



## Midnight's Mask

*Paul S. Kemp*

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## **Midnight's Mask** Paul S. Kemp

The shadows deepen in every corner of the Realms.

The sun no longer shines on a man who has embraced the darkness within him.

The day's opposite finds Erevis Cale so far along the path away from his own humanity, he may never again walk as a man.

In the end, to be Chosen by a god like Mask is more curse than blessing...

## **Midnight's Mask Details**

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Author : Paul S. Kemp

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## From Reader Review **Midnight's Mask** for online ebook

### **Chris says**

The conclusion for Erevis Cale wrapped it up nicely. I still think this trilogy should have been released as one long book, as opposed to 3 short ones. The books very much read like it (of course you could say the same for Lord of the Rings though that series had more obvious breaking points, but i digress).

Erevis gets a couple more boons in power, including a really cool scene where he teleports through shadows an entire ship plus crew. He has temptation to fall into potential evil through the god Mask, but Jack keeps him true. On that note, Jack had a bit more important role at this point, so he didn't just seem like an annoying puppy dog (though it does irritate me how Cale always says Little Man all the time).

The book is action packed and has some really cool scenes and locations. The villains were interesting, though sometimes the comments about fashion and cursing feel forced. I didn't really see the point of Erevis saving the one girl and then going back to her in the end. Who is she and why should I care? The epilogue even kind of touched on that, like Erevis didn't know why either, just some strange attraction or something. I think it could have done without.

Fun fantasy book, not terribly deep or anything, but it was a good read (listen). Narrator was decent, but I wouldn't say good.

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### **Adam Whitehead says**

Azriim and his slaadi allies have succeeded in tapping the magical mantle of Skullport, delivering tremendous power into the hands of their lord and master, the Sojourner. They now find themselves joined by Riven, who has betrayed Erevis Cale to choose the winners' side. As the Sojourner prepares to execute the final stage of his plan, Cale and his remaining allies must gather all their remaining resources to thwart him.

Midnight's Mask concludes the Erevis Cale Trilogy in fine form, tying up the trilogy's storylines and plot points in a satisfying and even surprising fashion. In the first two books the Sojourner's ultimate objective is not revealed, but in this finale Kemp executes one of the better surprise endings in the epic fantasy genre when it comes to his main villain's motivations.

Before we get to that ending, the story takes in a number of clashes between Cale and Azriim and their respective bands of heroes and villains, not to mention a brief but highly memorable interruption by a third faction. There's some impressive sea battles and the final showdown is appropriately epic, but Kemp gives more focus to his characters' internal struggles, particularly to Cale's development as he continues to try to keep his morality despite being the chosen servant of a dark god and his battle to retain his humanity after being transformed into a shade. As a parallel to Cale, Riven also develops nicely as he schemes to seize Cale's position as the First Chosen of Mask.

Whilst the book has an impressive ending, the explosions and magical exchanges are but a sideshow to a surprisingly emotional climax, as not all of our protagonists make it to the end and even the Sojourner is revealed to have a sense of the nostalgic (albeit a highly warped one). Ultimately, Kemp's success with the trilogy, after a somewhat rocky start, is to deliver a story where the focus is on the characters and their emotional journey as much as the somewhat expectation-defying narrative.

Problems remain. Kemp's prose and storytelling has improved a lot over these three books, but there's still the odd clunky line. His characterisation is solid, but he occasionally falls back on over-repetition of minor character details (we know Azriim is a fussy dresser already). The odd situation where D&D rules are blatantly being dramatised also still appears, such as characters making their saving throws or praying for spells in a rather mechanical fashion. However, these issues are less prevalent than in earlier volumes, and do not mar an otherwise fine book.

Midnight's Mask (\*\*\*\*) brings the series to a successful conclusion, making the trilogy well worth the effort of checking out. The novel is available now in the UK and USA and also as part of the Erevis Cale Omnibus.

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### **Darren says**

(potential spoilers disclaimer)...

From Gnoll trackers (TF) and Skullport slavers (DoN) to pirates on the Inner Sea, and Netherese ruins (MM), this third book in the trilogy of Erevis Cale is not lacking in action or suspense by any stretch! A sentient kraken?! Yep. Loved it.

Once again, I will emphasize that Paul does a fantastic job at making your care about his characters (love or hate). In my view, this book got a little more gritty and also re-introduced a love sub plot for Cale - more interesting than Thazi IMO.

The ending left some threads untied for Cale and Magadon which I hope I will get to grab onto again when I crack the spines of the Shadow Wars trilogy. I found the resolution of Riven to be well done; an homage to the little guy.

Paul: great work with "the girls" (I am a dog guy so really enjoyed this aspect of Drasek)!

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### **Travis says**

Midnight's Mask by Paul S. Kemp- This is the final book in The Erevis Cale Trilogy. The first is Twilight Falling and the second is Dawn of Night. However, the first appearance of many of these characters are found in the Sembia: Gateway to the Realms series. There is a short story in Halls of Stormweather anthology entitled "Resurrection" and the second book in the series entitled Shadow's Witness. Then after this trilogy, the story continues in The Twilight War trilogy (Shadowbred, Shadowstorm, and Shadowrealm).

Caution: Spoilers are present if you haven't read Twilight Falling or Dawn of Night! The story picks up right after Dawn of Night. The Weave Tap taps Skullport's mantle, Drasek Riven has switched sides to join with the slaadi, and Erevis Cale, Magadon, and Jak Fleet are trying to escape Skullport's skulls. After seeing the destruction in some areas of Skullport, the trio leave and return to Selgaunt, a city in Sembia, to figure out their next step. While in Selgaunt, they run into an old "friend" who rudely helps them find where Riven and the slaadi are going. Riven and the slaadi are looking for the sunken city of Sakkors, which fell into the Sea of Fallen Stars. The sunken city holds another mantle where another seed of the Weave Tap needs to be planted in order for the slaadi master, The Sojourner, to create the Crown of Flame. However, the two groups come across something bigger and very angry. Barely escaping and having the seed planted, The Sojourner

starts casting his Crown of Flame. But can Cale, Magadon, and Jak stop the casting?

Negatives:

- 1) Crown of Flame. Honestly, it's really simple and a little lame. You get this whole big idea of what it is and it's a little disappointing in what it turns out to be. Why build something up so much only to make it so "uncool?" But then again, it was a good thing about what it turned out to be.
- 2) Middle Part Riven. In the first two books, Riven was a main character. Maybe he was a little bit of a supporting one, but I really looked at him being a main character in those books. And I was really disappointed with the way Riven was down played in the middle section. Yes, he was still present, but it felt like he was the side character to the slaadi, with Dolgan and Azriim (the two slaadi) being the main focus. It really threw me off and it almost made me forget about Riven's presence.

Positives:

- 1) Erevis Cale. What he goes through in this story really what makes him. Throughout the trilogy, Cale's been changing into something he doesn't understand or want to be, here it's no different. He gains more and more power, at times loses himself to the darkness, and still is able to prevent himself from crossing that plain (due in most part to his friends). Towards the end, he really changes into something that is, quite frankly, scary. But his continued growth and his changes were so well done and just very enjoyable to read about.
- 2) The Sojourner. Now, I didn't like this character at all in Dawn of Night. He was boring and just dry. However, in this book, he is given some personality and purpose. You can really see his power and his desires much more clearly. Maybe this change is due in part because of the amount of times he appears in the book, which isn't a lot but a perfect amount. Then towards the end, I became somewhat sympathetic towards him. Sure, he remained an arrogant jerk, but I just could help but feel sorry for him. There isn't an easy why to put that really. He was pretty much built up as the biggest, baddest, evil villain that there could be... But at the end, it turns out what he wanted wasn't so bad (aside from the many people he had to kill to gain what he wanted).
- 3) The Ending. It seems that I'm talking a lot about the ending, to put it simply, it's just good. Everything (well almost everything) is all wrapped up in a way in which you felt like it should have been. Aside from the obvious things placed in it to gain the reader's curiosity on certain things, the main story was told and told well. I really don't want to give away much of what happens but to explain why it was such a good ending, I could just give away some "teasers." Someone dies, and the death was totally unexpected, but it felt right how this character ended. Mask, the god of thieves and shadows, gained something from another rival god. And my last "teaser," someone starts to call some people friends. I hope I haven't given away that much...

Side Notes:

- 1) What happened to Riven's ability to wrap shadowstuff into something that could heal? It would have, I assume, helped a certain character.
- 2) Cover Art. Horrible. Cale looks like an old man with wrinkles and just doesn't look right. The "shadow demons" around the ...whatever it is... the globe thing, are just distracting and once again, look like bad tattoo artwork. It's ugly and a little plain.
- 3) I really liked how Paul S. Kemp really does stick with the small "cliffhangers" in this trilogy and places them in The Twilight War Trilogy. After reading that trilogy, and re-reading this one, I really appreciate how he did this. Nothing really seemed to be overlooked or forgotten and it is really nice.
- 4) Okay, quick question. Is slaadi the plural form of slaad? Or does it need an "s" at the end? I think it's slaadi. But I'm not sure on this. Any information on this would be appreciated!

Overall: 5/5

### Final Thoughts:

But wait! I had some complaints! So why is it a 5/5? Simple, the complaints didn't really deter the story in the slightest. The only one that had an impact on the full story was the seeming "disappearance" of Riven in the middle, but he was still present and accounted for, albeit in a smaller role in these scenes. Overall, the story was great, the characters were wonderful, and it's just an enjoyable story and trilogy.

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### Elar says

Whole trilogy is written in style of true sword and wizardry. In last book reader finally have great face off and all the characters are well acquainted. Priests powers are also more exploited in this book and makes magic display even more enjoyable

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### Tereza says

Moje recenze - <http://sheisbookaholic.blogspot.cz/20...>

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### Ray says

And all of that because the guy didn't want to use an umbrella ...

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### Kagan Oztarakci says

For some, a place is home. But for men like us, people have to be home. And not just any people. Friends. The friends who live through the changes with us, who grow with us.

Strength can move only mountains. Ideas can shake worlds.

(he) has more angles than a prism.

Nothing is bigger than the personal.

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### David says

The final book of this trilogy proves to be a very satisfying conclusion to the trilogy. I rather enjoyed it, especially as it builds up towards a finale. The loose ends are all nicely wrapped up, except for the bits that foreshadowed even more to come.

The story has an overall "dark" tone to it, even more so than the first two. I guess this ties in really well with Cale and Riven entering more and more fully into the Mask's service. You follow each of the two character's growth and self-realisation of their own part in a really big tapestry.

The downside I take from this are each of their relationships with Mask. They have become Chosen, but there's little insight in this third book as to how they view this relationship. There's little to show that Cale and Riven share the motivations and ideals of Mask, so it's a little off-putting because Mask just appeared to have chosen these two rather randomly, based on that they were just in the right place at the right time. But other than that, I really like how each character has been developed.

Villain-wise, it was very different. Vhosytm is not your typical power-hungry super-villain so the finale is very atypical. The two remaining slaadi were also used very effectively, each possessing a very distinct personality.

Overall, it's a great read at a smooth pace that slowly builds up towards the finale.

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### **Stefan says**

Even though I have a huge collection of books that I have not read, I still feel pulled to some of my favorites and simply have to re-read them. *Midnight's Mask* was one such book. I read this book when it was first released and while I remember several parts I had forgotten many of the details that made this book shine.

*Midnight's Mask* concludes the Erevis Cale trilogy. Throughout the series Cale, Riven, Jak, and Mags have each grown in their respective roles, but to me, it was Jak Fleet, a halfling of small stature but a big heart, that kept the group (and especially Cale) grounded.

### **POTENTIAL SPOILER**

The ending was heartbreakingly sad and while some stories end others are just beginning. Paul S. Kemp is one of my favorite authors and the way he writes his characters and how they deal with the situations they find themselves in, makes me want to strive to be a better person. Who says you can't learn anything from fiction? I have learned much from Cale and Jak.

The audio production of this book was excellent and the narrator, John Pruden, did a wonderful job with the characters, giving each his own signature voice. It was a wonderful listening experience that I highly recommend to any fantasy fan.

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### **Wired76 says**

On some level, this trilogy really should've been named the Drasek Riven Trilogy, given he goes through the greatest emotional journey of all the characters here. It's not to say Kemp doesn't do a great job with everyone else, including Erevis Cale himself. Kemp adroitly documents Cale's struggles with the darkness growing inside him, as he keeps drawing lines and then crossing them. Kemp also shows how Cale's darkness challenges everyone around him, particularly Magadon Kest. But, it's Riven who steals the show as he spends most of the novel contemplating what friendship means (and whether it actually means anything to him).

(view spoiler)

All in all, I can see why this trilogy is considered one of the best "Forgotten Realms" has produced. The characters leap off the page given Kemp's knack for conveying emotion, and the pace is brisk. After 900 pages, you're still at the end of your seat when the denouement comes. Onto the next trilogy!

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### ?enis says

Pri ?ítaní tejto trilógie som mal silné nutkanie pusti? si nejaké fajné RPG. Pekne to ten Kemp konštruuje. Cestovate?ov masaker kúzlam... Posledná ?as? ma ale oslovia asi najmenej. Ktovia pre?o.

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### Pedro says

This was a fantastic end to a perfect trilogy. One thing I may not have praised before on my other two reviews but that just has to be mentioned is the grip the story hold on you throughout the 3 books. Right even before the trilogy in The Halls of Stormweather the "epic" tale of Erevis Cale beings, and you just feel like it is one huge book divided into small tomes. The cliffhangers on all the books from the trilogy connect seamlessly to the next book and the first book starts just days after The Hall of Stormweather's end. This is such a positive aspect on Erevis' tale and few authors explore this, trying instead to "partition" their books with "quests" that, despite connecting themselves, haven't the same sense on continuity. Thank God I've only just read these books when all of them are available. I cannot imagine the agony of waiting on each cliffhanger for the next book. Because that was what I kept thinking throughout these series. Kemp's work is THAT good! Kemp's writing is that good. Few author's can actually accomplish such a thing. In these series events just keep happening, surprises keep popping and the end of each book is just the end of a chapter, as the beginning of the next book picks up just where the previous left off. Once again Kemp's characters are great (I know I'm biased towards Magadon, since he is a psionicist, but I understand how some people didn't like the way he was introduced). The battles in this throd novel are just epic. Which leads me to the most disappointing thing (probably the only one) the "normality" (for lack of a better word) of the end. It's surprisingly and chillingly simple, the Sojourner character. This was what mostly disappointed me, since the trilogy had been building up to it. However, not wishing to unravel anything here, I shall just say that "the ends justify the means" apply here. I know where Kemp wanted to get, the lesson at the end of it all. Some things are just so simple yet are valued by some people above anything or anyone else. "There is nothing bigger than the personal". Cale just keeps learning and learning until the very end. Going back to the epic battles, after writing about the only mildly negative (better saying disappointing) aspect of the book, Kemp once again elevates himself to Salvatore's level on the battle descriptions. Comparing Kemp to Salvatore may be doing Kemp a disservice, but the fact is most people think highly of Salvatore's fight descriptions (I do too, just not the last 10 books, just the first half of the Drizzt books, exception made to the Companions where he regains his style). Kemp works both "normal" and epic battles/fights with great care and it feels like you are there, however, the descriptiion doesn't tax you or go into minute details. There is a mild cliffhanger in this book, which I hope carries on to the next, but it isn't in the final pages, it's rather in the final real "battle", though I shall not spoil the book, and hope people will understand upon reading it. All in all I just cannot praise the book, the series, the author enough. This was written 8 years ago, most books nowadays don't last that long, but this will probably be a good read many years from now.

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## **Antoine Guillaud says**

Solid conclusion to the trilogy around Erevis Cale.

The trilogy can be seen as one big book and this was the last part.

The writing is good, the characters are great. Each having to struggle with his nature, the antagonists are well drawn.

All in all a valuable addition to the Realms.

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## **Scott Cook says**

I liked the reason for the Sojourner's grand plot although I was quite annoyed with Cale's reasoning for his dogged pursuit of the bad guys. I was also quite annoyed with the reason for Riven's betrayal. That is some confidence our heros had to program Riven that way when the whole thing could have been thwarted in book 2 and poor Skullport could have been spared! Overall, I was entertained and even though there were a few plot points that bugged me, I was still very happy to be reading the fun/creative work from a gifted author/storyteller.

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