



The Broken God

David Zindell

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Into the icy maze of the city of Neverness, a wild boy stumbles, spear in hand, starving, frostbitten and grieving. Danlo the Wild, raised by far-off Alaloi neanderthal cave-dwellers, survived a plague that took all of his tribe. Now he must find who engineered the disease and how he can cure it. And what kind of man he will grow up into, as he enters the Order of Mystic Mathematicians and Other Seekers of the Ineffable Flame.

His journey has only begun.

The Broken God Details

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Author : David Zindell

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Clarita says

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Dev Null says

This is an odd fish.

I really liked it. Big space opera and metaphysics of the soul all mashed up together around a chewy centre of some interesting characters and some intriguing concepts. At the core of this novel are questions like "What does it mean to be alive?" "What is consciousness?" and "When is it ok to kill?" but, to my mind, they're wrapped up enough in the story that you don't feel preached at. And Zindell's mystic style suits his somewhat mythical material. I'd definitely read it again.

That said, I might have trouble recommending it to anyone else. Some people will agree with me and like it, of course, but some people are going to be jumping up and down shouting "shutupshutupshutup and make something HAPPEN!" by about halfway through one of the main character Danlos mystic journeys of discovery. I would say "stately" but I can also see how for some the pace would be merely "slow." Strangely - because I often winge about the bloating of the modern SF novel - I didn't feel these 3 800 page books were too much for the story, but I'm not sure I can explain why. It just felt about right. I _would_ recommend reading Zindell's standalone novel Neverness first; if you like it, come read these; if not, save yourself some pain.

Also interesting to have a book about space travel written by a mathematician. He doesn't go into the maths, but he makes them seem real. That he makes the hero-pilots that everyone looks up to in his world The Order of Mystic Mathematicians seems less like putting himself on a pedestal and more like poking fun at mystics

and mathematicians alike...

Keso Shengelia says

The second book is not as startling, astonishing and remarkable as the first one, but this volume is great too

Martin Barbov says

Marto's Boolean Review

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Ainsley says

Incredible Sci-Fi. Sympathetic characters, gripping plot, eastern-based philosophical grounding (for those who are tired of boy-saves-world tripe). Best of all, fantastic and new imagery. Wolfe beats Zindell, but only just. Zindell wins overall, as he's not trying to show off how clever he is. Very recommended.

Marni says

It took me like forever to finish this book...and I liked it and I struggled to like it when I didn't like it because

I knew there was something more to it. This book is definitely philosophical, not the usual sci-fi that one may be used to. After Neverness, this one seems kind of...broken. It is a great piece of writing that keeps up with the traditional science fiction and philosophical space opera. If you read this for the adventure, you will abandon it shortly because the pace it is extremely slow and in truth not much action happens, plus it focuses on random things and has extremely long descriptions. If you read this for the philosophical questions, then go on - it is a fine read.

I gave it fewer stars because of the slowness, because from a literary point of view it lacked strengths, but I would give it easily five stars for the philosophical debate.

Would I recommend it? Only for someone that wants to burn him/herself with existential and social questions. Because at moments that's what I felt that Danlo's story is just a personification of an alien brought to our current world to judge it. How religions are born, how masses are corrupted, how humans fall and raise with the social changes, how the environment affects a human, why do we live, why do we believe, why do we struggle and why do we fall or succeed...

Kalin says

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<http://kal.zavinagi.org/?p=33>

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Kenneth Hindle-May says

I dived straight into this after Neverness, a distinctly oddball book that I enjoyed a great deal, but I never managed to get it finished. I think I got about halfway through, forgot about the book for a few years and then decided I'd rather donate it to charity than try and get back into it. It just seemed far, far longer than it needed to be. Maybe I'd have found it more interesting if I didn't already have a reasonable understanding of the world from Neverness?

Also, what's with the genital obsession? It was clear from the previous book that Zindell is a man who thinks penises are Very Important, but it's really turned up to eleven in this one.

Dave Petricolas says

Although set in the future, this book is more like high fantasy than sci-fi and technology is basically treated like magic. There are also strong mystical overtones throughout. I do like high fantasy, but that genre has to walk a fine line between earnestness and just pure silliness. I think this book is more of the latter than the

former. The book is also told from the point of view of a single character and with 900 pages to get through the single reference point gets old fast, or at least it did for me.

Also, when reading this book I kept remembering David Brin's brilliant polemic against elitism in Star Wars and our myths in general. I think a similar charge could be leveled at The Broken God.

Marshall Vandegrift says

Over-the-top but fun and occasionally deep, plus grand-scale world-building. Kind of *Atlas Shrugged* for existentialism. Only, you know, good.

Dennis Cooper says

I really enjoyed this book. I thought it would be quite a difficult read but I found myself pleasantly surprised. Now having said that it's not book for everybody. Yep it's classed as science fiction but there no big epic space battles or zap guns. It's a book that you need to take your time reading. It's not a quick read by any means and that not just length of book. The reader needs to think about what he/she is reading. I would recommend this if you enjoy your science fiction with a bit of depth.

Deepthought says

Yes, it certainly keeps up with the tradition of philosophical science fiction of a space opera. Book that follows the brilliant Neverness. I am a sucker for the higher themes. When a book addresses the big questions, it has my attention. My imagination ran wild with the cybernetic alam -al-mitral. It reminds of what is happening currently with the cyber world being more a realm we continue to exist in. You realise with these books that our loving consciousness connects to form a living entity.. called the universe and the secret is .. More life... And for the keepers of the ineffable flame, "how far do you fall, pilot ?"

Ognian Stioadinov says

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Terry says

This was a re-read for me and so to give you a general feel for my thoughts on Zindell's 'Requiem for Homo

Sapiens' trilogy as a whole and the larger themes of the books I would simply point you here. I'll restrict myself in this review to a few thoughts on volume 1:

- The novel is both a bildungsroman of Danlo's journey from childhood to adulthood (as well as from the primitive society of the Alaloi to the civilized one of Neverness), and the story of the birth of a religion supposedly based on the worship of Malory Ringess, but more truly of humanity for itself, and the desire for power and glory of its founders.
- The Alaloi and their culture have grown on me quite a bit since I first read about them. I wonder if I'd enjoy those sections of Neverness more now?
- At times Danlo skims awfully close towards being a Gary-Stu given his near supreme excellence at everything he turns his hand to, but somehow, for me at least, he never quite steps over the boundary. Perhaps this is because he is, at heart, such a likeable character. Zindell somehow manages to create a character who is both an exemplar of human excellence in all he does without losing his fundamental human vulnerability, as well as being imbued with an earnest morality and devotion to pacifism that don't have him devolve into an annoying Pollyanna (as was the case, for me at least, with Gene Wolfe's unfortunate character Patera Silk).
- Ah Bardo! It's always great to see you, even if I'd probably want to punch you in the face if we ever met in reality.
- I'm still a little dubious about how the story of Old Father, the alien Fravashi character who first mentors Danlo when he comes to Neverness, concludes, but to discuss this further would be a spoiler and we'll see if I feel any differently when I actually get there on a re-read of the subsequent volumes.
- Zindell is quite good at expressing character through the unique speech patterns of his characters: esp. Danlo, Bardo, and Old Father (as long as you don't find these 'verbal ticks' to be annoying...they worked for me).
- Hanuman li Tosh is an intriguing character: both Danlo's greatest friend and his most adamant enemy; a villain whose perspective often makes the most rational sense (especially when contrasted with Danlo's seemingly unrealistic idealism) and whose perspective is often quite sympathetic...though perhaps I'm just a cynic. As Danlo himself says he is "both cynical and sincere, too aware of the darkness that everywhere permeated the universe and yet strangely innocent."
- Hanuman wants all the universe to share in his suffering, a suffering that he believes is the fundamental truth of life, and so he rails against Danlo's idealism and uses all of his powers to ensure that he can give Danlo "the gift of fire [so that he would] always...burn for something impossible to ever hold."
- Danlo's great quest, and initial belief, is in the 'Halla' nature of reality: all things exist in harmony and are good, but Hanuman, with his 'twisted compassion', teaches him the lesson that despite the fact that the universe is beautiful, it is also deeply flawed, with a deep crack of 'Shaida' (or disharmony/evil) running through it. Danlo comes to see that there is no escaping this.

Russell says

This is a rich and satisfying book. At times it's difficult, but that is because it's thought-provoking and intricate. However, this is all balanced on the beautiful world-building that Zindell has achieved; an effort that is both physical and metaphysical. And human. A wonderful experience.
