, and two toddlers, I don't really have the time, or the patience required for acquired tastes. Steel, Blood, and Fire is engaging from the first page and never slows. While there are certainly lulls in the action, Batchelder uses this time to make you laugh and round out a wonderfully varied, flawed and interesting cast of characters. Tarmun Vykers, while somewhat trope, being your standard bad ass/whirlwind of destruction, is nonetheless an instant favorite with his callous attitude and laconic wit. Long Pete took some time to like, but he's fun to read, and you grow to care about his band and the relationships he develops with them.

Furthermore, Batchelder lays down a narrative with multiple twists and turns, with events that unfold, fortunately, very unpredictably, and the surprises are always welcome and only serve to force the reader to ask more questions and take the story in new and interesting directions. Overall, a great start to a great series. You will want to read the next volume immediately, and you'll love it as well.

Review by Michael Gordon Shapiro: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Tightly plotted, captivating, and strangely fun. Reviewed in the United States on November 12, 2018. Verified Purchase. This was the first fantasy novel I've read in years which I proverbially couldn't put down. It's tightly written and set in a world that's rich with detail but doesn't bog the reader down with minutiae. The story's characters and situations and tribulations are described with economy, but also a love for imaginative twists that made me think, "This author plays a lot of tabletop RPGs."

Like many fantasy novels, SB&F features a contrarian hero who in real life we'd find abhorrent — but in this case his personality and decisiveness of character makes him perversely likable. Vykers' unique relationship with a secondary protagonist (I won't spoil the details) makes his an especially enjoyable POV to follow; you can't wait to see more of the world through his special perspective.

Above all, there's a real sense of wit here despite the dark and sometimes savage subject matter. The element of cleverness distinguishes the story from many others in the genre, and makes it, in addition to being gripping, simply fun.

Forgive the somewhat generic title (I literally can't remember it while typing this) and check out this gem. I can't wait for the next installment in the series.

Review by Ryan Rettinger: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. A great start to a great series. Reviewed in the United States on March 19, 2018. Verified Purchase. I came across this book while browsing r/fantasy on reddit. I had never heard of it previously, but for 99 cents, I figured why not. While the book 1 does start a bit slow, it's worth the wait as the author lays out the colorful cast of characters. Tarmun Vykers, aka the Reaper is a warrior of immense skill and violence that is down on his luck after a run in with the queen. Aoife a travelling priestess, running from a dark secret in her past. Long Pete and Co a lovable bunch of idiots who find themselves as soldiers in the queen's arm as war returns to the land. And finally, the protagonist Anders, The End of All things his name says it all. Get past the slow start and the book will reward you. The Reaper will have you amazed and laughing at the same with take no shit attitude. Long Pete and buddies will have you clamoring for the author to write a series based on their adventures.

Review by Keogh: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Rise to the occasion, sir, or the occasion will bury you. Reviewed in the United States on October 4, 2017. Verified Purchase. Don't know if this review will show up on many of your radar's because it was not a 'Verified Purchase', rather a borrow from the Kindle Prime catalog. That being said, I am really looking forward to borrowing the rest of this series. It does start out in a mundane, scattered way; but, in looking back, it did provide some insight into character progressions and ultimately, sympathy towards their suffering. Once things got moving, I thought that there was a healthy mix of elements that make for a good sword & sorcery novel: lots of gore, crazy sorcery, ease to follow fight scenes, comic relief, love stories, big final showdown, larger than life characters, enough loose ends to keep you coming back for more... but, nothing too cliché. To the best of my reading knowledge, there are a lot of original ideas here. It is always refreshing to see that.

Review by Russell Martin: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Fantastic Read for Fantasy Fans. Reviewed in the United States on January 31, 2017. Verified Purchase. I absolutely loved this book! It was such a refreshing gem of a novel that was genuinely difficult to put down. It really bothers me that this series isn't more popular. There are multiple viewpoints and I found all of them to be engaging and interesting. Tarmun Vykers is such a fascinating, bad ass main character. Even though he's not necessarily a "good" guy, you can't help but root for him. I can't really think of anything not to like about this book. The characters, situations, creatures, pacing, and story are all fresh and unique. In the few instances where we encounter certain familiar fantasy tropes, they're handled in new and exciting ways. There are so many awesome moments, with plenty of heartbreak and even some appropriately placed levity sprinkled throughout. I immediately started reading the next Immortal Treachery book. You'll want to do the same once you've finished Steel, Blood, and Fire.

Review by Amazon Customer: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Loved it! Reviewed in the United States on February 2, 2013. Verified Purchase. I just finished reading it and I must say, it's one of the best books I have read in a long time. It has a lot of the typical fantasy elements of magic, fae creatures, etc. but it has some nice twists on how these elements are portrayed. The characters were well rounded and varied and the writer pulls no punches in how he deals their fates. Vykers is a scoundrel but still manages to be likeable, Aoife has a power to her but still has very human doubts and the End of All things has just enough child-like behavior and insanity to him to make his motives believable. I am usually not into big battle scenes but in the case of this book, I found the main battle scene to be extremely interesting and epic in proportion. There is some glory to war but also a lot of horror and the author does a great job in portraying both. I added this book to my favorites collection, and I am definitely looking forward to a sequel. The author definitely has a knack for writing and should continue to do so.

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Audiobook:

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IMMORTAL TREACHERY: BOOK TWO

AS FLIES TO
WANTON
BOYS

ALLAN BATCHELDER



Three years have passed since Tarmun Vykers' victory over the mad sorcerer who called himself the End-of-All-Things. But they've been three long years, confined to a sick bed with a grievous wound that will not heal, cannot be healed by any means known to man. And then something unthinkable happens, and Vykers is summoned once again to save the kingdom.

This same mysterious event ensnares Long Pete and his companions, reuniting them for a mission whose consequences none can anticipate and not all will survive. Will Vykers master his wound, or will it finally end him? Can Long Pete serve both his Queen and his family? And what of the A'Shea, Aoife, who finds herself torn between her faith and her powerful attraction to the Reaper? In a world in which the gods play with the fates of men as mischievous boys torture insects, nothing but strife is certain.

THE
VINTAGE
PRESS



As Flies To Wanton Boys by Allan Batchelder.

Immortal Treachery Book 2.

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Review by Sneaky Burrito:5.0 out of 5 Stars. I thought this was even better than book one. Reviewed in the United States on March 10, 2016. Verified Purchase. I first heard of the Immortal Treachery series on a fantasy book forum I moderate. I know the people's tastes there pretty well, and they don't always embrace the self-published, and so when a lot of them raved about these books, I decided to check them out.

I ended up enjoying book 1 fairly well so I dived right into book 2. I am actually a bigger fan of book 2 than I was of book 1. I think I just like the type of story being told a bit better. A big chunk of the previous volume was a massive battle against a somewhat one-dimensional villain. While I thought the battle was done well, actually, it is just not my favorite type of story. At any rate, I was pleased to see this book taking a different turn.

One improvement (for me) over the last book was the storyline with Long Pete and crew (common soldiers, basically). These characters had a job in the city in this book and they had to split up to accomplish their tasks. I think the humor in their various sections was more natural than in book 1, both in terms of one-liners and larger, situational humor. The ways in which they go about their tasks (infiltrating noble households) really serve to distinguish their separate personalities and talents and made me care about them more as individual characters, as do the outcomes they achieve.

Not everything is roses for Long Pete and crew (far from it, and there are some truly sad moments for them as well as some troubling transformations in at least one of their number). I also like that their task is to solve a mystery. There's not one overpowering bad guy -- in fact, they don't necessarily know who the bad guy is.

Of course we also follow Tarmun Vykers in a parallel series of events (it's related in a way to Long Pete and crew's story). It is somewhat similar to his adventures in book one (minus the battle part), where he goes off with a small group of people on a quest. He does fight, and finds he has to rely on cleverness as much as might in some cases, which is sort of a new thing for him. He has a few more limitations this time around, and that makes him more sympathetic. But he is still a very "sword and sorcery"-type protagonist. There are some sad moments in his storyline as well. It is not clear who the villain is in this storyline either (I don't mean that in a bad way; the journey is one of discovery!), though of course there are opponents of the moment. There were also some flashbacks/dreams/etc. (hard to say which of those they are with the information we have now) that give some tantalizing clues into either Vykers's past or future, or a past lifetime, or something along those lines. I'm hoping those will be expanded upon in future books.

Aoife (an A'Shea, or type of magical practitioner who has healing abilities) largely follows Vykers in this book, though she has conflicting emotions about doing so. As with the previous books, I feel kind of like she stands by and lets things happen to her, but she does take some initiative in this book, finally, especially at the end. I think this bodes well for the books to come.

The book stops at a point where certain adventures have come to an end, but not without giving a taste of what will probably happen in book 3. I'd be tempted to call Vykers's storyline a cliffhanger except book 3 is already out and I'm going to start it today. At any rate, other than these bits at the end, the book was self-contained. The characters' quests at the start had come to a close by the end, by and large. However, you do need to read book 1 or this won't make a lot of sense to you.

For the most part, the writing flowed a bit better this time. I had a bit of trouble getting into book 1 but did not have that same problem here. There were occasional copy-editing/proofreading hiccups but only a few that stood out to me in what is actually quite a long book, and none of them interfered with the overall reading experience all that much. I haven't said much about the worldbuilding because it is in the same vein as book 1. Even though we travel to a new land, humans and others exhibit the same types of behavior, if somewhat different physical appearances. It'll be familiar if you read a lot of fantasy, at any rate.

I will also say I think I have an idea of where the series title comes from by the end of reading this book. At any rate, I'm looking forward to book 3.

Review by Molly R.: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Grimdark turns mystery... Reviewed in the United States on July 15, 2017. Verified Purchase. I love what Allan did here: though keeping within the epic grimdark fantasy world created with the first volume, the plot flavor (if you will) of this one is more along the lines of mystery. The Queen has disappeared, there are virtually no clues as to what's happened to her, and our heroes from book 1 are dispersed to various places to find out what they can. It leads each of them into a crazy adventure of his or her own, some mostly comic, some mostly tragic, many a blend of the two.

That's actually one of the things I like best about Allan's writing: the whimsical delight and bawdiness thrown in to lighten up the grimdark. In fact, it sometimes made the darker parts catch me off guard and gave them more shock value. There was at least a death or two that made me suck in my breath in disbelief ("That didn't just happen?? No!!!").

We also get a splash of romance in this one, which I really enjoyed, being all sentimental like that. Some of it even gets LGBTQ representation points, which was even more fun. And that ending--ha! Some quite incredible new twists to throw us into the next volume, whose plot flavor I can't even begin to imagine yet.

I... dare I say this?... yes. I already ship Spirk/Ron. There. I said it. We'll see if that happens in the next book or what. :)

Review by Flem6pack: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Vykers keeps it going! Reviewed in the United States on November 18, 2015. Verified Purchase. Tarmun Vyker's services are necessary again for the Virgin Queen, although she would rather keep her distance from him and his amazing killing skills. She and her Shaper sorcerers have kept Vykers alive from the magical wound he sustained at the end of book one, and they have given him a belt that will keep some of his discomfort at bay, but he is not fully Vykers. Yet, he must journey over the ocean, which few ships ever return from, to rescue the Queen. He is reunited with #3, his Chimera colleague, and Aoife (still growing into her role as a forest person - get it? Growing?), as well as the Historian, an ageless man who has some knowledge of what they will face over the ocean. Tarmun will find enemies to meet the sharp edge of his sword, although he is definitely weakened, and Arune, the Shaper who shares his head will have her hands full with sorcerous protections for him. New lands, new

creatures, new surprises, including a twist at the end that will blow you away, yet one that does not trick the reader. Good, not so clean, sorcerous barbarian fun! Highly recommended!

Review by Captain: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. This sequel is even better than the great original. Reviewed in the United States on December 15, 2014. Verified Purchase. By the way, Allan Batchelder writes as well as Abercrombie and Martin. He was a master right out of the gate. This sequel is even better than the great original Steel Blood & Fire. Why there are so few reviews is astonishing to me. I've read almost all the epic fantasy that has been printed and this is easily in the top ten of epic fantasy series, and features an anti-hero, Tarmun Vykers, who would have Karsa from Malazan and Logan Ninesingers crying for their mummies. Alan Batchelder writes with a Joe Abercrombie vibe, down and dirty and bloody yet plenty of interaction and camaraderie between the characters. This sequel has a lot more happening than the intro book. The author writes as though he's been at it all his life, but these are his first two books. Non-stop action, a mix of military fantasy and good old regular fantasy. This is a must read for epic fantasy fans. Again the anti-hero here is the baddest guy ever, and yet, there's something about him, and it's almost as though he...No, that would be a spoiler. Just read it, you will love it.

Review by Thorin: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. As they conspire to discover the intentions of the great eight noble houses of the capitol. Reviewed in the United States on May 11, 2018. Verified Purchase. Conspiracy, exploration, and lots of blood! ... (And Alheria's Balls! WHAT AN ENDING!). As Flies to Wanton Boys is a must-read for anyone that enjoys tales of herculean bad-assery, as Vykers returns to cross the sea into exotic lands-- Where he must overcome his supernatural wound, follow the pull of his heart... and of course, disembowel any man foolish enough to give him the pleasure of fighting him! But also, we follow the story of Long & his crew, as they conspire to discover the intentions of the great eight noble houses of the capitol... The death, humor, sharp wit, and enticing revelations that follow them kept me hooked the way through, cover to cover. A great read, and highly recommended!

Review by Christopher H.: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Captivating characters ... Reviewed in the United States on May 23, 2014. Verified Purchase. I have to start by saying that I'm not a reader or fan of these fantasy style of books at all. I read a great deal, but they have never appealed to me. Yet I have to admit that I really enjoyed this book, and the earlier book in the series - Steel, Blood & Fire: Immortal Treachery, Book One (Volume 1). Mr. Batchelder creates characters that you really care for, and this is in spite of their colourful and (not always) desirable qualities. I found myself drawn into their respective stories and struggles and reading on for sometimes more hours than I had to spend to follow their exploits. I am looking forward to the third book in the trilogy with enthusiasm. Thank you, Mr. B! Great fun!

Review by Gjohncoe: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Great second book. Reviewed in the United States on August 28, 2015. Verified Purchase. This is a great second book of the trilogy which first started with the book Steel Blood & Fire which was also one heck of a great read, this book starts off some months later after the first ends. I really like the author and his flow with words and action, if you are in this genre looking for a super read, get the first book of the series and then this one. It is great story telling. You will not be sorry.

Review by Keyser Soze: 5.0 out of 5 Stars, Just as good as the first. Reviewed in the United States on January 20, 2016. Verified Purchase. It is honestly amazing to me that these books are not more popular. The story is simply one of the most entertaining I have read.

Review by Amazon Customer: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Must Read! Reviewed in the United States on January 28, 2015. Verified Purchase. Very imaginative book. Thought the first one was great too! Can't wait to read number three!

Review by Amazon Customer: 5.0 out of 5 Stars, It's easy to see that the author's writing has matured.

Reviewed in the United States on January 20, 2016. I can't for the life of me remember the last time I read a book of 600ish pages so quickly. I finished it in two days (in two 12-hour bouts). As Flies to Wanton Boys by Allan Batchelder is a page-turner if ever, I read one.

The story in this second installment of the Immortal Treachery series is totally different when compared to the first book. It's easy to see that the author's writing has matured. The stuff that made the first book so good -witty dialogue/banter, over-the-top gory action scenes, a mysterious world full of fantastical creatures and weird and scintillating magic- is still there, but everything feels just a tad more fleshed out. The point of view characters are "ensouled" (for a lack of a better word). They each now have their own distinct personality, their own past, and act under their own (often selfish) motivations. Characters that played a secondary role in the first book now make the move from relative obscurity into fame (or infamy). Personal favorites are the idiotic Spirk (there's more to this guy than meets the eye), the best-actor-in-the-world (according to himself) Rem and, inexplicably, the troubled Captain Kittins. Of course, the (surviving) heroes of the first book also shine in this book. Tarum 'The Reaper' Vykers is as arrogant, belligerent, proficient and devil-may-care as ever (although there's a lot more introspection on his side now). Aoife has evolved from a somewhat weak character, ruled by events around her, into a powerful player of her own; a magnificent force to be reckoned with. Vykers' resident Shaper Arune, as witty (and sometimes snide) as ever, faces a thorny conundrum, which is infuriating for her, but very interesting for the reader. These old acquaintances and newly fleshed out characters together set the stage for an engaging story.

Vykers and his posse -among whom we find Aoife, the Historian and Three- goes on a quest to find and retrieve the Queen, who has suddenly disappeared from her palace. The Reaper, still being wounded after his battle with the End-of-all-Things at the end of book 1, sets sail for a mysterious continent to the south where his prowess is being tested like it hasn't been tested before. Meanwhile, Long Pete and his crew are ordered by the Queen's household to infiltrate the Eight Great Noble Houses to find out if one of them has something to do with the Queen's disappearance. Each infiltrator has to walk a fine line, as it cannot be made known that the ruler of the Kingdom has disappeared, lest chaos ensues.

This book has anything a great fantasy book needs: a relentless warrior, going on a quest to save the Queen; a Gentleman Basterds-like infiltration scheme with amazingly high stakes; and above and beyond it all the machinations of Greater Powers: the Fey stir, the race of giants come forth from their crags and crannies, and Gods and Goddesses step onto the stage to take matters into their own hands. This is a must read for every fantasy fan.

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Fantasy (Dark)

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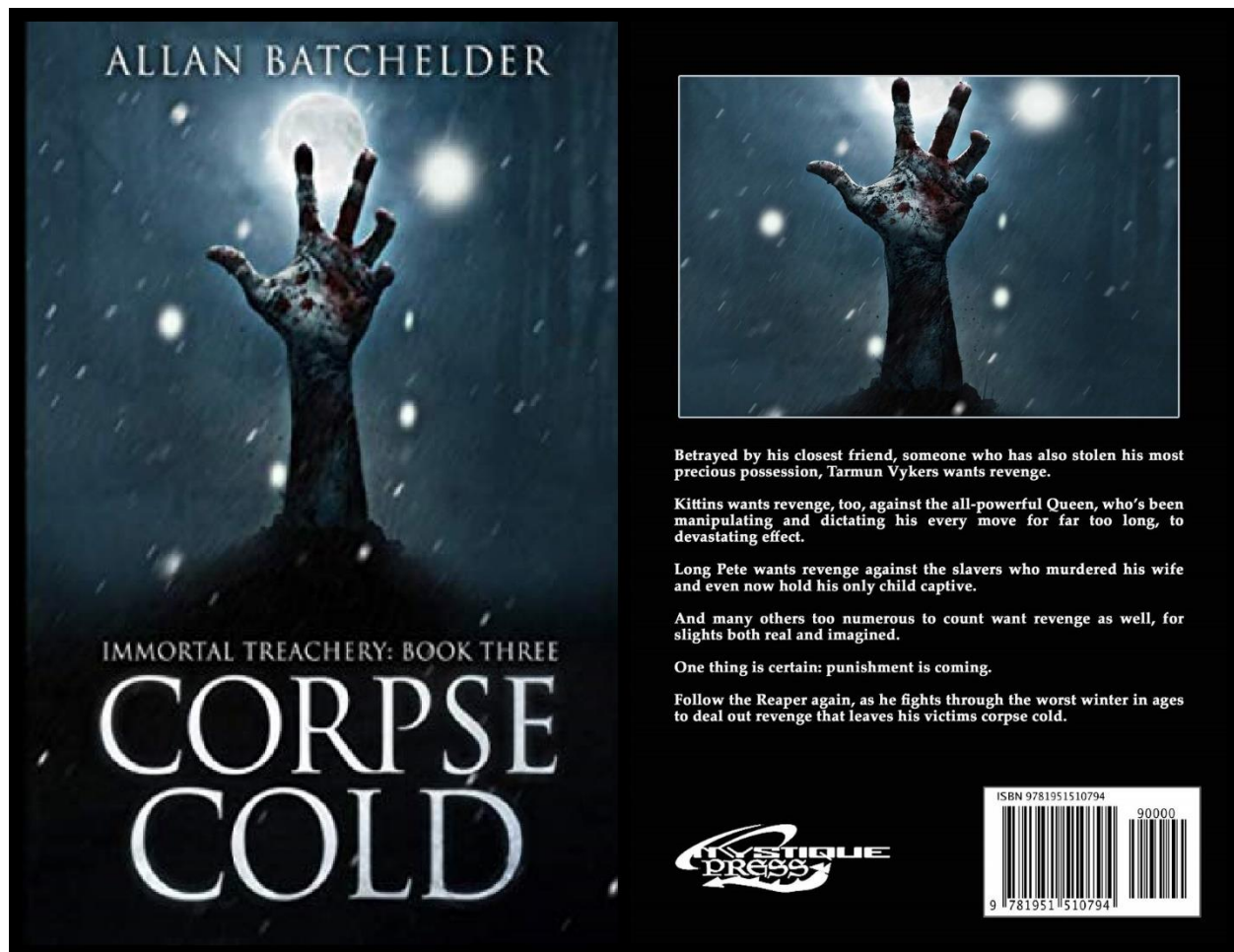
https://www.amazon.com/Flies-Wanton-Boys-Immortal-Treachery-ebook/dp/B07LDLQBW3/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Audio Book:

https://www.amazon.com/As-Flies-Wanton-Boys-Treachery/dp/B08QDNKKJF/ref=tmm_aud_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Customer Ratings:

https://www.amazon.com/Flies-Wanton-Boys-Immortal-Treachery/dp/1949914216/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=#customerReviews



Corpse Cold by Allan Batchelder.

Immortal Treachery Book 3.

Betrayed by his closest friend, someone who has also stolen his most precious possession, Tarmun Vykers wants revenge.

Kittins wants revenge, too, against the all-powerful Queen, who's been manipulating and dictating his every move for far too long, to devastating effect.

Long Pete wants revenge against the slavers who murdered his wife and even now hold his only child captive.

And many others too numerous to count want revenge as well, for slights both real and imagined.

One thing is certain: punishment is coming.

Follow the Reaper again, as he fights through the worst winter in ages to deal out revenge that leaves his victims corpse cold.



Review by Flem6pack: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Vykers is needed yet again! Reviewed in the United States on November 18, 2015. Verified Purchase, Long Pete's life is turned upside down. His apple farm is abandoned as his family is split up by circumstance and kidnapping. His crew volunteers to help him find his wife and daughter, but Long Pete is in the thick of things as far as politics and intrigue go too, Kittins, part of Long Pete's crew has become a tool of the Queen too, giving in to his dark impulses and being sent on suicide missions that he somehow survives. He is now known as the "Dead One." Tarmun Vykers has been betrayed by his Shaper, a woman that lived in his head for years. He has been healed, but only so that he can serve the Queen. The End is back, as his core was saved from his defeat in book one, but he is changed. Aoife is coming into herself and her new powers but torn by feeling for Vykers that she cannot get over. Secrets are emerging about the Virgin Queen and why she has not participated herself in ridding the world of the End, but a Goblin and the weapon that harmed Vykers will figure into this battle, once and for all! Highly recommended, great Fantasy fun!

Review by Carrie Blair: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Read This Series! Reviewed in the United States on February 10, 2019. Verified Purchase. I'm almost finished with Cold Corpse, and I am loving this series. The pacing of all these books are fantastic. From Page 1 you're thrown right into the story, and you can't catch your breath until the end. Allan Batchelder has created a fantasy world that is Fresh and exciting. Where as a lot of fantasy books get bogged down with pages and pages of explaining to you about the world in which you're in, Immortal Treachery reveals a little bit of it at a time through the rich characters that inhabit this land. I can't wait until I read the next one and a bit saddened there are only two more to go. Fun read.

Review by R. Sherwood: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Best Book In Series...So Far! Reviewed in the United States on July 24, 2015. Verified Purchase. We're back! "Corpse Cold" is just spectacular. I was more than a little worried with the cliffhanger our author left us with at the end of, "As Flies to Wanton Boys." How was he possibly going to get out of that one? Well, he did it and he did it with aplomb! The latest installment of, "The Immortal Treachery" series is sublime. This book has it all; amazing action, inventive locations, myriad twists and turns and, most importantly, Batchelder's trademark wit. I think it may be his best book

in the series as he has taken the characters he so carefully crafted and placed them in incredible peril and took us along for the ride. I cannot recommend this book enough and I cannot wait to see what happens next!

Review by Berserker: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. More Reaper please!!! Reviewed in the United States on September 27, 2015. Verified Purchase. The Reaper is one of my favorite characters in a fantasy series in years. Loved the first 2 books and I hope there is more to come from our 'hero'. Things are never easy for our gang but the great thing about the series is how it all comes together. Kinda like old Seinfeld episodes the way it all fits together (w/o the slapstick of course!). Awesome series!

Review by J Galt: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. I really enjoy the combination of Grimdark and humor. Reviewed in the United States on May 19, 2019. Verified Purchase. Really good series. I've read all 4 books (#4 twice) and I'm looking forward to number 5!

Review by Amazon Customer: 5.0 out of 5 stars highly recommend. Reviewed in the United States on November 17, 2015. Verified Purchase. Another imaginative book in his series. Each book captures the thoughts of the characters in different ways and keeps the reader interested. Highly recommend this strange imaginary world for people who like fantasy novels. :-)

Review by Amazon Customer: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Incredible book! Reviewed in the United States on April 26, 2016. Verified Purchase. The characters are among my favorites in all of fantasy. Fast paced plot that had me staying up late. I find it surprising that this author hasn't received more recognition.

Review by Amazon Customer: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. As I regard MBotF as the best epic fantasy series out there. Reviewed in the United States on January 22, 2016. If you'd sit me down in one of those interrogation rooms -single table, two chairs on opposite sides, single light bulb above it; you know what I mean- and asked me to name a fantasy franchise similar to the Immortal Treachery series, then I would say it resembles Malazan Book of the Fallen (albeit in a condensed form). Praise indeed, as I regard MBotF as the best epic fantasy series out there. Sure, Batchelder's books are nowhere near the size of Erikson's tomes, but the content shows quite some parallels; bizarre (but fun) magic, tons of interesting creatures and races, witty banter, great humour, Gods meddling in mortal affairs, explosive action.

Now, normally I'm loathed to compare series from different authors, especially when the comparison is between an established bestseller writer and an indie author. However, I feel I can safely discard that inhibition whilst reviewing the Immortal Treachery series. It's just so freaking good. When reading some tracts I was actually more enamored by Batchelder's books than by Erikson's. "Why is that"? You may ask. Well, for one, Batchelder doesn't waste time on a gazillion forgettable POV characters (something a lot of great fantasy authors tend to get caught up in). There's a cast of about 8 POV characters and all are interesting in their own right. Furthermore, Batchelder switches between these POVs with a remarkable timing; not so fast that you don't get engrossed in a character, and not with too big intervals, so you don't have the risk of getting fed up with a certain character. This is brilliantly done in my opinion and I'm gonna go out on a limb here and say I've never read any fantasy series where this was handled so well.

I will not go into too many details regarding the plot, magic-system, world, characterization etc. Everything that was appealing in the first two books in the series is still present in Corpse Cold. For detailed thoughts on these aspects, I refer you to my reviews of Steel, Blood & Fire and As Flies to Wanton Boys.

However, I do have some short remarks specifically about *Corpse Cold*: Vykers faces a truly taxing situation. It's the biggest pickle he's been in up to date. What ails our taciturn protagonist? Well, suffice it to say that he's somewhat 'out of sorts' (can't say anything lest I spoil it). But the Reaper shines as never before in *Corpse Cold*. New and old hitherto relatively obscure races enter the scene and bring a vibrant new impulse to the fantasy world Batchelder created. And Gods pop up left and right to cause mischief for mortals and fey alike.

And Allan, you wretched, wretched man... did you study at the University of Insufferably Scintillating Cliffhangers or something? You can't just give us a revelation like that at the end of the story and expect your readers to keep their cool until book 4 hits the shelves! Argh!

I'll conclude by saying I sincerely wish that the *Immortal Treachery* series becomes more widely known to the greater fantasy world. This series deserves to be read and appreciated by fantasy lovers around the world. I can't wait for book 4!

Review by Nathan Evan Tepp: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Another Gem from Allan! Reviewed in the United States on December 20, 2022. If you love a good revenge story this is the book for you!

Review by Molly R.: 5.0 out of 5 Stars, Revenge served cold - and clever. Reviewed in the United States on January 16, 2019. Catching up on this series again. Great to revisit these characters! They felt like old friends. In this one there's a definite "revenge quest" (sometimes mixed with rescue quest) theme going on, with all kinds of characters furious at the damage they've taken from all kinds of others. But they come to a tangled common focus by the end of the volume, to resolve things once and... well, not exactly for all. Because another thing we're learning in this world is that even the dead have a way of coming back somehow (which is sometimes good--I was happy about one of them in particular!), and that the gods are all around us but have limited powers and knowledge.

My favorite aspect was watching these separated groups of characters meet up at last, some for the first time, some in at-long-last reunions. I got more emotional than I expected to at a couple of such scenes toward the end. We get to know the giants a little better in this one too, and they turn out to be possibly more civilized than most humans, which was cool and intriguing.

I also really like that Allan keeps the scenes concise and quick, so that even though it's epic fantasy, it doesn't have that epic-fantasy feel, no meandering descriptions of scenery and history. And still, plenty of irreverent humor, which I love. (Spirk in particular cracks me up.) Looking forward to books 4 and 5 to see what else shakes up this world!

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Fantasy (Dark)

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Kindle:

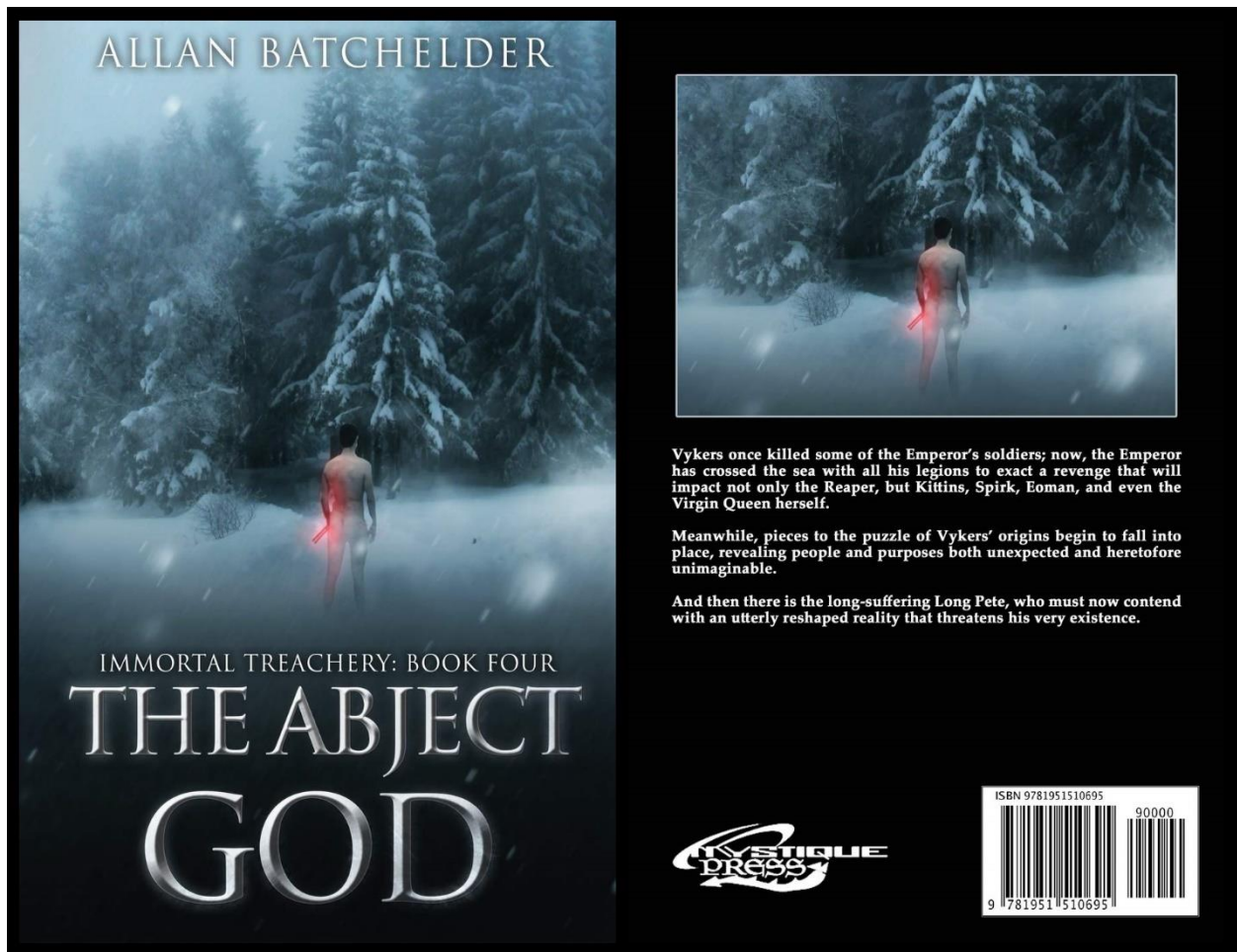
https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07LDLDRM/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_tkin_p1_i4

Audio Book:

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Customer Ratings:

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The Abject God by Allan Batchelder.

Immortal Treachery Book 4.

Vykers once killed some of the Emperor's soldiers; now, the Emperor has crossed the sea with all his legions to exact a revenge that will impact not only the Reaper, but Kittins, Spirk, Eoman, and even the Virgin Queen herself.

Meanwhile, pieces to the puzzle of Vykers' origins begin to fall into place, revealing people and purposes both unexpected and heretofore unimaginable. And then there is the long-suffering Long Pete, who must now contend with an utterly reshaped reality that threatens his very existence.



Review by Sneaky Burrito: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Wonderful plotting, fast pace, and I was interested in all of the characters. Reviewed in the United States on January 3, 2017. Verified Purchase. First off, this is the fourth book in a series. There might be spoilers for books 1-3 below. I'll try to keep that sort of thing at a minimum, but it is not completely unavoidable. Also, please note that you will want to read books 1-3 before starting this one. This definitely builds on past books in the series and doesn't infodump about the world, nor does it recap the past books within the main story. (I prefer this strategy on the part of an author. I would rather have to figure out a few things or be forced to remember -- or look up -- a few things, than be continually beaten over the head with the same information.)

I found this to be the easiest book in the series to get into. I was reading along, about halfway through, and I realized that I was interested in ALL the various POV characters. You know sometimes there will be chapters in a fantasy novel you just want to skip (e.g., Quentyn Martell in *A Dance with Dragons* or various random Aes Sedai in the *Wheel of Time* books). But I actually didn't find any chapters like that here. That meant I got through the book a lot faster. I think part of the interest on my part was because each character had an interesting scenario. Although the various storylines were unrelated at first, too, I liked the way everything tied together in the end. It wasn't too convenient but rather made sense in the context of the story, and to me, it speaks of careful attention to plotting and planning on the part of the author.

There are actually quite a few POV characters here. Most of them you will know from the past books, although there are a few new faces. Of course there is Tarmun Vykers. He still likes to fight (and kill), but he shows what I will call a softer side (for lack of a better term) in this book as well, when he stops to help some villagers defend themselves, and it makes him more sympathetic than he otherwise might be. He doesn't remember much about his past and he spends much of the book traveling to seek out answers. There is an episode early on where he is disfigured, and what happens after that sets the stage nicely for an event later in the book (and said event also ties up a loose end from a previous book in the series). I will say, I was a bit surprised by Vykers's last scene, but I don't think it came out of nowhere, and I think we will learn more about it in the next book. And it did have some good shock value.

And there is also Long Pete, who has just found out (at the end of book 3) that he is the god Mahnus, reincarnated. He spends a lot of the book trying to figure out what he is capable of. He is, to me, a bit more sympathetic than Vykers, because he lost quite a lot with the revelation about his nature. I enjoyed reading about his transformation and his increasing confidence in his abilities. I was, at first, shocked by

the task he sets one of his former companions near the end of the book, but I realized that one of the parallel storylines (with the Queen) was setting this sort of situation up all along.

We are introduced to the Emperor from the other continent. There is quite a lot of internal monologues in his scenes, but I found that I enjoyed the way it was written, and there isn't really another convincing way to spread that information. The Emperor has invaded the continent where our other protagonists live (I am not trying to be vague and I haven't forgotten anything -- at least I don't think so -- but it has been established that the residents of our protagonists' continent don't know the name of their land). I love the progress of the invasion -- it is anything but typical for a fantasy novel. I love the reactions of the residents who are displaced, of the soldiers trying to defend their homeland, etc. It seems, even with a few defeats, that the invasion is unstoppable, but the Emperor has a weakness that ends up being pretty significant, and I like how it is introduced.

There is a storyline with the giants, who are traveling together and seeking out more of their kind. When a challenge to the giant leadership emerges, things do not go as expected for the winner. There is also a storyline where the Svarren become involved with the war effort and I have to say, I liked reading about the Svarren more in this book than in the previous ones. Both of these plots, while not the major focus of the book, were well-integrated into the overall narrative structure.

Kittins, Spirk, Ron, Rem, and Yendor are back, and they are up to no good (well, Kittins is actually serving a useful function with respect to the city of Lunessfor's defense and recruits his former comrades to help). But Spirk, Ron, Rem, and Yendor are wildly successful in spite of their general bumbling, drunken, inept, etc. personal qualities. These scenes are probably the most fun to read.

And this is not even all the POV characters. There really is quite a lot going on in this book, but never so much as to become confusing, especially if you are familiar with the characters who appeared previously and some of their particular skills and traits. Although I think the book is fairly long, I got through it in a matter of just a few days, which is not something that happens often for me.

I've offered some commentary on the characters and plot. The setting is pretty typical for fantasy -- pseudo-medieval-European with cities, farms/fields, etc. You can fill in a lot of the details on your own if you have read much fantasy. The pace is great -- there are hardly any slow times at all. There are a handful of typos but really, no more than for a traditionally published book. The editing is, overall, pretty good. There is a lot of violence, some pretty graphic, and there are definitely a few four-letter words. These things work, for me, in context. But I am not easily offended, and some violence and dark humor is needed in a book classified as grimdark. The writing handles both the more upbeat, hopeful scenes (especially from the earlier part of the book) and the graphic violence well.

Anyway, this review is getting as long as a book, so I think I'll conclude now. This series is getting better as it goes on. I rarely read self-published fiction, but I'm glad I stuck it out through this series (the first book was a little difficult for me to get into). Looking forward to the next one.

Review by Captain 5.0 out of 5 Stars. The Abject God makes the Immortal Treachery series even better. Reviewed in the United States on January 19, 2017. Verified Purchase. The Immortal Treachery series is the best grimdark epic fantasy being written, not merely the best indie series. The first book, Steel, Blood & Fire, is one of the 10 best fantasy books ever written, and this fourth book, The Abject God, takes the story to a new level of exciting action and explosive revelations. Several new major characters are

introduced, and their story arcs are blended seamlessly into the story and makes it even more enjoyable. There are some shocking developments involving major characters that you won't ever see coming. This is one of those rare middle books of a series that are even better than what has gone before.

Review by R. Sherwood: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Batchelder nails it. Again. Reviewed in the United States on January 2, 2017. Verified Purchase. The Abject God: Immortal Treachery, Book Four is a fantastically fast paced, thrilling whirlwind of a book. Batchelder has upped the ante in this offering by placing his extraordinary characters into extraordinary circumstances. The Abject God is filled with shocking turns and thrilling scenes. A highly entertaining 5-star addition to the Immortal Treachery series. Heart-poundingly brilliant, the tension was palpable, and the action is non-stop. The ending will leave you wanting more, and I cannot wait to see how Batchelder wraps up this masterful series with book 5. The Abject God is truly a fantastic novel and a totally intense read, which I couldn't put down.

Review by J Galt: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Great Series - Highly Recommended. Reviewed in the United States on April 12, 2017. Verified Purchase. I've read all the books in this series, and I really enjoyed them all. There is lots of action, good character development and a nice low level of humor throughout the book. The book can be pretty funny, but it never turns into a farce...just the right amount of humor, violence and a touch of romance even.

Review by Kindle Customer: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Best. Series. Ever. Reviewed in the United States on July 26, 2018. Verified Purchase. I've just recently finished my third read of the series and it is by far the best fantasy I've read. Vykers is the ultimate hero and complete destruction in one character.

Review by Carrie Blair: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Don't want it to end! Reviewed in the United States on October 13, 2019. Verified Purchase. Just finished The Abject God. Wow! This series just keeps getting better. Game of Thrones has nothing on Immortal Treachery. Tarmun Vykers is the ultimate anti-hero. Can't wait to see how Batchelder ties this all up.

Review by Sean: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Just as good as the other books in the series. I'm looking forward to the next one. Reviewed in the United States on January 27, 2017. Verified Purchase. Well done!

Review by S. E. Britten: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Grim Better'n Anything? Reviewed in the United States on January 12, 2020. While some struggle and fail to handle to revelations of the last entry in the Immortal Treachery, Vykers, The Reaper, continues ever onward with workmanlike pragmatism. Mysteries are deepening, however, about the world surrounding these characters and about Vykers himself. Honestly thought this was the best entry in the series so far. The Emperor provides a terrific departure from previous villain The End-of-All-Things, terrifyingly sane or perhaps a whole other breed of madness. Characters and events come back into play in unexpected ways so there's plenty of surprises. And it felt like there were many more moments of humour, which were very welcome among so many grim moments. Like previous entries, felt like there was enough material for two or more books. Just a great, really worthy fantasy series.

Review by amaggitt02: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Okay... Reviewed in the United States on September 9, 2018. I didn't even realize I was finished reading... These are some great books that I've read. Now what will I do?

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Fantasy (Dark)

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Audio Book:

https://www.amazon.com/Abject-God-Immortal-Treachery-Book/dp/B0973DC3VX/ref=tmm_aud_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Customer Ratings:

https://www.amazon.com/Abject-God-Immortal-Treachery/dp/1951510690/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=#customerReviews



Tarmun Vykers, the Reaper, has battled his way across time and two continents, toppling kingdoms and empires alike and killing untold thousands in the process. And he has never really known why.

But he's about to find out.

And with this new knowledge must come a reckoning—with the Queen, who has manipulated Vykers every step of the way, with the Emperor, who would take what is rightfully the Reaper's, and even with the gods themselves.

It is time for the Reaper to do what he does best.



The End of All Things by Allan Batchelder.

Immortal Treachery Book 5.

Tarmun Vykers, the Reaper, has battled his way across time and two continents, toppling kingdoms and empires alike and killing untold thousands in the process. And he has never really known why.

But he's about to find out.

And with this new knowledge must come a reckoning—with the Queen, who has manipulated Vykers every step of the way, with the Emperor, who would take what is rightfully the Reaper's, and even with the gods themselves.

It is time for the Reaper to do what he does best.



Review by Robert Alan Barnett: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. Fun read! Reviewed in the United States on February 11, 2023. Verified Purchase. Fun read! I read all 5 of Mr. Batchelder's 'Immortal Treachery' books, back-to-back. The characters are layered and interesting. I did have a bit of trouble keeping the myriad of characters straight, but that may be a fault of my learning style. I would heartily recommend the series to fellow Fantasy lovers, especially those like me, who love digging into a long series. (This is Laurie Barnett, borrowing her husband Robert's Kindle, and he's happy to finally get it back!).

Review by Thorin: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. The reaper is a butcher of men, and he does not hold back for this, his final battle! Reviewed in the United States on June 19, 2020. Verified Purchase. We join Tarmun Vykers for his bloodiest quest yet—ending the cycle of godly contest that has long subjected humanity to eons of hapless slaughter. Rising from the revelations of the last book, Vykers finds his destiny in the maw of slaughter itself, in doing so learns the nature of reality, himself, and the place of humanity itself in the designs of the created cosmos. What he learns can only be rectified by blood, and so the Reaper reaps; the final battle has come, and Vykers has a key part to play...

The events of the immortal treachery series come to a fiery end as the emperor Mendis bears down upon the city of Lunness for with an army the size of which the world has never seen before. United against him comes every fighting force the rest of the world can throw at him, a ragtag conglomerate of giants, svarren, and the forces of the very forests themselves, keen on repelling the invader from the last stanchion of humanity left upon the war-torn continent. We follow Long Pete, Kittins, and others as they desperately get their city into fighting shape, hindered by the clandestine machinations of the goddess-queen, Alheria herself, intent on turning events to her own, mysterious ends. All forces told, we are left with a battle of proportions truly Epic, truly fantasy, and truly grim-dark. With a cinematic, satisfying close for the Reaper himself, The End of All Things is a must-read for any fan of Batchelder or the Immortal Treachery series.

Review by amaggitt02: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. One of my favorite series! Reviewed in the United States on January 27, 2020. Verified Purchase. I've been waiting for this book. Still a great read as the previous books. I was supposed to receive a notification from Amazon when this book was released..... I enjoyed reading from beginning to the end.

Review by S. E. Britten: 5.0 out of 5 Stars. A Fitting and Epic End. Reviewed in the United States on June 16, 2020. "What happened here?" "I did." After journeying with Vykers and his sometime-companions for so long, we finally come to some solid conclusions about our anti-hero and the nature of his world. We come in at Vykers at what may be his lowest, which would really be saying something. Not physically but mentally he seems at the end of his rope. Of course, nothing can keep a good... whatever he is, down for long, but this is a more introspective Vykers and one content to take less of a central role in some ways. Alheria is a very satisfying villain. After seeing her move the chess pieces around the board from a distance through most of the series, here we get a much closer look at her motivations, thought processes, and planning. And there's a huge cast of characters returning from earlier entries as well as a few new faces. Vykers' tendency to attract all sorts of unusual companions like flies to wanton boys despite his rampant misanthropy is thoroughly lampshaded. Besides all the character journeys there is a war going on, after all. The action in this last entry is suitably epic and more than a match for anything previously seen in the series, the momentum does not let up. My personal favourite scene though has to be the long-awaited sparring session between Vykers and the Dead Un, Kittens (which one suspects Batchelder included expecting just such a reaction from fans of the overarching series).

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Kindle:

https://www.amazon.com/End-Things-Immortal-Treachery-Book-ebook/dp/B07ZTR3K6Y/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=The+End+of+All+Things+by+Allan+Batchelder&qid=1602529251&s=books&sr=1-1

Customer Ratings:

https://www.amazon.com/End-All-Things-Immortal-Treachery/dp/1952979595/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1602529251&sr=1-1#customerReviews



About Allan Batchelder: Allan is a professional actor, educator and former stand-up comedian. In addition to *Steel, Blood & Fire*, *As Flies to Wanton Boys* and *Corpse Cold*, he's also written plays, screenplays, online articles, dialogue for computer games, greeting card sentiments and more.

Steel, Blood & Fire has been praised by Kirkus, Midwest Book Review and Fantascize.com. Allan holds a Master of Fine Arts in acting from the National Theatre Conservatory and a Master's in Teaching from Seattle Pacific University. He is a huge fan of Shakespeare, Steven Erikson, Joe Abercrombie, Glen Cook, George R.R. Martin, Tad Williams, and R. Scott Bakker.

Allan lives in Seattle with his wife and son, where he enjoys walks on the beach, reading in the garden and puttering around on his computer. Oh, and naps. He LOVES naps. In fact, he's probably taking one right now.



Amazon Author's Page:

https://www.amazon.com/Allan-Batchelder/e/B00AXP2EKQ/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?qid=1496859326&sr=8-1

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