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The Magician's Land: The Magicians, Book 3



Synopsis

The stunning conclusion to the New York Times best-selling Magicians trilogy. Quentin Coldwater has been cast out of Fillory, the secret magical land of his childhood dreams. With nothing left to lose he returns to where his story began, the Brakebills Preparatory College of Magic. But he can't hide from his past, and it's not long before it comes looking for him. Along with Plum, a brilliant young undergraduate with a dark secret of her own, Quentin sets out on a crooked path through a magical demimonde of grey magic and desperate characters. But all roads lead back to Fillory, and his new life takes him to old haunts, like Antarctica and the Netherlands, and buried secrets, and old friends he thought were lost forever. He uncovers the key to a sorcerous masterwork, a spell that could create magical utopia, a new Fillory - but casting it will set in motion a chain of events that will bring Earth and Fillory crashing together. To save them he will have to risk sacrificing everything. The Magician's Land is an intricate thriller, a fantastical epic and an epic of love and redemption that brings the Magicians trilogy to a magnificent climax, confirming it as one of the great achievements in modern fantasy. It's the story of a boy becoming a man, an apprentice becoming a master, and a broken land finally becoming whole.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I must agree with an earlier 3-star reviewer that I was not as enraptured with The Magician's Land as I had hoped to be--or as many other readers seem to be. I didn't buy the caper plot that animates the first third of the novel, and I really didn't buy the end-of-the-world scenario that drives the latter

half: didn't we just go through that, in *The Magician King*?? (Grossman permits a clear-headed hippogriff--or was it a pegasus?--to mutter as much, but we flail on.) Any sort of backstory or explanation for the apocalypse--and Grossman had excelled at these, on the fly, in the earlier books--is missing; he seems to have decided that the trilogy needed a big flash finish, so here it is, the end of the world, Filloragnarok. The writing degrades the closer the novel gets to its conclusion. Old characters from other books pop up for meaningless cameos. I was also disappointed that two of the possibilities I thought Grossman had so carefully set up in *The Magician King*--the transformation of the Neatherlands and the Far Side of Fillory--were barely touched upon in *The Magician's Land*. Yes, there were a few gaspable plot turns (cf. NYT review), and in the first half a few of the haunting set pieces that are the hallmark of Grossman's best writing: a segmented secret passage that includes dislocations in time and space; the excursion to Antarctica. We get a sliver of insight into Janet that we hadn't had before. And the object of the caper--that particular Fillorian MacGuffin--is worth it, even if the caper itself makes little narrative sense. Something else's that's missing: the sense of psychological depth that the development of Julia's story (not to mention her distinctive narrative voice) lent *The Magician King*.

Finishing this book last night I felt sadness. Sadness because the trilogy had come to an end and my time with these characters and this land had come to an end. And that feeling of sadness is the highest compliment I could pay to this book because that means that the story truly touched me. That's rare for a book to do and speaks highly of how magnificent this story is. I think the last time I felt that feeling was when I finished *Deathly Hallows* back in '07. Quentin was no longer a King of Fillory. Much like his antecedents of the Narnia books, he was no longer allowed to remain in Fillory and had to make his way in The Real World (no, not on that MTV show. Is it still even on?). But now he was back at Brakebills and was exploring what it meant to be an adult in the non-Fillory world. For those of you who would have wished for more writing about HP post his school years, then you will find much to make you happy here. Especially if you were a fan of Ocean's Eleven. And here we meet Plum and discover other old friends interacting with Quentin. The first half of the book is a crime caper on the Quentin side of things. But that's just half of the first half. The other half explores the goings on of Elliot and Janet and the rest of the Scooby Gang in Fillory. As an aside, the story of how Janet gets her new axes is one of the highlights of the book. And there we are also treated to a modern version of Narnia's 'The Last Battle'. Think about that for a moment. Let it settle in. You know what that means. There is a certain sense of irreverence and whimsy permeating the book. There are amusing lines with wink winks to various Fantasy series's fan bases. Things like there

being no female dwarfs because they don't exist. The book rewards those who are well read.

• "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened." • Attributed (almost certainly erroneously) to Dr. Seuss, that thought sums up my feelings as I turned the last page of THE MAGICIAN'S LAND, the gorgeous final novel in Lev Grossman's enthralling trilogy about a group of young magicians, their transition into adulthood, and the magical world that exerts an irresistible pull on their lives. • I wanted to see what happens when you take techniques and tropes from literary fiction and transport them, illegally, across genre lines, • Grossman said in a recent interview. Both in this novel and in the arc of this series, he has managed to accomplish that feat with impressive style. When the THE MAGICIAN'S LAND opens, it's been seven years since Quentin Coldwater, now age 30, was deposed from the throne of Fillory, the not-so-mythical land whose tales had been a source of fascination to him since childhood. In the real world, he has hit rock bottom. Bounced from a teaching position at Brakebills College for Magical Pedagogy, he is now • just another striver, grim and desperate. • Along with a handful of other misfit magicians, he is recruited to retrieve a mysterious suitcase and promised \$2 million in cash or gold if the caper succeeds. Things aren't much better in Fillory. Quentin's friends, Eliot and Janet, the High King and Queen, are warned that • Fillory is dying, • but they're powerless to arrest its rapidly accelerating decay as they watch the sun • spending its remaining thermal and kinetic energy on destroying itself and throwing stupendous curling gouts and fens of fire in the air and erecting a vast pillar of steam reaching up to the sky.

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