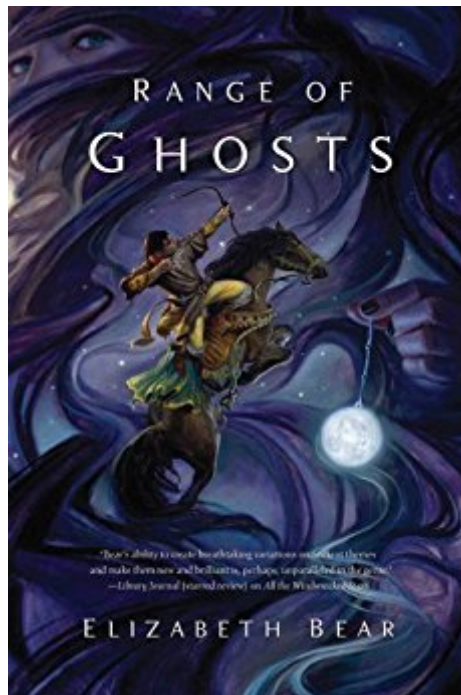




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# Range Of Ghosts (The Eternal Sky Book 1)



## Synopsis

A powerful new fantasy from Hugo award-winning author Elizabeth Bear, *Range of Ghosts* creates a world both deep and broad, where a sorcerer-prince seeks world domination for the glory of his God. Temur, grandson of the Great Khan, is walking from a battlefield where he was left for dead. All around lie the fallen armies of his cousin and his brother who made war to rule the Khaganate. Temur is now the legitimate heir by blood to his grandfather's throne, but he is not the strongest. Going into exile is the only way to survive his ruthless cousin. Once-Princess Samarkar is climbing the thousand steps of the Citadel of the Wizards of Tsarepheth. She was heir to the Rasan Empire until her father got a son on a new wife. Then she was sent to be the wife of a Prince in Song, but that marriage ended in battle and blood. Now she has renounced her worldly power to seek the magical power of the wizards. These two will come together to stand against the hidden cult that has so carefully brought all the empires of the Celadon Highway to strife and civil war through guile and deceit and sorcerous power. *The Eternal Sky Trilogy* #1 *Range of Ghosts* #2 *Shattered Pillars* #3 *Steles of the Sky* At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

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## Customer Reviews

You have to love a man who names his heroic horse "Dumpling". You have to love a princess who trades her broodmare status for the hope of power. You have to love a quest group that consists of three women and a dude who respects them all. If you go to describe this story, it is easy to get tangled in the A plot and the B plot and trying to figure out what's about to go on, but when you're reading it, it's very seamless. As you realize that all these plotlines are converging, the story seems to pick up speed and momentum, tumbling to a not-quite-conclusion. As usual, Bear's writing shows the toolmarks of master craftsmanship, and once in a while has showstopping images: "As the sky dimmed, the glow they twinkled in was cast by candles, fixed in glass jars to the shells of ambling tortoises, so as the sun set, the whole of the garden was filled with a moving light. Birds sang themselves to sleep in the tree branches, and the twilight made a canopy overhead." And one that would be a spoiler, but eek, hungry ghosts! One of the things I enjoyed most was the exploration of fertility and the consequences of chosen infertility. There were so many details that bespoke long thought about how this could be made to work in a pre-industrial era. There are apples studded with nails to build up iron, and an emphasis on the consumption of soy to provide phytoestrogens. The real chance of death by infection. But the beautiful payoff for all of this is here: "She folded her legs one atop the other and brought her hands before her groin, where the center of creation had once lived and lived no longer. There was the essence of wizardry. It was an act of creation; it was a pure delight in defiance of hunger, and thirst, and sorrow, and the inevitability of death and devouring. As she had sacrificed the power of creation with her body, so she gained the power of creation with her mind." As a woman and a mother, I thought this was immensely moving, to take all the iconography of childbearing and turn it into magic available only to those who choose not to bear. The story is obviously headed toward the second book, but I feel ok about that. In the meantime, I keep having moments where I forget I've finished the book and I look forward to reading more about Samarkar and Temur and Bانش. Will they defeat the rakh-rider? Is Temur about to have some 'splainin to do? Where will they travel next? I'm looking forward to finding out.

I just finished reading this wonderful fantasy by Elizabeth Bear and at first I decided not to review it. I was not sure how to describe it, or how to explain exactly why I loved it. However, I wanted to pass the word along with the other reviewers, because I feel as if this is a book that should not be missed. This book is so different than the normal fantasy books I am attracted too. However, this

was a recommended book on a review web site, and it just caught my eye. I am so glad I gave it a chance. There is magic, sorcery, action, romance and an array of cultures and world building that was outstanding. I was not sure if I would like it when I first started it, but once I got into the flow of the writing and the names of the characters, it was such a joy to read. I never knew what was around the corner and I got so attached to the characters. Even the villains are so interesting, I just could not stop reading it. There was a cliff hanger ending, so if you are looking for something that is stand alone, this may not be for you, but I cannot wait until the next book to see not only what happens to the characters, but what the author is going to come up with. It is beautifully written, just a wonderful read.

I went into this book having only read Ms. Bear's *Hammered*, a definitely different genre (but also a good read for cyberpunk fans). What I loved about the book, was it's departure from normal fantasy fiction norms, while keeping the same sense of adventure. Instead of knights and castles and dragons, we have horse archers, hidden mountain fortresses of assassins, and rukhs. The characters were very well developed, and even the antagonists make you believe they are acting for reasons that make sense to them, not just twirling their mustaches and projecting evil for evil's sake. The thing I loved the most was the evident research done in creating the backstory and setting. Hints of a parallel world to ours, with echos of Mongols, Hashashins, Caliphates, China and more (I would love to know from Ms. Bear if the lizard people are Sarmatian based, it does seem so), all fleshed out. And the tiny details are what really hooked me. Hints as why nomads drink fermented mare milk, the discussion of wound heat, all of these made it seem like a truly real place if only magic existed. Based on what I read, I've purchased both of the sequels and hope the story continues to thrill me as much as the first book had.

This story is way too slow. It was literally 1/3 of the book before any of the protagonists decided to take strong action--around 112 pages of 334. It's hard to like characters that are walking with no plan (Temur) or waiting to see if they have magic power (Samarkar). And then the rest of the story is pretty much traveling. They have a few fights on the road and share some backstory with each other. But until the very last 5% of the book no real progress is made. And the ending isn't one at all. It's not even a pause. It's just a break until book 2. Why it's not 1 or 2 stars is the wonderful cultural descriptions. It's an Eastern to Middle Eastern medieval world, not European, and it's subtle and nuanced. But that's pretty much it. Some good scenes but lots of reacting rather than pursuing a goal.

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