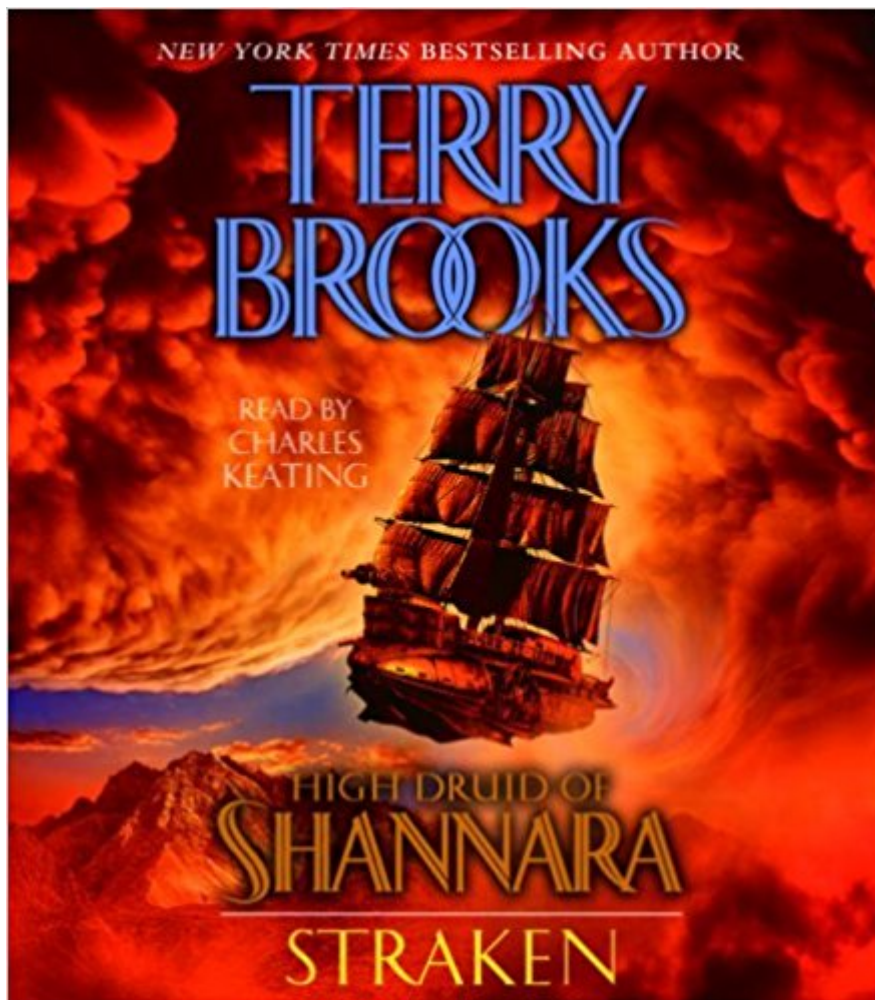




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# High Druid Of Shannara: Straken



## Synopsis

The High Druid of Shannara trilogy draws to a thrilling close as a young hero nears completion of his trial by fire, a banished ruler fights for her life in a wilderness of dread, and forces of darkness and light square off in a battle unto death for the right to absolute rule. Prepare to be spellbound by the masterly hand of bestselling legend weaver Terry Brooks, conjuring at the peak of his skills. For reasons known only to himself, the King of the Silver River has charged young Penderrin Ohmsford, barely more than a boy, with the daunting task of rescuing his aunt, Grianne, Ard Rhys of the Druid order, from her forced exile in the terrifying dimension of all things damned: the Forbidding. With the noble dwarf Tagwen and the prodigal elven princess Khyber Elesedil by his side—and with the outcome of the bloody war between the Federation and the Free-born at stake—Pen has accepted his mission without question. But not without risk . . . or sacrifice. Because Shadea Ru, the ruthless Druid responsible for imprisoning the true Ard Rhys and usurping leadership at Paranor, has sent her agents and assassins in relentless pursuit of Pen and his comrades. And in securing the talisman he needs to breach the Forbidding, Pen has paid a devastating price. Now if the Free-born forces already decimated by the Federation's death-dealing new weapon should fall, Shadea's domination of the Four Lands will be assured. Nothing short of Pen's success can turn the tide. But Pen's challenge grows greater when he learns that his parents, Bek Ohmsford and Rue Meridian, have fallen into Shadea's hands. He must try to help them—but once within the walls of Druid's Keep, where Shadea's minions and dark magic lurk at every turn, Pen's survival is far from assured. Yet it will all pale in comparison to the horrors that wait inside the Forbidding—horrors poised to break free upon the Four Lands when the time is right. . . .

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In bestseller Brooks's satisfactory conclusion to his High Druid of Shannara trilogy (after 2004's *Tanequil*), young Pen Ohmsford retrieves the "darkwand," whose magic will allow him to enter the Forbidding and find his aunt Grianne Ohmsford, the Ard Rhys of the lawful Druids and the Straken queen. Meanwhile, though the elven army has been defeated, Pied Sanderling leads a desperate (and well-depicted) commando-style operation to destroy a secret superweapon of the Federation. Pen's parents are simply trying to find their son. While the author may not equal the wit of his earlier *Magic Kingdom of Landover* series, his characterization has grown substantially more sophisticated over the years, and both his optimism about the triumph of virtue and his avoidance of graphic sex and slaughter make this series an excellent starting place for younger readers wishing to explore high fantasy. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Brooks concludes the High Druid of Shannara trilogy, which begins with *Jarka Ruus* (2003) and continues with *Tanequil* (2004), in an equally rich and riveting high-fantasy style. Young Pen Ohmsford, now armed with the darkwand he obtained from the ancient sentient tree *Tanequil*, is taken to Parador by Druids who have been pursuing him, is imprisoned, and is deprived of the darkwand, his only means of crossing over into the Forbidding to rescue his aunt Grianne, held captive by a demon. Can Khyber Edessedil, wielder of the Elf Stones, rescue him? The demon that passed through to the Four Lands when Grianne was taken is still working to destroy the barrier between the two worlds. Shadea, the false leader of the Druids, and Federation prime minister Sen Dunsidan continue their machinations aimed at destroying the elf and dwarf populations and expanding their sovereignty. All characters remain true to their already established identities, and Brooks unerringly weaves the many threads of his complex saga into an intricate and colorful tapestry that, taken with the previous books, casts the expected magical spell over the reader. Sally Estes Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This is the third and final book in this set. By set I mean that Terry Brooks writes 3-4 books sets within the greater story of Shannara. Anyone reading this because you liked the TV show, should definitely read the series through. You might be surprised to learn that the TV show was not starting from the beginning and you'll be pleasantly surprised that the quality of the book and story are much greater than the show. If you've read my reviews of the first two books, you'll know that I really like this set. I have really enjoyed all the books in the series but I think that while this isn't my favorite story, that it's some of his best writing so far. I'm re-reading the series, to catch up, after an extended lapse from reading Mr. Brooks. From this point forward, as well as my reading of the first three prequel books, I'm in new and unread territory. That's really exciting. So, as to why I think this is some of his best writing in the series so far. I think it's some of his best because of the response it invokes with me. Everyone responds differently based on their moral compass and life experience. It may not affect some of you like it affected me. You may have had similar reactions earlier in the series. For me, though, these (3) books are the first of his to evoke a visceral reaction. Where I felt deeply enough about a character or situation to pull back and say, "No, don't let that happen". All of the previous books have been good. Like I said, this isn't even my favorite story so far, but the quality of the writing is higher. It's not as safe. In all the previous books I've felt like it's one of those tv shows where you know that you're favorite characters going to survive, you just don't know how. You guys know what I'm talking about. Superman is going to be brought down by kryptonite and beaten to a pulp, but he's going to make it. It's called "Superman" for goodness sake. It's just a matter of how he'll make it. That's why I think the latest movie was so stupid. You know what I mean, though. It's not like Game of Thrones where it was just such a shock when the first main character dies. Then GRRM starts going through them like a gardener weeding a flower bed. Even when a character has died, previously in the series, it felt deserved and timely. I won't spoil anything, though I think if you're reading this review that you've read the ones before it, but anyone familiar with the series will remember an epic battle, in a castle above a certain jungle that certain book was in. Any characters that may or maynot have died went out having achieved their lifes ambitions. While I like the first type of writing, it's not going to give you the shock and awe that something like GRRM's first main character going down is going to give you. I think this series does so. While it's not as graphic as GRRM, it plays it safe and leaves it up to your imagination, but it still puts those moments in there and I think it's more impressive to evoke those feelings without being specifically graphic. So yes, I highly recommend this book, as well as the rest of the series.

Why give this trash three stars if I have trouble reading it? Well, break it down to components. We

are introduced to Pied Sanderling in Book 2 and meet him again in Book 3. Well, his story is very interesting, I enjoyed reading it although it broke up the continuity of the plot. Brooks goofed, I wanted Pied and Troon to have a whole book to themselves. Why put them in this series, what have they to do with Pen and Grianne? Dunsidan, yes, he is a minor character, essential to Moric, but little suspense is developed, Brooks is not his usual self here, and both time and space are wasted on a good story deserving of a better treatment, and all to no purpose. Then we have two other characters deserving of better, and more, treatment, the demon Riverine should have a book of his own and hopefully he gets killed. and Weka Dart is a very intriguing figure, he may need a trilogy of his own but Brooks has backed himself into a corner, these two characters, interesting as they are are confined to the Forbidding and unless Brooks breaks his own rules for the confinement they must stay there. Can he write something as fascinating as Shannara for the Forbidding? He has, perhaps, given himself some freeway in his Genesis series with the moving of the Ellcry's Tree during the flight of the elves. Then there are the Rock Trolls. Ermadec and Alatine, brothers and rivals for the Maturen. Will we know any more of this? Do their fights signal intense competition or is it just brotherly love? Brooks' writing seems to have degenerated lately, is he growing old or is it lack of interest, writer's block? He has generated a load of interest in this series, too many questions, not enough answers, good writing in spots but too much is foreshadowed or even indicated, losing suspense and even creating boredom. Characters are mishandled, almost all other reviews note this, I hope Brooks reads them and takes note. We can only hope for more books with improved plot and suspense. His characters are good, I hope we see them again.

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