



# **Emissary**

*Thomas Locke*

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Hyam is a likeable lad who will make a fine farmer someday. But he carries a burden few can fathom. As his mother slips toward death, she implores him to return to Long Hall, where he spent five years as an apprentice. It was there that Hyam's extraordinary capacity for mastering languages came to light--and soon cast him into the shadows of suspicion. How could any human learn the forbidden tongues with such ease? When Hyam dares to seek out the Mistress of the Sorceries, her revelation tears his world asunder.

He has no choice but to set out on the foreboding path--which beckons him to either his destiny or his doom. An encounter with an enchanting stranger reminds him that he is part hero and part captive. As Hyam struggles to interpret the omens and symbols, he is swept up by a great current of possibilities--and dangers.

## **Emissary Details**

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Author : Thomas Locke

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# From Reader Review *Emissary* for online ebook

## Deb Haggerty says

### **Deb's Dozen: 12-Word Summaries – Dying mother's last request sends orphaned farm boy on a quest – *Emissary*!**

Fantasy has always been one of my favorite genres, although, until recently, I'd not read much of note. *Emissary*, by Thomas Locke, has shot to the top of my list of favorites. Clean, crisp writing paired with descriptions that pull you into the environment make this a very enjoyable novel.

Hyam's dying mother had one last request—tell your father that I am gone. Hyam's father had left them years ago to reside in the Three Valley's Long Hall, residence of what remained of wizardry and magic. Hyam himself had spent five long years there and had no fond memory of the experience. But obey his mother's wish as he had promised, he would do—Hyam was honorable if nothing else.

When he arrives, he's told his father's been dead for four years—and wasn't his father, nor his mother his mother. The Mistress of the Hall sends him to another hall to seek the mage, Trace. And so begins Hyam's epic journey of danger and disbelief and destiny.

I was given a copy of *Emissary* by Revell Publishing for my candid review.

The story so enthralled me that I dreamt about Hyam's adventures and woke myself up—only to read to the wee hours until I had finished. As I loved Hyam and Trace and Joelle, I am delighted to tell you this is merely the start of the adventures. The *Emissary* stands by itself, though, with a beginning and a conclusion—unlike many series that leave you hanging.

If you love a rollicking adventure, with romance and danger involved, you'll love *Emissary* as I do. Although a fantasy story, Locke writes with such assurance that you'll almost believe in a new reality. Five stars – be sure to pick up a copy and enjoy!

I was given a copy of *Emissary* by Revell Publishing for my candid review.

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## Kathleen (Kat) Smith says

Written in a possible mid century type of style where wizards, mages, magic, mystery and a clouded past are just a part of the true underlying story of Hyam. Born and raised by a mother who did not birth him and a father who did not raise him casts shadows of uncertainty and an unresolved past of who Hyam really is. He has powers and can speak forbidden tongues of Milantian, Ashanti, and Elven even from an early age. It was told that anyone speaking or to be of Milantian blood would be killed on the spot. Hyam tries to understand who he is, where he is from and his uncertain future that bids of doom and prophecy.

Reading through the book from the first several chapters sent me in search of Ore as I turned each page. The character development was very well written and with each chapter I could see the characters forming in my imagination! Some of the writing could be better written with explaining how Hyam got from one town to

another as in the beginning. It skips a bit without much detail on how the main character gets from one place to another.

Hyam, Joelle, Bryna as well as a flock of other interesting characters fill the pages with a deep sense of sorrow, wanting, and a lust to be free. The main characters could each have a separate book written about them and their races that would be just as fascinating as this book was. I will leave that to the author...

I rate this book a 5 out of 5 stars and would recommend anyone who loves mythical, magical science fiction and fantasy! I received Emissary by Thomas Locke compliments of Revell Publishers and Edify Media Group for my honest review. I received this book for free with no monetary exchange either written or expressed for my sole review. Thomas Locke is the pseudonym for Davis Bunn as he launches into a new genre of novels for readers. Davis Bunn has long been a favorite author of mine and this was did not disappoint. Definitely one I would recommend to fans of novels like The Lord of the Rings Trilogy and Chronicles of Narnia. This is the first novel in the Legends of the Realms Series due out in December of 2014, with a teaser prequel The Captive out now! I can't wait for the sequel and once again this author has found a true treasure in this book lover's heart!

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### **Jim says**

High fantasy that was just too predictable & easy. It started out well & held my interest well for the first half, but it just became a drag. Everything was "a thousand years ago" & there wasn't a lick of tension. It had every over-used trope I could name, too. Still, I got through it & the first part was pretty good. I'll give it 2.5 stars rounded up to 3. I don't recommend it to anyone who has read a lot of fantasy, though.

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### **Paula Vince says**

Hyam's mother dies the week he turns 21, and he returns to a Long Hall where he used to be an acolyte, to tell his father of her passing. He hates having to go back, as he has traumatic memories concerning his time spent there. Hyam learns that his father is deceased, but that he himself was actually an orphan with unknown origins who his parents took under their roof. Although Hyam is willing to return to his village and farm his land, his magical heritage catches up with him now that he is of age. In fact, his powers turn out to be so vast that he must fight to ward off evil powers which are threatening the whole world.

Allies he teams up with along his journey include his faithful animal sidekicks, Dama, his wolfhound and Matu, his noble steed. They are joined later by Joelle, the beautiful young woman Hyam rescues from a hostile Long Hall, and Trace, the wise old Mage.

I've got to admit this isn't one of my favourite fantasies. A fair chunk of the magic seems to happen unintentionally, giving the plot an impression of randomness at times. The astral travel which both Hyam and Joelle embark on at different stages seemed so out there (excuse the pun), my head was spinning. I found this way of whizzing out of their human bodies to be present at various significant gatherings verged on making discoveries a bit too convenient at times. Sometimes it even happened while Hyam was trying to have a good night's sleep. Having said this, there were always huge challenges ahead of the protagonists, no mistaking that. To judge from other reviewers, it seems I might be in the minority with these misgivings anyway, so you may choose to take them with a grain of salt.

This novel's author and publisher are Christian, and I found the themes to be hidden rather than in-your-face. Some of the imagery and storyline I did find interesting include the following.

- \* The user/bearer of the powerful orbs is the one who determines how the force is to be applied. The power is present for anyone who can tap into it, and the orbs take on the colour red for those who wish to use them for destruction.

- \* Hyam gets a chance to reveal the supposed experts, the controlling mages of the Long Hall, to be not as adept in their magical arts as they think they are.

- \* The setting has a Medieval feeling I liked a lot.

Yet overall, although there's a lot that's good, I'm not sure I'll be interested enough to read the sequel.

Thanks to Net Galley and Revell for my review copy.

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### **Sarah Sundin says**

From my fantasy-loving 16-year-old son, Matthew: "The story is well written and very enthralling. The story following Hyam leaves you with a sense of wonder, but has enough realistic properties that it does not become insanity. Though the story is meant for a younger audience, members of an older audience could still find enjoyment in reading this book. Through and through, *Emissary* is a great story and a good read. I recommend this story to lovers of adventure and fantasy."

I received a complimentary copy of this book from Revell in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Ana says**

*Emissary* tells the story of Hyam, who up until his 21st birthday was a plain farmer's son who enjoyed hunting. And that is all I could tell of who the guy was. He was dull and his emotional range appeared minimal to say the least.

Anyway, it's his 21st birthday and it appears that he is not a regular human after all. He has powers. Powers which only manifest themselves at that specific age. Why? You tell me. Apparently it's in his race. People turn 21 and boom - they get powers. Does that answer satisfy you? It sure didn't please me.

When his mother dies he goes to tell his estranged father on some wizard school city place, since she begged that of him. When he first leaves his village to go on that trek we are told that he isn't allowed to hunt. Why? You tell me.

So, very grudgingly, he arrives at the place where people were so mean to him, beating him senseless (Why? No clue.) to tell the man who abandoned him at a young age of his mother passing, except the guy is dead too.

So he gets there and talks to the place's mistress. He refuses to accept what he is told about his heritage and to take the advice of this very smart old woman, who we are told Hyam instinctively knows is very clearly speaking the truth. However, it seems that he either doesn't believe her or, if he does, he plans to do nothing about this new information. And then, when he develops the powers she said he would, he still refuses to

follow her advice and go seek help from someone we can obviously tell is also trustworthy. Why? You guessed it! You tell me.

So there he is, very willingly practicing his awesome new powers in a secluded place. With mastery, I must point out - apparently just because he remembers some words in another language which he had learned years ago very grudgingly. How can someone who is now discovering they have powers control them like that? Again, feel free to tell me.

So he uses his powers with great skill, murders a bunch of people (bad guys, granted, but still people) and doesn't seem to feel a thing. Now I would like to think he had never murdered anyone up to that point, so yes, I would have expected a bit of emotion there.

He takes one of the bad guys' treasures and his horse and goes on his merry way, making plans to visit a very special city. And here I must note that, for someone who is so reluctant to go on this so called quest, he sure gives away the only home he knew rather quickly.

When he gets a supposedly extremely smart dog as his companion, you'd hope there would be room for some creative interaction here but nope, he just travels by the mutt's side, neither uttering a sound (Crazy as it seems, not exploring this relationship was one of the things about the book which upset me the most. I mean, seriously. A super smart part wolf-part dog-part something else which name I cannot recall who is usually destined for royalty? Such a waste...).

Both the wolfhound and the horse Hyam got by murdering its owner (call me petty but considering how Hyam got it I never considered it *his* horse) seem to grow instantly attached to Hyam and give him their complete loyalty. Why? Uh... Right.

We are fed a lot of information too quickly about all the races and can tell how not all of it is accurate, although not why or how or which parts. So while reading I kept thinking ok hmm we are going on this assumption but it's probably wrong.

Then the voice changes and we are introduced to Joelle. I immediately thought uh oh... Feisty girl with similar background of being a prisoner and not belonging, a couple years younger than main character, similar wizard powers... I smell forced romance. And was spot on. (view spoiler)

Moving back a bit, his role of emissary is explained, bestowed and accepted by him in a manner that made me think *Huh? That's it?*

Even though he is guaranteed protection, he is apparently abandoned. Why he wasn't helped, as promised, after things died down beats me.

And I will stop specifying what happens in the book now; it's pretty pointless given the book's length, and as a rule I don't appreciate doing this at all, as I prefer the reader to discover things as they unfold.

However, in this case I felt this introduction was required to make it very clear that, as I was following Hyam around, I was left with this hollow and confused feeling of not knowing why things happened and why the narrative developed the way it did, and this was something that accompanied me throughout the book. There were no clues that I could refer to thinking *oh so that's why that happened* until pretty much the end of the book, and by then it was too late.

Take the main character. Hyam starts off as a sort of ornery type who has never come to terms with his past and refuses to deal with the information given to him about his heritage. However, over the course of the book, I sometimes felt I was reading about a guy in his 40s, one who had suddenly gained all sort of moral

values and a self-confidence and bravery that I had not seen before nor realized where it came from. We are told that he had barely stepped out of his village all his life, certainly not very far, and suddenly he is giving orders left and right, owning all the places he visits, as if it was the most natural thing in the world to him, and having all sorts of people pledging alliance to him. All the crazy easy magery that happens is justified by the fact that he is, apparently, someone really, really special. Now while plenty of people may be happy with that explanation, especially because of the interesting world creating, to me it just felt extremely forced and overly simplistic. Not to mention extremely convenient.

I simply could not feel involved in the narrative nor relate to any of the characters, the main one in the least. Whatever chance there was for bonding between characters was obliterated. The plot lacked direction for at least 3/4 of the book, nothing felt natural. Reading *Emissary* made me feel like I was watching a board game unfold. *Ok, main character is here, so I am going to move hiiiiim.... Here. Yep, sounds good. Now, this happens. And now let me move him to another square in... this direction seems good!* The action never felt progressive. I felt that one minute I was in a place and then in another with no transition. I wasn't in the story, I could not feel what the characters were feeling nor was I particularly interested in knowing what came next. I was actually more curious to see if the dog would do anything interesting.

In a nutshell, all the focus of this book is clearly on the world building, completely deterring character and plot development. Things happened not because they make sense but because it was convenient to where the author wanted the book to go. Yes, there are good things, particularly towards the end of the book, but not nearly enough to make it one worth reading, in my opinion.

It did start to pick up a bit on the last third or so - at least we were finally getting some explanations and some sense of direction - although even then things which could have had tremendous impact were given miserable treatment/null development/utterly rushed) and the *hidden for a thousand years* line got SO freaking old. But you know what? Whatever was mildly enjoyable came too late. By that point, the book had succeeded in almost completely losing me, because I had been fed piles and piles of descriptions about the places Hyam and the others visited and, well, that was about it. I kept trying to hold on to the plot, to why certain things were happening or to even remember aspects that seemed important. But I just couldn't get a grip on the narrative because the situations were presented out of the blue, events unfolded with no clues whatsoever to get the reader to arrive to those conclusions by him or herself until it was too late to enjoy; stuff was just planted.

I cannot tell if this negative experience is due to me not being a native English speaker, the progressively archaic, sometimes even presumptuous, writing or because my mind kept wandering, since nothing there told seemed to interest me and I could not relate, but the fact is after a while, against all desire to just give up, I just trudged on and, for the most part, it was not a very pleasant experience. And then things became so predictable and disappointing, especially the romance bit, that I felt like reading this book was a huge waste of time.

In conclusion, *Emissary* has pretty close to spectacular world building, but without a plot that makes sense, that allows me to connect the dots, is overall well developed and keeps me interested along the way; without characters who have their own personalities, whose relationships are clearly developed, and with whom I can relate in the least - then it just becomes a travel book of beautiful sceneries which I would love to visit someday.

The extra star is for the ending, which thoroughly surprised me.

*Disclaimer: I received a free copy of this book via Netgalley in exchange for my honest review.*

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## Kayleigh says

### DNF at 28%

I don't really have a lot I can say about this book because I didn't even get 30% of the way in, but I just couldn't do it. I was bored.

That doesn't mean that this is a bad book by any means. I can definitely see that some people would actually love this book, it just wasn't for me.

This, actually, very much reminded me of *The Wise Man's Fear*, which is strange because I loved both of Patrick Rothfuss' books but I just couldn't get along with this one.

There seems to be a complete lack of emotion in the writing which made it very hard for me to connect with the story and the characters - it's hard to feel involved or relate to anyone in any way. And there was this feeling of being perpetually confused about everything. There's a lot of back story here that you need at the beginning to be able to follow the story and you're not given it. After a while you start to feel like you've walked into a conversation halfway through and are being forced to join in with absolutely no context as to what has already been discussed.

The pacing is a little bit off - it was a bit jarring to me. Nothing progressive seems to happen and there wasn't anything interesting enough happening to make me want to keep on reading. The writing, however, is of a very high quality.

Like I said - I can see how some people would like this book - in fact, there are some hardcore high fantasy lovers out there who I think are going to *adore* this book, but it wasn't enough to hold my attention and I kept finding myself wondering off to do other things.

This isn't a bad book - it just wasn't for me.

*Disclaimer: I received a free copy of this book via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.*

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## Rebekah Gyger says

When I first saw this book up for review, I was not aware that Hyam was to become a mage. Ordinarily, I would stay away from books with wizarding heroes, but since it was from a Christian publisher, I decided to stick it out.

Let me start by saying that Locke has done some fantastic world building. At no time did I feel like this was not a real world that I could somehow enter and move around in. The story was easy to follow and the magic interesting. Yet, as a whole, I could not get into the story.

For most of the book we are given absolutely no insight into Hyam's emotional state. We know his mother just died and assume this makes him sad, but there is no real clue that it does. The mages themselves seem to



be the only things which draw an emotional response from him. Because we have no idea of his emotions, I really can not say what his motivations were. It made him difficult to relate to.

Joelle was a much easier to understand. However, it took half the book for her and Hyam to meet and during that time she did relatively nothing important to the plot except give us a better glimpse of the red mage.

Emissary had a great story, I just wish the characters had been more relatable.

I received this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Marjolein says**

*Read all my reviews on <http://urlphantomhive.booklikes.com>*

This was a difficult read for me that I had a hard time getting into. Emissary felt at the same time too long and missing details about the characters, mainly the main character Hyam, who for some reason only at 21 finds out he has magical powers, after first enjoying his simple life as a farmer.

The rest is a pretty standard fantasy story, where Hyam will prove everyone rather quickly why he is such a special boy and fights some battles. The problem is that even though Hyam is really at the core of the story, I didn't feel like I got to know him at all. Also, the romantic angle I didn't care for.

I won't be continuing this series, it was not for me.

Thanks to the publisher and Netgalley for providing me with a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review!

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## **Sherry says**

Emissary, by Thomas Locke, is a fantasy which takes place in a world that is often frightening and dangerous. Ominous forces threaten the realm, and most of those who have the wisdom and power to stop these forces have been hidden away, their powers forbidden. Hyam, a young man with a mysterious lineage, turns his back on all that is familiar to become the reluctant leader of a brave, loyal group of mages, soldiers, and a beautiful, equally mysterious young woman, all of whom are dedicated to freeing the realm from the terror that threatens to destroy the realm. Characters are well-drawn, action moves quickly and urgently, and the writing transports the reader to the realm. It has been awhile since I last read fantasy; this novel was a good journey back to that genre.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from Revell in exchange for my honest review.

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## **Amber says**

When Hyam's mother passes away before his 21st birthday, he follows her final wish to go find his father

and tell him that she has died. Upon going to the Long Hall where his father was at that he was banished from after 5 years of training, he is told that his father has passed away and to go away. It is only when he goes to the Ashanta that they declare him emissary to their clan that his true adventure begins. Can he warn the others of the sinister force that is descending into the land to cause chaos and destruction and stop the force with his newly-discovered mage powers before it is too late? Read on and find out for yourself.

This was a pretty good read that I got for 99 cents with another book at a clearance sale at a local Christian bookstore that is going to become a movie soon. If you like Christian Fantasies, then def look for this at your local Christian bookstore and wherever books are sold.

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### **Christian Fiction Addiction says**

Fans of Tolkien and C.S. Lewis will rejoice at a new addition to the realm of epic fantasy with the arrival of "Emissary". From page one, I was captivated by Hyam and his story, as his status as orphan garnered my sympathy while the explosion of his powers onto the scene held me captive to the point I simply couldn't put the book down. I had to find out, just who is Hyam? How did he come to have these mysteries powers? I absolutely love characters who come from humble beginnings, only to discover that their future holds more than they could have imagined, and Hyam is just such a character. As with books by Tolkien and Lewis, "Emissary" isn't overtly Christian in that God or Jesus aren't mentioned anywhere in the pages. Yet Christian themes abound, from Hyam having a purpose that is beyond himself, to the age old fight of good versus evil. I greatly enjoyed watching Hyam discover his powers and fight for not only his own survival, but the survival of the world around him. This book has it all - mystery, intriguing characters, epic battles, and romance that serves to move the story forward.

Locke does an excellent job at setting up this story as the first in a series, because despite the triumphant ending readers are still left with an ominous sense of foreboding that there is much left undone, that Hyam's destiny isn't fully realized. So I found myself turning the last of the pages feeling unsatisfied by only one thing - I have to wait an entire year until I find out what is coming next for Hyam! However will I survive the wait?

Those readers who typically read fantasy novels are going to love this book. And those who have never given the fantasy genre a chance should definitely plan to do so now. "Emissary" is well worth the read. 5 out of 5 stars.

Book has been provided courtesy of Baker Publishing Group and Graf-Martin Communications, Inc. Available at your favourite bookseller from Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group.

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### **Nyxus says**

As someone who is very picky about fantasy novels, I found Emissary to be a great addition to my fantasy shelf. The story of Hyam is fast-paced however not because every page is filled with action. The dialogue is quick, even explanations are left blunt and to the point, which works very well for this book. My only trouble was every so often I'd get so engrossed that I'd forget who was speaking and would have to backtrack a sentence or two as a reminder. As the book delves into Hyam's adventure, we get the sense of how vast this

world is without having to explain exactly how many days go by. Yet at the same time, it's easy to realize that you haven't seen that much of the world because only a few towns were visited. This, of course, is a great set up for future novels because we want to see more.

The only time I had a struggle with the fast-paced nature was in the beginning. Because Locke leads in with no explanation (relying on the idea that the reader should learn as he or she continues), the intro of Hyam is a little jarring. We learn right off the bat that his mom is dead and something about coming of age, but as these details seem unnecessary to the story we never learn more about them apart from his mother. As I continued I was fine with it, but I do think some side additions (maybe just a paragraph) of how the village functioned might have added some depth to Hyam's hometown. Of course, the limited knowledge is inherent of a third person limited view, so the book still succeeds regardless.

Locke also doesn't flee from some of the topics of temptation and true love. Thankfully his novel also does NOT function like a teen novel where the plot really is "love first, save the world later". Instead Hyam pushes the thought of love to the side knowing that the fate of the world comes first. Also thankfully, neither Hyam nor the other woman feel as though they absolutely cannot survive without one another. The characters are strong enough to be separate individuals with lives, and their love comes second to that, a great departure from some of the sappy novels out there now.

Overall I really loved this book. It serves as a full, separate story while also acting as an obvious beginning to a series. The pace is fast but it still functions well. There is no crude humor. Hyam is a strong character with traits that one may question at times simply because he is not as much of an archetype. Love this book and could probably even say more but that would be spoiling it!

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### **Mark says**

Wow! Wow! And triple wow! I LOVED this book. This is no epic. This book for me, however, was epic enough where it counted. I love the characters, the mystery, the magic and the quest. The main character Hyam is one amazing guy. Simple, kind, an all around good man and a total bad-a\*\* with what he can do. This simple read had me sucked in from the get go and I hated to put the book down. As I read, the better it got. This is not a story for everyone out there. It may seem too simple and streamlined. But I loved it. I won this as a Goodreads giveaway and I am so glad I did. I sincerely look forward to reading the rest of this awesome series!

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### **Pegg says**

I had not read a good fantasy novel in a long time. I enjoy the genre when it's done well, and Emissary is done well. It has all the elements of a good fantasy tale. There is a hero who is honorable and steadfast. The hero has a quest that is shrouded in a mystery. There is an older wizard (*okay, not a mandatory element, but one I like*) who mentors the hero. And there are clear lines between good and evil. Fantasy that smudges that line won't work for me.

Hyam begins his journey by honoring his mother's last request. He discovers a truth about himself that shakes his world. It also requires that he leave his home and everything he's ever known. Mysterious things start happening to him and around him. He discovers the world is not what he had learned it was. People

thought long dead are not. Myth and fact mix together in a confusing array of events that draw Hyam to his ultimate purpose.

Emissary is a very good story with wonderful characters. I'm withholding one star because parts of it lacks clarity, or explanation, of unfolding events. While the mystery aspect is definitely part of the story, I was at times a little frustrated over that lack of clarity.

The end of the book includes the first couple of chapters of the sequel - and I will be reading it when it comes out.

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