



Master of Sorrows

Justin Travis Call

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You have heard the story before - of a young boy, orphaned through tragic circumstances, raised by a wise old man, who comes to a fuller knowledge of his magic and uses it to fight the great evil that threatens his world.

But what if the boy hero and the malevolent, threatening taint were one and the same?

What if the boy slowly came to realize he was the reincarnation of an evil god? Would he save the world . . . or destroy it?

Among the Academy's warrior-thieves, Annev de Breth is an outlier. Unlike his classmates who were stolen as infants from the capital city, Annev was born in the small village of Chaenbalu, was believed to be executed, and then unknowingly raised by his parents' killers.

Seventeen years later, Annev struggles with the burdens of a forbidden magic, a forgotten heritage, and a secret deformity. When he is subsequently caught between the warring ideologies of his priestly mentor and the Academy's masters, he must choose between forfeiting his promising future at the Academy or betraying his closest friends. Each decision leads to a deeper dilemma, until Annev finds himself pressed into a quest he does not wish to fulfil.

Will he finally embrace the doctrine of his tutors, murder a stranger, and abandon his mentor? Or will he accept the more difficult truth of who he is . . . and the darker truth of what he may become . . .

Master of Sorrows Details

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Author : Justin Travis Call

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From Reader Review Master of Sorrows for online ebook

Lucy says

Thank you to Netgalley and the Publisher, Orion, for providing me a copy of this book for review. All opinions are my own.

This book was great, it had magic, great world building and it was action packed!

I will say this book does sort of throw you in and you figure things out as you read. Even after reading it I had so many questions which should be cleared up in the next books. The book has its own history which links in to what is happening. The book also has a couple of parts or extracts about the gods of the world. There are three gods and Keos is the 'bad' one. There is also Oder and his sister who are the 'good' gods. The world is based around these gods. It has a religion that follows them and prophecies which is woven throughout the book.

It begins with a birth, this child is missing an arm and so they believe he is the son of Keos. They try to kill the baby and they do kill his parents because they believe Keos is the devil like figure. The action begins in the prologue and I have to say this book does start as it means to go on. It times jumps and now the boy from the prologue is training at the academy to become an avatar. The academy believe magic is evil and annev questions this. The trials were fun to read and I loved that Annev wanted to work with people rather than trying to do it on his own. Annev wants to become an avatar and he wants to get the girl but he doesn't want to disappoint Sodor who raised him. He has to go through so much; trials, a test set by Tason, fighting a witch, learning the truth about himself and prophecy from Sodor, his duties at the academy, rivals and things just keep going wrong. The academy is attacked and he has to fight with one arm which reveals him as a 'son of Keos'. Even at the end I feel Annev is going to go through a lot more as the epilogue sets it up.

The writing flows really well and I found the action sequences to be exciting. I really loved how it was written. I loved the mentor-son relationship between Sodor and Annev. If you like high fantasy with good characters and great world building then you will like this book.

The Characters! There are so many amazing characters in this book, it would take too long to list them all.

Sodor - He is a magic priest, has the gift of Odor and he is Annev's guardian. He follows the true religion of Odor and he believes in Annev. He is there for Annev and wants him to be happy. Sodor was probably my favourite character.

Annev - Annev is the main character. He goes through so much, realises a lot and has to figure out a lot for himself. I loved that he always tried to follow his heart and didn't compromise his morals.

Myjun - she is the girl Annev loves, she is the daughter of Tosan and believes her father that if anyone is scared or missing a limb they are a son of Keos and are evil. I didn't really like her because of that.

Sraon - is the village blacksmith. He is a friend to Annev and Sodor. The rest of the village don't trust him because he is scared. He always helps Annev when he needs it and I hope to see more of him in the next book.

Nils | nilsreviewsit says

Master of Sorrows by Justin Travis Call is the first book in the Silent Gods series, and I'm pleased to say it was an admirable start. This book was very reminiscent of the earlier classic fantasy books that I used to read from such authors as David Eddings. The Belgariad by Eddings was one of my favourite series and I can certainly see many influences from that in this book such as; a prophecy, warring gods and a young unlikely hero. However, Call managed to put a modern twist to the narrative, which I was glad to see. I'd been craving to read something that was nostalgic and charming and this book did the trick.

In brief, this first book tells the story of our main protagonist, Annev; a young orphan at an Academy that trains its students to retrieve magical artefacts which have been outlawed by the religious institution. Under the surface though, Annev hides a secret deformity, he can use forbidden magic, and a prophecy states his coming will either break the world or save it. Which path will he choose?

Although the magical school trope has been used time and time again, I still found this setting and plot extremely fun and entertaining. As Annev faced trials to become an Avatar, which would lead him to be sent on artefact retrieval missions, he faced bullies, betrayal and the infatuation of young love along the way. He also faced a choice between following his trusted and fatherly-like tutor Sodar, or following his own path.

Annev was not your typical perfect at everything type of character; he was naive, angsty, flawed and often goddamn foolish. There were times when I wanted to slap him across the face to make him see sense; especially when he was pining after his beloved Myjun. I'm not a fan of romance in books, so this part of the narrative was not my favourite, but I could see that it reflected the experience of first love. However, there were other times when I was proud to see him think rationally and weigh up his options with some maturity. I felt he was a great rounded character and his coming of age portrayal was done realistically; I mean who hasn't made mistakes or been naive in their youth?

My favourite parts of Master of Sorrows lied within the world building. Most of the story is told from the POV of Annev, but there was a prologue and other breaks throughout that told the history and religious lore of the Gods. Here I could see fantastic use of Norse Mythology had influenced many of the ideas in the book. There was the Staff of Odar which only the worthy could wield, and the Hammer of Keos which could create malicious creatures. I also enjoyed how the stigma of deformities was reflected in the narrative. Any deformity was seen as a sign of a follower of Keos, the corrupted fallen God, and therefore any person with the slightest impairment was either killed or shunned. I appreciated how all this was weaved into the story and there were no large sections of info dumping.

Overall this book exceeded my expectations time and time again, especially towards the end, and I'm looking forward to the rest of the series.

Thank you to Gollancz for providing me a free ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Anna says

But what if the boy hero and the malevolent, threatening taint were one and the same?

No need to say anything more - I'll read it.

Andy Angel says

Some great ideas here and more than a few WTF did i just read moments too. Reminded me a lot of David Eddings, Robert Jordan etc but also, so much more than that. There is a rich history of Gods, Younger Gods, prophecy which makes for a quite delicious read and the idea that our hero is 'destined to be a villain' (from the ARC copy cover) makes for a different spin on things.

I'll post a more detailed review nearer to release date in February but until then i have one question...

Is it too early to say Book Of The Year 2019?

Bookdragon Sean says

This is a very strong dark fantasy debut that will appeal directly to fans of *The Poppy War* and *The Name of the Wind*. It's tense, mystical and brutal.

The novel is Asian inspired, depicting a fighting academy that has an eastern quality to it. The masters who rule their and teach their ways despise the use of magic and hoard it in their secret vault to protect the world from its effects. They hunt and kill magic users and will gladly slay an infant at birth if they bare the taint of magic. They are an order that appear benevolent but have many dark secrets they hide from the boys they claim to train for the benefit of humanity.

Driving the plot is a strong undercurrent of destiny and dark magic. Our hero (Annev) is being hunted by dark forces. Dark gods want him; they want to use him for the power he can channel. He lives in secret at the academy training to become an avatar of the order. The masters have no idea that one of their enemies is in plain sight. And this made the novel quite tense in points, there were several close moments when Annev's identity was almost revealed. Such a thing would mean his death and banishment from the place he calls home. The story took several unexpected directions, so I was certain this reveal could happen at any time.

Fans of *The Poppy War* will, undoubtedly, really appreciate this one. Both novels begin in a training academy, but slowly burst out into the real world as death approaches quickly. I really do recommend trying this if you like R.F Kuang's writing. Justin Travis Calls' novel is much darker from the outset, though he uses the school trope just as effectively. And I really liked how quickly the book moved forward, it didn't mess around as the story constantly developed as more elements were added in. It also contains a very dark and dramatic prologue, which I couldn't wait to find more about. And when the reveals came, I wasn't disappointed.

As a protagonist, Annev is the archetypal reluctant hero. He is unaware of his potential. His greatest strength is his ability to question and to think independently aside from the brainwashing that occurs at the academy (similar to Kvothe's ingenuity.) This allows him to succeed time and time again where he would potentially fail because he has not yet fully come to trust his own physical abilities. It also makes the action quite interesting as the characters begin to work together as a unit rather than as independent warriors. And I think as friendships and trust grows across books, this could become much stronger. He is quite a compelling

character, genuine and honest, so it becomes hard not to root for him. It will be intriguing to see what the dark magic he possesses does to his personality as it begins to manifest itself more strongly.

For now though this is the beginnings of a new and exciting fantasy series that kept throwing surprises my way – **a solid 8.5/10.**

ARC provided in exchange for an honest review.

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Mary S. R. says

You have heard the story before—of a young boy, orphaned through tragic circumstances, raised by a wise old man, who comes to a fuller knowledge of his magic and uses it to fight the great evil that threatens his world.

But what if the boy hero and the malevolent, threatening taint were one and the same?

Um, THANK YOU???? The hero that could be the villain and the villain that could be the hero is what **I need in every. single. book.**

Unlike his classmates who were stolen as infants from the capital city, Annev was born in the small village of Chaenbalu, was believed to be executed, and then unknowingly raised by his parents' killers.

This is **so messed up**, so twisted; it's my special meal, ready to be fully devoured in one huge bite!

Will he finally embrace the doctrine of his tutors, murder a stranger, and abandon his mentor? Or will he accept the more difficult truth of who he is ... and the darker truth of what he may become ...

Will he, indeed?? A total **must read!**

I mean, can we just talk about the fact that the series' name is so awesome??

The Silent Gods

Yes, please????

So much freaking POTENTIAL!!! I'm anticipating this!

Expected publication: February 1st 2019

P.S. When you're the first review!

Alison???? says

~~I received an ARC from Netgalley/ Gollancz (Orion Publishing Group) in exchange for an honest review, all opinions are my own.~~

3.5/4 stars

(I'm not going to do my usual organizational structure for reviews for this one (characters, then plot etc.) as for the characters, most of the main ones changed per different event in the book, so it would be a bit confusing since some were important, then not and so on.)

What I liked:

- The main aspect I liked about this book was that the story moved at a reasonable pace and there were no slow moments, where a reader could have gotten bored with reading the book. Also, the idea of having all these gods and half-gods and many different creatures in between was quite original.
- In addition, I also liked that the main character was not hugely singled out to be the "special snowflake", unlike many other books where the remaining characters other than the main one were almost hidden because of the importance of the main character.
- Furthermore, everything that had been revealed during the book, an explanation happened at once. There were no half-explained events that were going on in the book or events that were never explained, which is the case in a couple of books I've read and thus, the reader remains confused as to why it happened.

What I didn't like too much:

- However, the many names of the different creatures or characters were a bit confusing and every now & then, I had to search it up to remember who it was.
- Additionally, the event that happens at the last chapter to a particular character was a bit unrealistic given what happened to that particular character beforehand (I can't go into it without spoiling the book).

In conclusion, this book was a really good debut that I really enjoyed and hopefully, I will get to read the sequels of this series.

Unseen Library says

This week for my This week for my Waiting on Wednesday review, I really could not decide between two very intriguing fantasy novels, both of which are being released in Australia by Hachette around the same time. Therefore I decided to review both of them, and I will be very interested to see which one I enjoy more in February.

The second book that I am really excited about in the next few months is Master of Sorrows by Justin Call. Master of Sorrows is a fantastic-sounding piece of young adult fantasy fiction from debuting author Justin Call. This will be the first in a planned series of fantasy books, titled The Silent Gods, which will no doubt be released over the next few years.

Essentially, I have really enjoyed all the synopses for this book that I have read. After seeing all of them I think that Master of Sorrows has the potential to be a really great read. I am really looking forward to this book, and I think it could turn out to be one of the best debuts of 2019.

For other great reviews visit my blog at:
<https://unseenlibrary.com/>

O.R. says

Hero might be the villain? BRING IT

It's been a while since I couldn't wait for a book as much as for this one.

Countdown!

Hiu Gregg says

Review to come

TS Chan says

ARC received from the publisher, Gollancz, in exchange for an honest review.

4.5 stars.

Master of Sorrows was a remarkable debut which I simply cannot put down.

This book recalled so much about what I loved about classic epic fantasy and yet felt modern. The author has quoted David Eddings as his earliest favourite. Having read and loved Eddings' works myself, I can definitely see the influences from *The Belgariad* in this book; a prophecy, Gods and a coming-of-age tale of a young man destined for greatness. Except, in this case, that greatness may lie in the path of darkness instead of light.

As if those three elements above weren't enough to make me love *Master of Sorrows*, we also have the school trope in this story. You know the drill. A talented main protagonist trying to advance, but was constantly thwarted by his equally talented enemies, or bullies. School bullies will never go out of fashion – in books, television, movies or the real world. As a reader or spectator, it is always so satisfying when the victim overcomes the abuse, and it is especially gratifying to see the antagonists receiving their comeuppance. I believe that this satisfaction stems from its underlying message, which is one of hope, perseverance and karma.

Overused standard tropes, one might say, though I maintained that tropes existed for a reason; once upon a time, readers enjoyed reading them. The distinction lies in how well-written the story is and how well these fantasy plot devices serve to tell the story. Admittedly, originality is also usually not the first thing that I look for in a book anyway. This doesn't mean that I don't appreciate originality, I absolutely do and it does count when it comes to my overall reading enjoyment. Ultimately though, I gravitate towards compelling and empathetic storytelling. A story that can capture and retain my attention, as my mind takes flight and wanders into the imaginary world with its characters. *Master of Sorrows* gave me that experience as I devoured the novel in just two days.

Save for the Prologue and Epilogue, the story was told solely from the perspective of Annev, an orphan who was brought up by a priest and mentor, Sodar in the hidden village of Chaenbalu. Annev was an Acolyte of Faith in training to be an Avatar of Judgment of the Academy. These avatars are entrusted by the Academy to retrieve magical artifacts and bring them back for safekeeping. It is for this reason that the village is kept

hidden by magic and its existence is practically unknown to most people outside. The hierarchy of the Academy goes up the ranks of Master Avatar, Ancients and the Eldest of Ancients. And all of them will kill Annev without hesitation should his deformity, the mark of the Fallen God, come to light.

The coming-of-age characterisation of Annev was quite excellent in my opinion. His apprenticeship under his mentor, Sodar, had instilled within him moral values which are at odds with those of the Academy that will help him pass the Test of Judgment and become an avatar. As only one acolyte can pass each Test, he may need to betray his friends to do so. His determination to pass the Test was further inflamed by his love for Myjun, the daughter of the Eldest of Ancients. Ah yes, the stupidity that accompanies the flush of young love. I do sometimes feel like shaking Annev for being idiotic when it comes to Myjun. However, even though I typically don't like romance in my books and how silly characters can get when in thrall to romantic love, it is a wholly realistic part of growing up. With that perspective, I think the author did a great job in handling this tricky aspect of Annev's character development.

As much as I disliked the Annev-Myjun love story, I absolutely loved the Sodar-Annev mentor-apprentice, surrogate father-son relationship. This relationship between Annev and his mentor formed the emotional backbone of his story as far as I'm concerned. Without which, I would not have been half as invested in these characters as I was shortly into the book. Annev's arc on friendship, loyalty and kindness also played a significant role in his character development, and is especially crucial given the dark legacy for which he is supposedly destined.

I have earlier mentioned about the Fallen God. The worldbuilding in *Silent Gods* was based on the lore of three Gods – Odar, Lumea and Keos - their elements and creations. The elements of the world, *quaire* or skywater, *lumea* or lightfire, and *t'rasang* or earthblood, were each represented by these Gods (in that order). The magic system was then divided into different forms as dictated by the elemental power behind it. Throughout the book, several interludes recounted the story of the Gods and how Keos became the fallen one. These interludes helped provide history and context without having the characters going into info-dumping monologues.

There were also many unfamiliar terms which have been introduced, but not yet explained in this instalment. What I did get out of a specific narrative somewhere in the middle of the book was that *The Silent God* series will reach epic fantasy proportions. And when there was a Fallen God, there will be monsters. Witches, *feurogs* and shadow assassins were just a taste of what is in store. The woods that kept Chaenbalu hidden and safe were also strange as shadow-magic can stretch and lengthen the paths to confound travellers. The worldbuilding was fascinating, but at this early stage of the series, its intricacy still quite opaque. Hopefully, throughout this tetralogy, the intriguing complexity will give way to enlightened wonder.

The writing style is unembellished and non-distracting, which makes the story easy to read and digest. I also loved the relatively short chapters because I can easily squeeze in some reading during short periods of free time during the day. And this book certainly made me want to keep reading whenever I can, as the pacing was executed quite superbly. The action scenes were gripping and well-written, showcasing both the agility and fighting skills of the trained avatars as well as the magic of the artifacts.

This first instalment ended in a grim and poignant note, and even with a few surprises. The coming-of-age tale was wrapped up, but Annev's fateful journey had barely started. **Master of Sorrows is a brilliant and riveting tale of having the courage to find and choose one's path, and it left me wanting more.**

I recommend this book for lovers of classic epic fantasy looking for a modern voice.

You can pre-order this book from: [Amazon UK](#) / [Book Depository \(Free shipping\)](#)

You can also find this and my other reviews at Novel Notions.
