

THE BLACK MAGICIAN TRILOGY BOOK TWO

THE NOVICE



TRUDI CANAVAN

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"Even if a magician's powers surface of their own accord, he will soon be dead if he does not gain the knowledge of how to control them." Alone among all the novices in the Magicians' Guild, only Sonea comes from lowly beginnings. Yet she has won powerful allies—including Lord Dannyl, newly promoted to Guild Ambassador. But

Dannyl must now depart for the Elyne court, leaving Sonea at the mercy of the lies and malicious rumors her enemies are busy spreading ... until the High Lord Akkarin steps in. The price of Akkarin's support is dear, however, because Sonea, in turn, must protect his

mysteries—and a secret that could lead a young novice mage deep into the darkness. Meanwhile, Dannyl's first order to resume High Lord Akkarin's long-abandoned research into ancient magical knowledge is setting him on an extraordinary journey fraught with unanticipated peril—as he moves ever-closer to a future both wondrous ... and terrible.

The Novice Details

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Ésa says

How PATHETIC did Sonea turn out to be in this book?

Again, the author drags part of the story, aka where Sonea gets bullied by some of the rich, spoilt novices, out for pretty much 2/3 of the book, needlessly I may add.

I only gave this two stars because throughout the whole book, whilst the style of writing is still appreciable, I found myself completely aghast at the pathetic, lacking in backbone and self-doubting creature that she turned Sonea into!

We are talking about a young, determined individual with a lot of potential for success, the HEROINE for goodness sake, who defiantly evaded the entire Guild of the best magicians in the world, during the first book....to be turned into this pathetic thing!

Pretty much the whole book was filled with passages followed by passages of self-doubting 'but if I did this then....on the other hand, why would it matter if they thought....what if I...' questions and it just drove me nuts!

Cut out all this self thought passages for the characters crap please!

??υκ?τ? says

Olaylar olaylar demek isterdim ama bir iki ?ey hariç çok dura?an gidiyor yahu kitap. Akkarin çok h?zlı? ö?rendi mesela.Yada bütün bir kitap Regin'in Sonea ile u?ra?mas?n? okuduk durduk.Art?k son kitapta biraz h?z kazanmal? konu.Son olarak bana Akkarin'in kötü bir niyeti yokmu? da yapt??? bütün kötülükler Loca'n?n selameti aç?s?ndanm?? gibi geliyor.

Bec says

ERMAGERD I'm so intrigued by all that's happening. Going to start book 3 immediately because I NEED MORE

Elise says

After reading this book, I'm really starting to love the series. The first book didn't really get interesting until Sonea got to the Guild. With this book, though, it remained interesting from beginning to end. I can relate to Sonea's goal to be a Healer. And I really approved of Trudi Canavan's view of homosexuality that she portrayed through two of her characters. I won't mention the names here to prevent spoilers. Seeing the progress of one of those characters, both in the journey and realization of his feelings, he quickly became one of my favorite characters.

And, of course, the plot thickens. I can't wait to read the next book.

Jen3n says

It's entirely possible that I was just in the wrong mood to read this book. The first one in the series was ... okay, I guess. I thought of it as brain-dead yahoo-fair. Bathtub reading, if you know what I mean. Simplistic and derivative but harmless. I thought I saw where the author was going and was willing to follow her to the next book, should the opportunity land in my path. Well, it did and I did and here we are. Unimpressed.

The simplicity continues (all poor people noble and good! all wealthy people closed-minded and bad!) and the main character continues her journey toward becoming the world's biggest Mary Sue ever. She's not quite there yet. The author still has a chance to save her. Of course, I see by Goodreads that there are already several books in the series after this, so the chances of the main character continuing to reveal that she's the Greatest Wizard. E-var. are pretty high.

Yeah ... I'm probably taking this all the wrong way. At least I admit it.

Where was I? Oh. Right. So, this book has less of the charming character interaction that saved the first one, and a great deal of repetitive story-telling interspersed with the "shocking" insertion of a homosexual character. Bless. Is that still shocking any more? Was this book written in 1987?

Sorry, sorry, sorry. I'm all foul today. I didn't hate this book. Really, I didn't. I just didn't much like it, apparently. I felt that it was lazy in all the wrong ways.

Not particularly recommended. Unless you either REALLY liked the first book or are into stock-and-trade fantasy palaver.

Phrynne says

The second book in this series and not quite as good as the first. I felt there was not enough content for the length of the book so it dragged a bit in places. As in the first one I enjoyed the characters although I did get a bit tired of waiting for Sonea to use her powers and turn Regin into the rat that he was. (Sadly she never does). Having said all that I read the whole book in record time so it must have had something going for it. And I still want to read the next one!

Karissa says

This was a spectacular continuation to the Black Magician series. After reading the first book in the series I wasn't sure if I would continue it; but I am so glad I did. This book is much better than the first one and incredibly interesting and engaging.

I listened to this on audiobook and I really love the narrator of these books. He is a pleasure to listen to and does an awesome job with character voices and emotion. I would highly recommend listening to this series on audiobook.

There is so much tension throughout this book, it just about kills you. Sonea, Lord Robin, and the Administrator know a deadly secret about the High Lord Akkarin that they are desperately trying to keep secret. As if this isn't enough stress Sonea's fellow classmates have taken a strong dislike to her. Sonea remains admirable through the book; she is smart and resourceful but continues to get caught up in events that test her. I loved her character and my heart just broke for her throughout this book; there were a couple of times I just wanted to scream "Enough, give the girl a break and some happiness!"

Much of the story is also told from Dannyl's perspective. I adored his parts of the book just as much as Sonea's. Dannyl does a lot of traveling and ends up on a quest to trace Akkarin's travels and find out more about the ancient history of magic. These parts of the book had a lot of adventure and history involved in them and I loved them. Both Sonea and Dannyl develop love interests in this book; much of that is in the background but it was nice for these characters to have some happiness in midst of all of their trials.

The only thing that really irked me throughout this book was everyone's fear and assumption that The High Lord Akkarin was evil. Yes, Sonea saw him practicing black magic but did anyone ever try to figure out why Akkarin would do that? Throughout the book Akkarin remains aloof, intimidating, and at times strict and even a bit cruel. However, he is never outright evil and I can't help but believe he isn't the problem in this book. It bothered me that all the magicians and novices that know his secret just assume that he is evil without finding out if maybe he has a greater ulterior motive. It made me disappointed in the intelligence of the surrounding characters and seemed short-sighted to me. I was especially disappointed in Robin and the Administrator.

The other thing I found frustrating was how all the magicians turned a blind eye to how Sonea was tormented by her classmates; at times this torment is so severe as to be torture. I found it disturbing that the adults in this book are okay with the students ganging up on and torturing one young girl.

Overall aside from the above two complaints I thoroughly enjoyed the story. The whole book is written in a fantasy style that feels a bit older to me (like 90's epic fantasy) and I enjoyed it a lot. There is some excellent world-building in here along with a complex plot and characters that are easy to engage with and relate to. The book ends on a cliffhanger that will absolutely kill you; I want to read the third book immediately! I would recommend to fans of classic fantasy.

Pam Baddeley says

This is volume 2 of Canavan's first fantasy trilogy, and a much more enjoyable read than volume 1 (which had very little plot). By contrast, in 'The Novice', a great deal happens and a lot of the subplots weave into the main plot, of Sonea's experiences and progress as a magician's novice. Due to her origins in the slums, she meets a great deal of bigotry from other novices and even magicians, and is bullied by a classmate, Regin, who manages to get the rest of the pupils on his side, and later to recruit older pupils too. Each day becomes a battle for survival as Sonea is stalked in the corridors after lessons and repeatedly attacked with magic by larger and larger groups organised by this malicious novice.

Alongside this, a subplot deals with the discovery at the end of book 1, that the leader of the magicians, the High Lord Akkarin, appears to be (illegally) using black magic. At first, Lorlen the administrator involves Sonea's guardian Rothen in keeping the secret, as Akkarin is so strong that an accusation could lead to a pitched battle between him and the Guild magicians, which he is likely to win. (view spoiler).

A third thread to the story is that Dannyl, friend and former ward of Rothen, is appointed Second Ambassador to the neighbouring land of Elyne. This has been arranged by Lorlen, who recruits Dannyl in investigating libraries and other sources, for information about ancient magic. He doesn't reveal to Dannyl the real reason for this interest, but it is actually to retrace the steps of Akkarin who ten years ago returned from a similar mission, and find out if he learned his black magic somewhere on the trip. All Dannyl knows is that it is inadvisable to let Akkarin know as it might look like prying into his private business, and Dannyl has always been intimidated by the High Lord so is happy to keep the research lowkey. He makes a friend, a scholar at the Great Library in his new land, and as the story goes on, it becomes clear that this friend is gay. In Elyne, this is frowned upon but tolerated whereas in Dannyl's own country it would result in disgrace and in being barred from high office etc. In other countries, it incurs the death penalty.

In a changed premise from book 1, the reason Rothen took on Dannyl's guardianship (most novices don't have guardians) is that rumours were threatening to spoil his chances, following a friendship with another novice who was suspected to be gay. In book 1, there was no mention of this - the reason being that Dannyl was lazy and neglecting his studies, and also spending too much time in a running feud with another novice (who became the villain in book 1). As Dannyl spends more time with his new friend (view spoiler).

A minor subplot is that strange murders are happening in the city which point to a rogue magician. Lorlen starts to believe that Akkarin could be responsible.

The storytelling itself seems a little better this time though Canavan hasn't entirely got rid of the superfluous adverbs whenever anyone speaks, and also there is far too much nodding, chuckling, smiling etc, again in character dialogue. People smile and chuckle in situations where things are quite serious and it jars. However, there is a bit more tension in this book, and a definite improvement on volume 1. One blooper is that at one point Canavan forgets to use her invented terms and refers to the network of hidden tunnels outside the University as a "spider's web" instead of the invented term she usually uses for arachnids. As with book 1, I don't know why she bothered to go through inventing new names for things that sound from context and the back-at-book glossary to be mice, rats, coffee, spiders and other everyday items.

This volume didn't make 5 stars for me because it was difficult to believe that a supposedly tough slum girl would have been so timid in facing down her tormentors. Also, she seems very naïve, for example, when she first has a meal with the other novices, she answers their nosy questions frankly, admitting that she stole when a child, and when asked if she ever killed someone, that she might have because she defended herself with a knife from sexual assault once. A character who has grown up with such experiences would surely be more shrewd in her responses to the questioning by what turns out to be a bunch of spoiled brats - she could, for example, have said that she helped her aunt and uncle make clothes for a living (true) and that not everyone in the slums steals, using a suitably offended tone. And just said 'no' about the killing. As it is, the other novices immediately turn against her and follow Regin because she has put them all off. I found it hard to believe that she wouldn't have learned to be economical with the truth if not an outright liar on occasion, when she had spent quite a few childhood years in a gang, where surely such skills would have been lifesaving on occasion. Possibly the truth could subsequently have been discovered and put round about Regin, given his obsession with getting her expelled, but it seemed ridiculous that she handed over this ammunition against herself.

The bullying sessions also go on for a very long time: she initially tries to escape by extra tuition that allows her to rise to the previous class who at least are not bullies, but Regin does the same and follows, and he then recruits more and more novices to join in his attacks. The magicians do absolutely nothing, even though this is a definite breakdown of discipline on a large scale which they might be expected to frown on for its own sake despite any personal feelings about having a 'slum girl' in the University. And although she acquires a

coach to help her with warrior skills (that is, being able to defend against and make her own attacks), she doesn't go to him for help (she can't ask Rothen or Lorlan due to the situation with the High Lord) which would seem the obvious thing to do - she wouldn't even have to explain why, just that she needs to improve those skills, which is one of the threads in the story. In fact, at one point, the tutor is discussing the situation with Akkarin (who knows about the bullying but allows it to go on, to help develop Sonea's powers) and says her problem is that she is 'too nice'. This seems very odd for a girl who is meant to be a tough city kid, rebellious, and defiant of the magicians in book 1, a girl who is handy with a knife on occasion - almost as if she has turned into a sheltered rich kid herself. There is also a slight element of 'Mary Sue', in that Sonea is already stronger than a novice of her age would normally be and showing signs of developing into a magician powerful enough to eventually oppose Akkarin, though I suppose being the protagonist, she couldn't just be an average magician. But the character change isn't very convincing, and therefore I can only give the book 4 stars although I enjoyed other aspects of it.

Inge says

The Novice begins right where *The Magicians' Guild* takes off. Sonea has started learning magic and she's by far the best of her group. But because she's a girl from the slums – and therefore the victim of prejudice – she's subject to many harassments from other students, especially Regin, a boy from her class. He'll do anything to make her life a living hell and send her back to 'where she belongs'. But Sonea is strong and she could give Regin a run for his money. Then there's the mystery around Akkarin, the High Lord. Akkarin finds out that Sonea knows about his secret, pulls her away from her loved ones and intimidates her. Poor Sonea can't catch a break. How long will she be able to handle this?

Personally, I found *The Novice* a much more enjoyable read, which was what I had been told in the first place. The story was right where I found it the most interesting – right in the school during and in between classes, and right with Lord Dannyl during his ambassadorial journeys. The thing that makes Dannyl stand out is that he's so cheerful compared to all the other magicians. He's eccentric and likes gossip and there used to be gay rumours about him when he was young. The story is set in a time where this is absolutely unacceptable and so he was able to suppress all the rumours, but you still wonder – is he or isn't he? (view spoiler)

Regin. He's only been active since the beginning of the book and I am getting pretty damn sick of this guy. He's the guy who keeps bullying our main character (and he's *cruel*). It's like he has too much spare time on his hands, which surprises me since he needs to study just as hard as Sonea (and she studies every night to keep up). I really hope he'll die or turn into a chicken or something. That would be nice.

All in all, I was really satisfied with this sequel. It was better than the first, which is not something you can say about every second novel...

Louise says

This was a brilliant! I thought it was even better than the first book (The Magicians Guild). Can't wait to

read The High Lord.

imts says

"There's always a bit of truth in each rumour, the trouble is finding out which bit."

The worldbuilding in this series really is exquisite.

On the other hand, I found more editing errors in the book, and they continue through book three, too (which I finished half of before remembering I was supposed to mark this one as read).

Melissa Delpont says

Finally I felt toward the end of the second book that things were picking up. The story has been very good, but too drawn out for my liking. Now, things are starting to get real. Am looking forward to book 3.

Kells Next Read says

This read was okay. I'm literally on a fence as to what I'm actually feeling about it.

I like the characters in the book but found that the author drag out the storyline unnecessarily. I found myself getting bored frequently and that is a big No No when I read a book.

The heroine in this read also played the victim role way to long. I seriously reached a point that I didn't even care what happen to her as it was pointless.

My official rating is 3 Stars and I'll eventually finished the trilogy (if only to see how it all ends)

Alatea says

Do you know that feeling, when you backpacks weights 10 kg after going to a library? And one single book contains 500+ pages and you have to cycle uphill and all the way you're mad on yourself that you took so many books, when you have other things to do? Your studies, your work, your crafts, etc? And when you start reading a book at 11 pm and finish it after 3 am. And you forget that it weighted tone, that you had something else to do, that it's already morning --- you're fascinated, charmed and totally out of this world.

Oh, you do know that feeling? Well, if you want to feel it again - take this book.

The story itself is not complicated and I could say that it's even a little bit predictable. But something in it - and it's so hard to say what exactly - makes you want more. The magic world in the book is very real, so are

main characters. Sometimes it feels like some of them are only sketches, but they still feel real. I have no idea how this is possible. As I said, fascinating story.

Miss Raven says

INCREÍBLE.

No tengo más que buenas palabras y halagos para este libro, porque contra todo pronóstico me ha ENCANTADO♥

Siendo que el ritmo narrativo de su primera entrega, El gremio de los magos, me pareció un poco lento, este libro me ha encantado de principio a fin.

Creo que no ha habido ni un solo párrafo que no me haya gustado, y además de la historia maravillosa, el estilo literario está tan inmensamente cuidado, que da gusto leer y recrearse en las maravillosas descripciones que Trudi Canavan utiliza para sumirnos en la ciudad de Imardin y el Gremio de los magos.

Los personajes me han ENAMORADO en sumo grado: Sonea y su increíble fuerza y poder, Rothen el incansable y noble tutor de Sonea, Dannyl y sus viajes como segundo embajador del Gremio, Akkarin, el imponente y misterioso Gran Lord del Gremio y el malvado Regin, incansable en su empresa de torturar a Sonea día tras día.

Me gusta que no sean típicos ni clichés en absoluto y que ninguno de ellos responda a los cánones esperables en esta clase de novelas. Mientras que en el primer libro no llegué a conectar especialmente con ningún personaje, en mi lectura de La aprendiz le he cogido mucho cariño a Sonea, Rothen, Dorrien, Lorlen, Tayend y Dannyl, y me fascina especialmente Akkarin.

La historia por otro lado, no se queda atrás en modo alguno. Intrigas políticas, viajes a tierras desconocidas, oscuros escarceos con la magia negra, y un sinfín de misterios que rondan al poderoso Gran Lord, además de intrigantes asesinatos acaecidos en circunstancias más bien sospechosas, todo ello regado con el atractivo de la magia, me parecido MUY MUY AMAZING♥

El sistema mágico que rige el Gremio me parece super interesante, así como las ramas en las que se divide la magia: alquimia, sanación y artes guerreras. También se enseña a los aprendices historia (pues el pasado de Kyrallia, la región en la que se encuentra el Gremio es algo turbulento en relación con la tierra de Sachaka, especialmente), arquitectura mágica, herbología, ...

En resumen, este libro me ha parecido una maravilla y estoy deseando continuar con la saga, ver cómo se desarrollan los acontecimientos y cómo se desenvuelve todo.
¡Ojalá el nivel continúe de esta manera!

Dhuaine says

Think of this book as what a Harry Potter novel would look like if it was only about Harry vs. Draco struggle. Except here it's Sonea vs Entire School all-out war with the protagonist being 1) a total victim, 2) accepting everything they throw at her, 3) not fighting back, 4) barely protecting herself, 5) barely accepting

help from third parties. Antagonists consist of nearly all the students, most of the teachers, staff and a kitchen sink. Rare people who are on Sonea's side try to help her a little, but it doesn't really work because she's the Ultimate Victim and not cooperating. She doesn't even use all the resources available to her.

It was all very funny. I don't doubt it appeals a lot to young readers.

There's also a second thread, which contributes exactly nothing. A mage... magician is sent on a quest to find Important Stuff. Instead, he finds himself a lover. I was extremely curious as to how m/m slash looks in young-adult version, but was sorely disappointed. That part of the book was insanely, mind-numbingly boring and consisted of rambling and preaching about tolerance etc. Yawn. Primary school stuff.

Ah, the mage... magician found something Strange. Don't get your hopes high though, it's irrelevant to the story and not explained at all, either in the trilogy or in its prequel.

cat reads says

It's been a long time since I was this frustrated with a book.

There were so many moments of, "Why doesn't Sonea shield? Why doesn't she call for help? Why the f**k is she allowing this to keep happening?! And why ffs are the adults not doing a damn thing about all of this!?" For a strong character, in this story she does the most illogical things, but then, how dare logical progression interfere with the plot the author wanted. >.< Seriously, Sonea gets into a huge amount of trouble because she was framed for stealing a pen. A pen. That's it. Other students sabotaging her, attacking her, torturing her, and nothing. At most a slap on the wrist that's quickly dismissed for the lead aggressor, but nothing for the others. Even when the teachers know this abuse is going on, they do nothing. Really? Ah, but this is a magical guild where the logical progression of events is subverted by the 'i-wanna-write-it-this-way' spell because reasons.

True, bullying in real life is an issue; however, it's one that flourishes with secrecy, but that's not the issue here. The adults know what's going on for the majority of the book. In rl, any teacher worth their credential would escort a student and provide safe harbor, and with current media pressure, administrators don't dismiss these issues. Certainly the parents are called in. In any school, Regin would be expelled.

Ahh, but this is a magic school in a fantasy setting, so *obviously* we can't expect the same standards. And the villain? He's from a rich an influential family, so *of course* he can get away with whatever. *Except*, isn't Sonea something special, someone the teachers would want to shield from bullies? Even if you did have teachers who turned a blind eye out of classist spite, Canavan also has teachers who hunch their shoulders in full knowledge yet complete impotence to do **anything** as simple as escorting a bullied child from class to class. Who's running the school here? You can't have Sonea as some dismissed guttersnipe and have the whole institution rallying against her without setting up that conflict.

Regin is one of the most one dimensional villains I've ever seen. We don't get anything other than he's arrogant and has a cruel smile, and that's the extent of his character. Oh, and he is obsessed with Sonea for reasons unknown. Even if his family felt slighted by Sonea's presence at the school, that doesn't explain the extent this character goes through to ruin her life. And how in the hell is one little first year novice able to spread rumors that any adult would take seriously? The whole thing with Rothem being a litch was so beyond ridiculous. Where are the adults here? We have older people, but no actual adults acting like adults.

Lord Rothem, who I initially liked in the first novel, is just as helpless as Sonea in that he should have the ability and intelligence to act but doesn't. This is a book of willing victims, and that's no fun to read.

The story line I actually liked was Dannyl's. The way homosexuality is treated in the novel is old fashioned by this age, but I enjoyed the slowly developing romance. While it may end in scandal and tears, I'm hoping for a HEA. The characters are well matched and quite cute together.

Last but not least of many issues, this novel could use a lot of trimming. Thanks to Harry Potter and no thanks to crapfests like Divergent or (shudders) Twilight, young adult novels are topping over 500 pages. Just because you can write this much doesn't mean you should. Tighten your plot and actually use your overabundance of words to set up the society in such a way that the plot makes sense rather than having 'sh*t happens because the author likes these tropes'. At least then I have to suffer less from the ridiculousness.

Marzena says

Wow. Judging by the general rating (4,01!) and after over 500 pages-long intro that The Magicians' Guild was, I expected a bit of an action and a bit of a story. What I got was 600+ pages of *another* prologue. I'm a bit tired, when will we (ever?) get to some decent action?

I'm aware that's YA, but that's not an excuse to see it poorly written. The protagonist is a weak girl, constantly bullied, refuses help and when she finally stands up for herself, she's sure to fail the duel. This kind of a story could be put in less than 600 pages. But it's not a big deal, because despite the title Sonea's story is just a secondary one. To be honest, I'm not quite sure what exactly *was* the main plot. Dannyl's voyages added nothing to the book and his sexuality issues weren't interesting to read about. All of the characters were dull and flat which is sad, because first book of the series was at least intriguing me how the sequel would end up like. I'm already afraid to start reading the third part.

Biene says

Wirklich sehr gut und einfach nur einnehmend dieses Buch. Man muss einfach mit fiebern und steckt mitten drin. Ich liebe es, hoffentlich wird der dritte Teil ebenso großartig!

David says

A surprisingly good fantasy title. The plot reminds me quite of Harry Potter (i.e. protagonist in school of wizardry, unusual circumstances of birth, befriended by the school headmaster), but the plot is much more suspenseful and interesting. And none of that ANGST-CRAWLING-IN-MY-SKIN rubbish that one usually sees in this genre of stories.

Mature plot, snappy writing, interesting characters. What more could one ask for?
