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The Magicians: A Novel



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. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I got this book because the great podcast Nancy described it as Potter for grown ups, featuring that rare thing, a fully realized gay protagonist. Not true at all. Eliot is first of all a side character, secondly a 1950s-style tortured homosexual, and extremely fey to boot. The actual protagonist is a boring teenage boy with minimal personality. This book occasionally comes to life - the author is extremely nimble at portraying alternate worlds and magical events - but as another reviewer noted, it mostly trudges along, tempting you to put it down and move on to a better novel.

This is a surprisingly adult take on a world like Harry Potter or Narnia. Most books you read about magical worlds follow children, but the characters in "The Magicians" are far past the age of innocent wonder. That tweak results in much deeper, darker themes and conclusions; our main character--the introverted Quentin Coldwater--frequently questions his own motivations and searches for a greater sense of purpose that seems to be evading him throughout his life. Through his struggles, we're asked many of the same questions. Is there more to life than seeking to have success? What do you do when you have it? I don't want to spoil the story for those who might read it, but this book isn't about high-flying emotion and unflinching heroes conquering the great enemy of their era. It's about real-life people dealing with real-life problems that are inescapable, no matter how much magical power you have. The characters are very real, flawed people, and their depression and disillusionment is both refreshingly uncommon and a bit unnerving in books like this. If you are expecting your typical fantasy tale, you may be sorely disappointed. The fantasy elements are there, but they run secondary to the characters and their thoughts as they deal with life. I thoroughly enjoyed it, even if it was a bit of a downer.

The Magicians is the addicting tale following Quentin Coldwater, a depressed teenager that is constantly in search of something to make him happy. He discovers Brakebills, a magic university, and is admitted to study magic. Realizing that magic is real, Quentin is temporarily happy until the luster wears off and his studies become just another normal thing for him. He finally finds out that his childhood dreams are a reality when he discovers the land of Fillory is real, but he also discovers that not everything is as it seems. Some may describe the book as Harry Potter for adults, and while

I could see the comparison, it's got a completely different feel. The focus is more about the characters, especially on how each of them has been damaged in some way, than about the wondrous discovery of magic. There's also less focus on schooling. It's still a very well-crafted story, if depressing at points, and worth reading.

So I saw the product description and the reviews... Harry Potter but for adults. Maybe a little pretentious. Maybe not. Maybe a bit too much sex. Maybe not. Maybe brilliant. Maybe not. Maybe fantasy. Maybe seeing it as a fantasy book was all wrong. Okay, I had to check this one out for myself. Yes there is a school for magicians here. The school, it basically chooses you when the time is right - which appears to be about the time you'd be considering colleges. If you notice it is attempting to contact you and bother to answer, you'll be given a test. Few will pass and be admitted into the school. Quentin was one of the ones who did. He was sure it'd change his life. Make him happy. After all, he'd been waiting to find that magic was real all of his life, having read and re-read books about Fillory a magical world all its own - he'd always wished he could find the kind of joy the kids in those books had found. It quickly becomes obvious that Quentin is so broken that nothing, not even magical worlds will ever be enough to make him happy. Not alcohol, drugs, women, sex, love, nothing. He's rather self-absorbed, never seems to grow, to learn anything from all he goes through - even though we see him age several years in this book and he does go through a few major events he could have learned from. It's not until the end of the book that you start to think he might be changing and then it's set up for a sequel which makes you wonder... Still despite how incredibly frustrating Quentin can be, the story itself is pretty decent. Well written. It's fun. There's the "real world", the Brakebills school world where the magicians get their training, the Fillory world where the humans are mostly seen as oddities but oddities who are the only ones allowed to become queens and kings of this world. I liked it enough that if I notice the sequel I'll get it, but I'm not so obsessed that I'd be stalking the author's pages waiting to pre-order it.

I came to this book after finishing the second season of the show. I have to say that the two of them are very different animals. While the show has remained true to the main characters it is truly its own thing and it charts its own path. It is a coming of age story at its heart that spans the years the main character attends a magical university. I found it to be an easy and quick read. Entertaining throughout and really picking up the pace the last 100 pages or so. If you enjoy magic and coming of age stories then you will enjoy this book.

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