



Soulrazor

Steven Montano

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The war continues...

Eric Cross and his team of elite mercenaries are the bane of the Ebon Cities. Armed with the cutting-edge arcane weaponry of the Southern Claw, Cross and his crew – Black, Kane, Ronan, Maur, Grissom and Ash – have become a veritable thorn in the side of the vampire armies.

Now the team is tasked with halting vampire activity near the remote city-state of Fane, where the Ebon Cities have teamed up with a former Revenger in search of a deadly weapon called Soulrazor.

To make matters worse, something sinister has happened to Cross, and the key to his salvation is somehow directly tied to the Ebon Cities' new soldiers: a host of necrotic angels who bear traces of divine power.

Cross and his team must travel across a blighted wilderness and do battle with a vile array of enemies as they race not only to save the city of Thornn from total annihilation, but to rescue Cross' very soul from an enemy more powerful than he could ever imagine...

Soulrazor Details

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From Reader Review Soulrazor for online ebook

Gautam Surath says

There we go! Steven makes a comeback. The text continues to be extremely descriptive to the point of being unimaginable but I guess that's his style of writing. But the good thing here is that Steven has discovered a plot that begins to span a longer arc and it's really interesting. He has also chosen to create a team rather than focus only on Cross and it clearly works. We get Black's POV and it is as gripping as Cross's. Of course with the landscape he has created (The Black) he is free to screw around with just about anything so there is a complete disregard to any logic anywhere but that does not take away from the fact that every page has tons of action and drama. Soulrazor is Steven going back to the success of the first book and making it stick!

Shannon Gambino says

Each book in the BLOOD SKIES series has its own heartbeat and personality. Though all three books have their own storyline, Mr. Montano's construction and connection from one to the other is superb. Unlike its peers, SOULRAZOR takes the reader time traveling at warp speed through the eyes and visions of both Eric Cross and Danica Black. Altering the past to change the future, Cross, along with his team, fight against all odds to find Soulrazor. SOULRAZOR is much like the others with battles against the evils of The Black; however, instead of feeling as if you are fighting next to Cross, you are wishing you could fight for him but coming up short. Intense, dark, and gritty are almost limiting when describing SOULRAZOR. I hope the fourth book is released soon because I do not like the state Cross was left in at the end of SOULRAZOR. My favorite character has been lost and needs rescuing from the claws of his destiny. I have never had a series character grip me so intensely, and I'm loving it!

Paul Nelson says

I have simply been blown away by this series so far, the post-apocalyptic world that Steve Montano has created is vivid, imaginative and on finishing have immediately started the fourth novel The Crown of Ash.

After the events of The Black Scar, Cross has left the Southern Claw and now works as a mercenary taking on the most dangerous missions.

His team consist of Danica Black, a witch and former warden of the prison complex Black Scar.

Mike Kane, a tough guy gladiator and former inmate of Black Scar. Both Black and Kane contributed to the Southern Claw victory in the icy ruins of Karamanganji.

Ronan a twin blade yielding psychopathic mercenary with a warriors code of honour, always wants to be in the thick of the action and hates being left behind.

Mauer a Gol engineer and pilot, a dwarf with an uncanny knack for repairing things, he refers to himself in the third person which confused Kane so much during his job interview that he thought he was talking about somebody else. Mauer adds some humour to the proceedings and is a character that deserves a run in the series.

Grissom is a half-doj, over 8ft tall and always heavily armed, and finally his sister Ash, a human witch, tracker and healer with an almost silent spirit.

The book starts with Cross' team undertaking a dangerous mission for the Southern Claw to a Bonespire not far from their hometown Thornn. Intelligence discovered that the Bonespire housed a new Ebon Cities

weapon, Cross' mission find and destroy. No one had ever breached the Bonespire before, Mauer remains in the ship and the team gains entry guided by a soulstone to the centre complex. They are soon discovered and must battle vampires all the way, aided by their spirits the action is violent, intense and incredibly well described you feel you could actually be there.

Cross gains entry to the central chamber and is confronted by a horrific site, a chamber of dead girls chained and suspended above pools of arcane black liquid, they are identical to the woman in the ice from the previous book and the white mother, the revered leader of the Southern Claw. Cross is soon doing battle with two powerful undetectable mages, Cranos Thane a Southern Claw defector and converted vampire and Korva a renegade revenger and soon all hell breaks loose.

The team gain entry to the chamber as do a host of vampires and gargoyles as the fighting escalates. Cross falls into a pool of the dark ichor and here his visions and nightmares start, glimpses of the future and a fight that he must undertake alone.

And this is just the first four chapters, this book just drags you in and does not let go. As Cross starts to feel the effect of the arcane black liquid, he goes to see Warfield, a witch who deals in the shady black market side of Thornn. She tells him his spirit is sick, the fluid is making her more powerful and less controllable, she tells him about the black blood acting as an arcane conduit used to reanimate and give arcane ability and the vampires are making an army of avatars capable of handling this necro arcane cocktail.

Given there next mission, Cross goes alone across the territory to an excavation project, suffering visions and frightened that his spirit will harm the team.

Danica Black realises where Cross has gone and the team set out to follow, she takes leadership of the team and the majority of the story is told from her viewpoint. This move is definitely good for the story as she is a different character to Cross' good guy hero type. Danica Black comes with a lot of baggage and is deeply flawed but this is a great expansion to the story as she steps up to the mark and goes all out to rescue Cross.

The book wonderfully described by the author, a world that has been cleaved, and then fused back together by a blind hand resulting in a melding of dimensions or realities and the explanation of this catastrophic event is finally revealed. This and the act of Cross fighting to save the world is pure genius and I cannot recommend this highly enough.

Soulrazor continues as with the first two books with some fantastic action sequences and there is an element of replay as time lines are continually crossed but it is handled superbly both by the author and from Cross and Danica's viewpoint.

In true modern fantasy fashion not all the major characters survive and it's interesting to guess who out of the team is going to succumb to an eventful death first but by the end of the book we develop a core of characters, all look worthy to maintain the high standards set so far in the series.

So onto the next book to find out what's happening with Cross and his team, this is fast becoming one of if not the best series of books I have read.

Steven Montano says

After reading this book 17 times, I still didn't hate it. For a writer to say that about their own work has gotta be worth 5 stars, right?

Tatiana Maria says

Best of the *Blood Skies* series thus far. I really appreciated that more than just Cross continued into this book from the last. The ensemble cast here is strong. There's more of a feeling of getting to connect with the people for who they are, not just what they're going through; as I read the beginning third of the book and experienced Cross going about his day, I was struck by how much he has matured and grown since the first. I loved the first plot event and how it impacted him. I loved even more that a second PoV was provided in the novel -- and the character who provides it is interesting, flawed, and quite *human* beneath the armour they wear.

Soulrazor builds on all the plot events we've read in the last two books, weaving them into a satisfying read. Montano's writing has matured to a level where he balances action, description, and dialogue well, and I found the pacing to be spot-on. There were good places to pause in my reading for the night, and there were places where I couldn't fathom setting my Kindle down (and walked up the stairs with my eyes focused on the screen because *ohmigod no that character must, must walk away from this please*).

The only real complaint I have is a formatting choice -- from around the 2/3 mark of the book, a majority of the rest is written in italics. This is great for a dream sequence, but it really does weary the eyes and lose its impact after awhile. The content of these pages was excellent, however, so I have no complaint there.

If, like me, you found the second book to be a let-down after the first, then keep reading. You won't regret picking Soulrazor up.

Troy Lefman says

This is a cool addition to the Blood Skies series. This one had the addition of new characters, newish adversaries and some new info on what has happened before. The first part had me wondering what extra goings-on was lurking. Lo and behold, something pretty big was in the wings. Steven did this without too much exposition or any foreshadowing (that I could find.) It felt like things were too quiet. I liked the twists with Soulrazor, though I expected a name for the third blade. Nice use of time travel; it wasn't the typical use. I really like that we find out the truth of Cross's spirit. Still not who I thought it would be, but very ... interesting.

Maša says

Time-travel tends to get on my nerves because it so often leaves glaring plot-holes and fucks up a decent story, but luckily that didn't happen here. Sure, it opened up a hell lot of questions (is Cross really responsible for The Black?) and left a pretty mess in its wake, but hey... this IS a "dystopian fantasy sci-fi military novella" - that's kind of expected around this point. Characters really grew on me, which in my opinion shows further progress in characterization because in the first book I didn't care about them most of the time.

Although I enjoyed this book, Black Scars stays my favorite one of the series (for now).

Mihir says

Full review over at Fantasy Book Critic

Overall Rating = 3 & 1/2 stars

OVERVIEW/ANALYSIS: Soulrazor is the third book in the Blood Skies series and after reading the first two books in the series, I was very excited to see where the author was taking the story as in the ending of Black Scars, the protagonist had come at a crossroads of sorts and found new company. His struggles have not lessened though but he has more shoulders to share the burdens.

The book story begins twenty-five years after the events of the Black and Eric Cross now has his own mercenary team to handle. They are going after certain targets and getting good at their work when they unwittingly discover something more horrifying than the vampire overlords. Eric manages to save his team however learns that he might have over-extended his abilities. Things take a topsy-turvy turn as he's forced to search for the answers on his own. This gives rise to another POV character and Danica Black gets a chance to showcase her leadership skills and the readers get to know her thoughts while she lead the team into a maelstrom unlike they have ever faced in their lives.

Soulrazor is the book I was waiting to read since a long time as it deals primarily with the reason the world is the way it is now. It gives us the *raison d'être* for the occurrence of the event known as the Black. The author has hinted at certain things in the past two books however the revelations in this book come entirely out of the left field. Previously we had Eric Cross as the sole narrative driver however this time around he shares the focus of the story with Danica who's as different from Cross as chalk is to cheese. I very much enjoyed this change of POV as Cross can be thought of a goody two-shoes but Danica is an anti-hero and one whose cruelty can only off set by her bravery. This was a sharp move by the author and does create an interesting dynamic to the plot. On reading the book it becomes very clear as to why this move was precipitated by the author, which bring me to the main plot thread of the story.

The book deals with a lot of the why of the occurrence of the Black and I can't say I'm thoroughly elated with all that was revealed. I think that it might work for certain readers but many might be disappointed by the happenings in the story. I'll clarify that the story is not different from its predecessors in regards to the action, pace and plot twists however the revelation and the main twist of the story is something that didn't work for me because I'm not a fan of *deus ex machina* resolutions and this twist has a partial DEM feel to it. The ending then further sets up the story that is to come but at this point one of the biggest mysteries of this series has been revealed and that kinda takes precedence over the end twist of the story. The book however is still evenly paced and in regards to the action sequences continues on from the preceding titles. The character cast is also suitably widened as we get to know newer members of the team however I must warn the readers that the author is a ruthless one and so be prepared for unexpected character deaths.

It was a book that I anticipated a lot from but it didn't exactly deliver on the promise. I think that was more due to personal reasons and I'm still excited for this series though. I will review the fourth book soon to find out what Steven Montano has planned next with Cross, Black and his darkly alluring and dangerous world.

Jennifer Carter says

Best one yet!!! I am totally hooked on this series and about to start book four! I must admit I was going to download the fifth book and realized it will not be available until 2013!!!!!! WHAAAATTTT? I almost cried! These are some of my favorite books!! I have enjoyed every one of them more than the last! Steven Montano is definitely a recommended writer for me! I do not hesitate to tell others about these books! I am so very glad he decided to stop balancing sheets and write! Selfishly I hope he never enters another office to do anything other than write!!! All three books have been page turners but the last one was an extreme ride! Loving staying up late reading again because I don't want to put the book down and miss what is going on!!!

Danielle Young says

I fall more and more in love with the Blood Skies series with every book. Steven Montano has a way of silently ensnaring you in his world of dark fantasy. And the deeper into the series you get the deeper your connection with the story and the characters go. I know I for one am a huge fan of Eric Cross.

Cross has not had an easy time working for the Southern Claw, as we know from the first two books Cross goes through some pretty hefty crap, but it is his deep rooted determination that keeps him going. But he no longer works for the Southern Claw. Instead he heads up a team of mercenaries that are contracted to do the dirty work for the Southern Claw. But their team is the best. No doubt about it. And so as the best they get the worst and most impossible jobs. In Soulrazor Cross and his team of mercenaries are on the mission to stop the Ebon Cities from getting their hands on the deadly weapon the Soulrazor. While on this mission something ominous happens to Cross that changes everything. In Soulrazor Cross is put through incredible tests that will challenge his ability as a soldier and as a mage, with the ultimate price being his soul.

I love Cross. He is one of those characters that you like in the first book but by the time the second book is done you are completely attached. He is that guy that creeps up on you. He's the guy your mom always told you not to tease because when he grew up he was going to knock your socks off. Yeah, he's that guy. And it has been incredible to read his journey. And it has been one hellacious journey.

Cross has been beaten, bruised, and tormented never quite getting his happy ending. Oh sure he survives, for the most part. But for Cross it is just one battle after another. And it just gets worse in Soulrazor. Cross is put through so many tests as a hero it amazes me that he hasn't broken yet. And every time I thought things were going to get better for Cross in Soulrazor I found myself yelling at Steven Montano as I was sorely disappointed. Granted it makes for one hell of a story, but come on give my guy a break!

But Cross is not the only one who is tested in this series. You see no character escapes Steven Montano's creative wrath. Every character is put through trials that test all their abilities. And it is in these moments that we truly see the type of characters that they are. This is when Steven Montano separates the men or women from the boys. And in Soulrazor I was happy to see Danica in more of a starring role. I have to say that she is growing on me. There was a part of me that wanted Steven Montano to let Cross kill her in Black Scars, but now I am glad that he didn't. (Good thing I didn't have a say huh?!).

In Soulrazor we get to see Danica take more of a leadership role as certain events caused her to be in charge. And I was surprised to see how remorseful she was for her past behaviors. I loved reading some of the chapters from Danica's perspective as it really allowed me to learn what made her tick. And I will just say that what I found out shocked the hell out of me. So well played on Steven Montano's part, I am now a Danica fan.

Of course I was happy to see the return of Kane one of my favorite warriors. I love Kane's care free attitude and his ability to always crack a joke. He is fierce and is definitely not someone I would mess with. Because

under that casual attitude is a scary dude who would certainly kick your ass if he had to. But there's more to Kane than just comedy and his superior fighting skills. Underneath all that he is a tender guy who had his heart broken. He is incredibly loyal to those he calls his friends, is trustworthy, and can forgive those that have wronged him. But I would love to see more of Kane. Soulrazor also introduces us to a slew of new characters that I am quickly falling for. Especially Maur the Gol, he is awesome.

Steven Montano never ceases to amaze me as book after book he writes a more incredible adventure. I am so wrapped up in his world that I don't think I will ever look at vampires or magic the same way again. But I'm okay with that. Steven Montano has always had the ability to surprise me in the Blood Skies books, but I have to say that with Soulrazor the surprises literally took my breath away, leaving me completely flabbergasted. And knowing Steven Montano the surprises aren't over yet. I for one can't wait to see what he has in store for Cross, especially with the reintroduction of a certain character, as his story continues in Crown of Ash. I'm sure there will be more yelling involved, but I know that Cross can take it, he is just that kind of a guy!

Soulrazor is an absolute action packed adventure that will have you on the edge of your seat, will take your breath away and will have you yelling at the skies. Put your imagination to the test and dive in to Steven Montano's epic fantasy and be swept up in a world of magic and vampires. A world that seems like a cross between a western and the future a world that will leave you reeling for days.

*Received copy of book from author in exchange for an honest review

Mike Berry says

Quite simply, I loved Soulrazor. The author has taken the best elements from the previous formula and given them a refreshing new twist: The darkly poetic style that I enjoyed so much in the first two books is back, this time more polished than ever before. The action sequences, for which Steven Montano is rightly becoming recognised as something of a modern master, are also back, also better than ever. Montano's twisted and despoiled Earth is as dark and dangerous as ever. But this time the storyline is less linear, more unpredictable, and in Soulrazor it shines in its own right.

Eric Cross's experiences while lost in time and space, repeating a nightmare groundhog day that must ultimately end in disaster, really had my brain aching at points. The dreamy unreality of these parts of the book, and the literary skill with which they are rendered, serve as evidence that the author has some genuinely impressive tricks up his sleeve. I can't wait to see what's next!

James Groenestein says

After finishing the first 2 in the series, I was absolutely teeming with anticipation to get into this 3rd instalment.

The writer has great descriptive imagination when portraying a scene - I was instantly transferred in to the scene and could picture the entire plot.

It was great to learn of the teams life since they returned to Thornn - the way the characters have progressed and grown is brilliant.

The story unfolds and twists and turns in several directions - its quite a task to keep up but not so that it ruins the story. I was most shocked at the twist about 70/80% (I won't spoil it for you by saying what it is) and it brought a whole new side to the plot.

I noticed that there is a 4th book (called Crown Of Ash), not sure if it's out yet but I will definitely be researching to see if and when it does. There are also 2 short stories that accompany the series called Tales Of A Blood Earth that I'm definitely be checking out also.

This is, to summarise, a brilliant 3rd instalment to an amazingly well written series - definitely well worth the read and recommendation!

Scott Whitmore says

Hypnotic. That's how I described "Soulrazor," the third book of the Blood Skies series by author Steven Montano (@Daezarkian), on my Twitter feed.

Everything I said about the second book, "Black Scars," in my review can be repeated here. Mr. Montano's prose exploits and explores the senses. The reader will see, hear, feel, taste and smell everything in this wonderfully dystopian world; so much so that we almost become supporting characters.

I can honestly say I've never read another author who puts me into the story so completely as Mr. Montano.

And what stories! The setting is Earth, but not an Earth that any of us can easily recognize. Twenty-five years earlier The Black happened, a cataclysmic fusing of our planet with untold numbers of other worlds. The Black added species, continents, cities, and — most important for the survival of humans — magic to our planet while wiping out or altering our previous existence.

In "Soulrazor" we learn more about what The Black is and where it came from, once again following Eric Cross, a warlock and former soldier of The Southern Claw, the alliance of humans formed to battle the vampires of the Ebon Cities. What's that? Oh, yes, there are vampires and all manner of undead creatures roaming about thanks to The Black. Bloodwolves and giants, too, which makes the lives and future of humans somewhat tenuous.

After the events described in Black Scars, Cross left the Claw and formed his own mercenary team with former prison-warden Danica Black and Kane, who was once her prisoner. Soulrazor opens with the team conducting a vital surveillance mission for the Claw; what they find sets the stage for the rest of the story, which includes all the thrilling action and adventure I've come to expect from this series.

In a slight departure from the first two entries, much of this story is told from Danica's perspective, which I enjoyed. Having brutalized her fellow humans (including Kane) in the prison and served as an ally to the vampires, she is a deeply flawed character, which makes for great reading.

No spoilers, but there is also an element of time-travel in "Soulrazor," which makes perfect sense in the scheme of things with The Black. I've never been much of a fan of "temporal distortion" stories, (looking at you, Star Trek), but it is handled so well here, and fits into the story perfectly.

If you haven't already, I highly suggest starting with Blood Skies and then continuing with the subsequent books in this highly original and exciting series. The fourth book, Crown of Ash, is on my To-Read List and I'm looking forward to continuing the journey.

Dianne says

Dark, intense, creative! A group of mercenaries fight against vampires to help save humanity. The leader, Eric Cross has disappeared, but the fight goes on. Very dark, loved it!

Lou says

Once again Steven Montano has achieved a superbly written book. This captures your attention and imagination; and draws you into the plot from the start. There was more than one occasion where I wanted to be either alongside Cross fighting with him or fighting for him.

In this instalment of the Blood Skies Series Cross is no longer a member of The Southern Claw. Instead Cross is heading up a team of mercenaries. The Southern Claw have contracted Cross and his team to stop a deadly weapon from falling into the wrong hands. The weapon: Soulrazor.

But Steven Montano just isn't going to give Cross or his team a break! Cross once again has his mind, body, soul and life endangered; and his warlock skills are put to an even harder test.

Danica Black has a bigger role in this book; which for her isn't necessarily a good thing! But for us as readers means there are even more twists and turns to keep us engrossed. Kane also features more in this book. Kane brings a touch of light heartedness to the story with his attitude and ability to always crack a joke; regardless of his ability superior fighting as a hell of a fighter.

This is one series of books that I would definitely recommend reading if you haven't yet. Soulrazor from me receives 5* rating. Up to this point this is my favourite book, but that may change after reading the rest of the series. I guess we'll have to wait and see.
