

# A book begging for literary interpretation

**W**E'LL START OFF this week's column with an update on old friends who first appeared in this column the summers of 2008. Doreese Severe and Sherry Garr are still hard at work improving and marketing their reading program for beginners, "See ABC's." They have developed a free mini See ABC's Reading Workshop that is now available on their Web site, [www.seeabcs.com](http://www.seeabcs.com). This video features Doreese and Sherry teaching a group of moms and their children how to use the reading program.

Doreese writes in her press release, "You will see how imagination is such a powerful teaching tool in learning to read and, most exciting, you will see how a new technique, 'Imletteration,' eliminates the need to memorize sight words (rule breakers), unlike other methods. 'See ABC's' brings learning to read to the pre-school level."

Now on to this week's featured review ...

**"Servant of a Dark God"**  
by John Brown  
(Tor, 2009, \$25.99)

**UTAH WRITER** John Brown makes his debut with a novel rich in fantasy tradition and lore, while at the same time providing a new and interesting tale and characters for the serious fantasy reader. The storyline is so complex — almost to the point of needing a map to keep track of all the characters and events, which the author conveniently provides at the end of the book — that you may want to start there. The story, events and characters are well crafted and this make-believe world becomes quite believable and frightening under the skillful pen of this author. Don't expect to figure this one out in advance — just go with the flow and enjoy the journey.

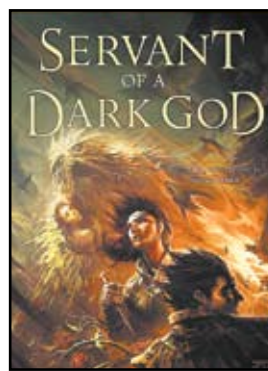
Talen, a young Koramite, is caught up in the mystery and

## Regional Reads

By Charlene Hirschi



black magic of a world that exists only in Brown's imagination. There is danger lurking at every turn, behind every tree and from every source. Most fearsome of all is that nobody is who they seem. Even though the society is made up of set laws and order, where powers are delegated according to the class and station, nobody seems to be playing by the rules. There are those who are known to be the enemy — the Bone Faces, the Fir-Noy and the Sleth — but there are also those who hold and hide secrets about their identity,



## Meet the author!

John Brown will be meeting the public and signing books from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 22, at the Logan Borders.



who are trusted members of society, the protectors of the people, and who may not be at all who they seem.

A few excerpts to pique your interest:

"Alarm scuttled like crabs up his (Talen's) neck. This was the fat season for pillaging. Of course, the Bone Faces hadn't attacked Stag Home or any of the surrounding villages for years. But that's precisely why Stag Home would be a perfect target. The villagers would have grown overly secure, just as Talen had. ... The Bone Faces took more than livestock and goods. They took men, women, and children. ... He scanned the fields again, this time looking for signs of a raiding party."

"The Bone Faces would make them nine-fingered

chattel. They would rape the women, force those they thought were pretty into being concubines. And when they finished, they would draw the Fire of the people to build their armies. They would levy taxes of Days until the people began dropping like flies."

Meet a creature named Hunger. A man (?) constructed of earth, rock and wood, whose "hairy" body is covered with grass and whose appetite cannot be satisfied, no matter how many souls he may consume. "He was taller than anyone ... but his arms and legs were thicker than they should be. And his face — it was all wrong. He had a mouth that was dark, ragged, and huge. A mouth that seemed to crack his head in two. ... A tuft of hair on the creature's arm caught

fire. The flame sputtered, flashed, and receded into red and yellow sparks that fell to the ground. Then (he) realized it wasn't hair. It was grass. Patches along its arm had burned, some of them still full of dull red sparks. A clump of smoldering grass fell from the creature's arm to the ground."

This book is full of allegory and symbolism just begging for literary interpretation. Hunger himself seems to represent all of the ravenous and out-of-control appetites of man: greed, gluttony, power, domination and on and on. The "Seven Creators" seem to parallel the Biblical seven days of creation: the first representing the creation of the earth; the second the vegetation of the earth; the third the animals; the fourth the fishes and creatures of the sea; the fifth the fowl; the sixth representing humans; the seventh, you decide — "was misshapen and black. Upon its head sat a crown of thorns (Christ?) and about its chest was woven a breastplate made from the bones of a thousand animals (anti-Christ?)." And who is Regret? Sleth? What is a Weave? Steeped in lore and the occult, yet fresh as this writer's imagination.

Like another reviewer, I picked up this book with reluctance, but by the third chapter I found myself completely under its spell, especially captivated by Talen and his family and wanting to know where this saga would take me and the characters. Think "Lord of the Rings" and "Star Wars," and you will have some idea of both the complexity of the story and the skill of the writer.

Book critic Charlene Hirschi holds her master's in English from Utah State University. She is among a number of freelance writers whose columns appear in The Herald Journal as part of an effort to expose readers to a variety of community voices. Authors, readers and editors are invited to visit [www.charlenehirschi.com](http://www.charlenehirschi.com).

## \* This week's New York Times Bestseller List \*

### HARDCOVER NONFICTION

1. "Have a Little Faith" by Mitch Albom
2. "Arguing With Idiots" by Glenn Beck
3. "True Compass" by Edward M. Kennedy
4. "The Time of My Life" by Patrick Swayze
5. "The Murder of King Tut" by James Patterson

### HARDCOVER ADVICE

1. "Guinness World Records" edited by Craig Glenday
2. "Mastering ... French Cooking, Vol. 1" by Julia Child
3. "Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man" by Steve Harvey
4. "Master Your Metabolism" by Jillian Michaels
5. "The Last Lecture" by Randy Pausch

### CHILDREN'S BOOKS

1. "Where the Wild Things Are" by Barb Bersche
2. "Skippyjon Jones, Lost in Spice" by Judy Schachner
3. "Listen to the Wind" by Greg Mortenson
4. "Waddle!" by Rufus Butler Seder
5. "Dewey (There's a Cat in the Library!)" by Vicki Myron

