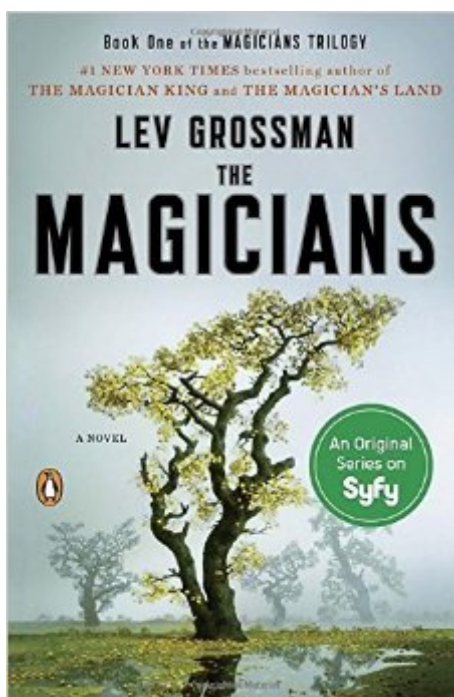


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The Magicians: A Novel (Magicians Trilogy)



Synopsis

The New York Times bestselling novel about a young man practicing magic in the real world, now an original series on Syfy

“The Magicians is to Harry Potter as a shot of Irish whiskey is to a glass of weak tea. . . . Hogwarts was never like this.” George R.R. Martin

“Sad, hilarious, beautiful, and essential to anyone who cares about modern fantasy.” Joe Hill

“A very knowing and wonderful take on the wizard school genre.” John Green

“The Magicians may just be the most subversive, gripping and enchanting fantasy novel I’ve read this century.” Cory Doctorow

“This gripping novel draws on the conventions of contemporary and classic fantasy novels in order to upend them.” . . . an unexpectedly moving coming-of-age story.

“The New Yorker” “The best urban fantasy in years.” A.V. Club

Quentin Coldwater is brilliant but miserable. A high school math genius, he’s secretly fascinated with a series of children’s fantasy novels set in a magical land called Fillory, and real life is disappointing by comparison. When Quentin is unexpectedly admitted to an elite, secret college of magic, it looks like his wildest dreams have come true. But his newfound powers lead him down a rabbit hole of hedonism and disillusionment, and ultimately to the dark secret behind the story of Fillory. The land of his childhood fantasies turns out to be much darker and more dangerous than he ever could have imagined. . . . The prequel to the New York Times bestselling book The Magician King and the #1 bestseller The Magician’s Land, The Magicians is one of the most daring and inventive works of literary fantasy in years. No one who has escaped into the worlds of Narnia and Harry Potter should miss this breathtaking return to the landscape of the imagination.

Book Information

Series: Magicians Trilogy (Book 1)

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Customer Reviews

Stop thinking this is a fantasy book. I know, I know, it's called "The Magicians," the plot synopsis references all three of the most famous fantasy series and describes a handful of familiar fantasy tropes, including the school of magic and the fairy tale land come to actual life. But forget all of that. I have read more fantasy books than I can remember -- I'm named for a character in perhaps the most famous fantasy series of all time -- and I'm telling you: "The Magicians" is not a fantasy. It has fantastic elements, yes. There is magic; there is a school for magic, where the characters learn to cast spells, using hand gestures and arcane language and strange mystical components -- Ziploc bag full of mutton fat, anyone? -- and there is a voyage from this world to another, a land of naiads and fauns and magical speaking animals, gods and demons, kings and queens, quests and wishes. But this book is something very different from the usual fantasy novel. In "The Magicians," Lev Grossman has done something unusual, and remarkable, perhaps even unique: this is a grown-up fantasy. This book is to fantasy what "The Grapes of Wrath" is to travel books, what "The Metamorphosis" is to self-help: so much more depressing and visceral and funny and horrifying, and genuine, and fascinating, and hard to read and therefore valuable, that it doesn't belong in the same category despite sharing some central traits. The setting is imagined, and there are supernatural things that happen, but make no mistake: this is a serious novel.

The Magicians by Lev Grossman is a well written story about a magical world, a fairly detailed world of rules and exceptions. The story, at one point, had a very poignant concept of what magic may be: That if the universe was a house that God made for everyone, that Magic was the tools he left behind, possibly by accident, in the garage. That perhaps using Magic was as dangerous as kids finding these power tools and such, and using them without direction or precaution. The characters in the story are fairly fleshed out, in that you have a good sense of what drives them, what makes them tick, you can see the dynamics between them. The description of the magic school Brakebills is very well done, filled with things that people don't understand about and that has a life of its own. And while at the very end there's something that can lead to a sequel, there's definitely an ending to this book, no gimmick cliffhanger that requires you to wait for the next book. Definitely, the book had the makings of a great story. Yet, I was left numb at the end, not happy, not sad, not scared. And that, really, is why I left this review with 3 stars. I read fiction to be entertained. This entertainment can be in the form of humor, feeling good, scared, excited, titillated, insightful, or some combination

thereof. Instead, when I read this book, I saw through the eyes of a fairly apathetic protagonist, who messes things up and blames everyone else, who had chances to become a hero and fails each time. I read about a person who wanted something, got it, didn't like it, and became apathetic. I read about the antagonist being defeated, the protagonist winning in the end, and no one feeling ... well, happy for having accomplished anything. Perhaps this is what real life can be.

I was given this book as a gift, and finally sat down to read it. After the first thirty pages or so, I was still wondering what the book was supposed to be. Was it fantasy? (No.) Was it homage? (No.) Was it parody? (No.) Was it an exercise in existential ennui? (Maybe, but not a well done one.) I kept reading, hoping that the book would hit its stride as the plot engaged and as I got to know the characters.....but the book sputters along with no real plot, very little character development, and the oddest choices in pacing that I've read in a long while. No plot: there really isn't a story here. The book follows Quentin's (the main character's) life in fits and starts as events happen to him, and as he whines to himself about it, but there is no story arc to pull you in and keep the reader engaged. Things just happen, and then another thing happens, and then something unrelated happens. Add to that the fact that the prose is klunky and occasionally florid, and you've got a book that requires more work to read than it should. I found myself speed-reading three and four pages at a time, and missing nothing essential. (In fairness, noticing and fixing stuff like that is an editor's job, and this book might read a lot better if it had gotten a sterner editing.) It might be possible for a book to thrive without a strong storyline or plot, if there are characters you can care for. I could not come to believe in these characters, much less care about them; they are too one dimensional, and that dimension is the same for all of them (angsty). Quentin especially just goes where events pull him, as though he is just the author's puppet. And despite those events, he remains essentially the same brat at the end as at the beginning: whiny, self-absorbed, and unlikeable.

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