



Master and Fool

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The Known Lands are teetering on the brink of war. Desperate to avert worldwide catastrophe, Jack, the baker's boy, must learn to harness the full strength of his magic to face his ultimate destiny--a final confrontation with the murderously evil Kylock.

Master and Fool Details

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From Reader Review Master and Fool for online ebook

Karen Cowgill says

Whoa! Read this book in two sittings.

Adam Koerner says

So I've officially finished the "Book of Words" trilogy.

Needless to say, I'm reminded why I love it so much. It really does engage me in an emotional way that doesn't happen too often. At the same time, I'm also reminded of how much the final book annoys me.

First off, there are a bunch of subplots that are introduced as solely filler. This author gets you to be emotionally involved with the characters, then introduces subplots that you just don't care about. At the end of the day, I ended up getting bored in a few chapters.

I also really didn't like the treatment of Melli in this book. She spends the whole 2nd book being built up as this strong and independent woman, and in the final book, she is basically torn back down and relegated to "damsel in distress".

All in all, I love the story arc, and fully enjoyed the trilogy for the third time.

Mike (the Paladin) says

The conclusion of the trilogy. I liked it. One thing I continue to point out, looking at a synopsis you may say that this sounds like "standard fantasy". the character types will be familiar...in this volume Jack must learn to handle his "newly discovered" magical ability. Seen it before, right? but these are still fresh. the characters are their own and they are good stories. Enjoy.

Laura says

AMAZING!!!

I loved these books! The ending was satisfying... I was scared the author was going to put a major horrible twist with some loved character dying.. but no!

Tawl <3 im glad you got all your heart desired!

I loved how everyone in the books all came together to sort out the problems and that this book was unpredictable, well written and kept me from going to bed at 7 and reading till late into the night... the type of book I carried around with me at all times...

Im sad its over, but it was very very satisfying :)

I love you J.V. Jones

Benolio says

Good but not Great

This segment focuses heavily on action and most of the mysteries have been resolved. It's still solid storytelling. I would recommend the entire series for some cozy fantasy. It is addicting.

S Pearlyan says

3.5 stars.

I liked how Jones tied up all the loose ends, But I also felt that they tied up too neatly.

Few things made me feel like I'm watching a movie where everything comes together, just because it had to end.

That said, It was definitely a fun read and I don't mind the fact that I spent last 6 hours doing nothing but reading it.

James says

Going into this book I was wondering how J.v. Jones was going to tie off so many loose ends in one book. Luckily, this did not lead to a plot line that stretched the imagination or a really quick narrative that failed to entertain. No, instead it produced an action packed book, literally teeming with adventures, fun and whatnot. A perfect ending to a perfect series.

I was tempted when I put it down to give it a five stars but then I thought a moment and decided that it was a very high four Stars. Now, having written this review, I can't think of any reason why this isn't more. This book is definitely brilliant enough for the full **Five Stars**

The plot, as I have already mentioned, was choca-bloc full of action that failed to slow down for even a minute. Really, you picked it up and wondered how Jack who was only now learning some sorcery, going to progress quick enough to finish the book. Then, you promptly forgot about the question as you were swept away by the amazingly intricate plot. And then, when it did come to point that Jack needed his sorcery, it was done so that his lack of training was taken into account and it was all probable and possible. Then you had Melli's tale, which was unique for me and really... it didn't slow the book down, but rather gave it rest point I think. Her anguish and the power of her emotions was compelling reading. Tawl's quest was also really good fun to read, and managed to break any clichés about a knight errant doing good, despite the fact that that was exactly what he was. Then the way that these plot lines all converged was brilliant, and showed a clever mind behind it all and great planning.

I also really enjoyed Jack's history, and the way that it was slowly revealed to us. It really added something extra and personal to Jack's struggle, and helped clear up many hazy points - even a barely remembered note from the first book. I was also intrigued in the way that she dealt with the *sister for a lover* in the prophecy, and felt that the way that it was handled was just right and left me heartbroken for them, slightly perturbed and intrigued as to what they did in the future. That plot line could easily have been the downfall of the book,

but it was written and handled so well that it was 'just another part of the book', and really only stood out because of the anguish it caused.

Now, Jones knows how to create characters and I think this book is just another expertly done specimen of that skill that an increasing number of authors seem to lack. I won't go on and on about how great they are, but suffice to say that her characterisation was so well done that she managed to turn clichéd stereotypes (High lady in distress, troubled Knight and really powerful Peasant etc etc) into original, individual beings that came alive on the page. Probably the best evidence of great character writing, and reason alone to read this book.

And of course her writing. She writes really well, there are no abrasive sentences that jar you out of the book, no poorly chosen words, no nothing that can be construed as bad. Instead, her writing is descriptive, yet lets you imagine everything for yourself, flowing, without becoming plain, and interesting without detracting from the story. I don't want to sound self-aggrandizing, but I can see my own writing style within her work; of course, my writing is a much more amateurish, low level version but I like to think that it means I have a future.

I was also pleased to note that she left the book open at the end, with none of the characters actually becoming 'settled' (though you could argue Melli has), and it leaves the book open for further series in this world and with those characters. I don't know if this would be a good thing or not, but I would definitely read them and like the fact that they could come back.

My only complaints were that, if I had to make any, would be that she didn't pace the series that well. The first two were fun but comparatively slow compared to this one, and as a result I feel... I don't know. But for example, if Larn had been destroyed in the second book then... I don't know, really I am picking here, and even then... No, there are no really valid complaints to make

So, anyway, I would recommend this book to anyone who loves fantasy and would beg those of you are staying away from it because it looks cliched to give it a go - you will be pleasantly surprised. If you are new to the genre then this trilogy is not a bad place to start if you want to taste what is on offer.

Have Fun Reading.

Kyle says

Not as great as I'd hoped but still a really good ending to the epic trilogy.

First, it's going to be hard to write this review without spoilers but I'm going to do my best. This book continues to follow the pattern of the previous two books in the series by bouncing from main character to main character to drive the plot forward. As the story is told from each of these character's points of view you learn more and more about that character thus building a rich and detailed picture of just who they are. Because of this, the characters are very much real breathing people. You really get what motivates them. What makes them strong. What makes them weak.

In addition to creating detailed characters, J.V. Jones has also created a very real world for the characters to live in. When the characters travel, for example, it's more than hoping on a horse, finish the chapter, and then the next chapter they are where they need to be. There are real obstacles to traveling in this world:

mountains, bandits, weather, shifty innkeepers, and on and on. It gives the world a depth and character that so many novels lack. The great thing, Jones does all this without slowing down the pace of the storytelling at all.

The pacing in this book is much faster than in the previous books. As I had expected, the first two books really worked toward the major climax contained in this book. This is where all the detailed plot lines, that have been developing through the previous books, come together. All the questions get answered.

So why not five stars? I guess in the end it came down to believability. Again without spoiling anything I just think the way things ended could have been done in a way that was a bit more believable and not quite so fantastic. Yeah, I know it's a "fantasy" novel but you can only stretch that so far and I think this went just a bit too far. I still really enjoyed it, just don't think it was worth five stars.

The Book of Words is a series that is very much worth reading!

Adam Whitehead says

Melliandra, Maybor and Tawl are in hiding in the city of Bren as the mad King Kylock expands his power across the north. As armies march and cities burn, Jack discovers how to control his power and learns that his road leads to the forbidding island of Larn.

Master and Fool is the final volume of J.V. Jones's Book of Words trilogy. As is traditional with these sort of things, epic climaxes are reached, daring deeds are undertaken and destinies are fulfilled. However, Jones undertakes these actions with unusual cynicism, showing there is a cost to victory and no triumph is unmarred by tragedy.

Jones's writing skills have improved from book to book in this series, with the somewhat jarring tonal shifts of the first volume (from tragedy to black comedy and back again) now smoothed other by more natural transitions. Unlike the second volume, which was prone to time-filling wheel-spinning, this third book is fairly jam-packed with plot development. In fact, it's rather too full and a long and epic journey that fills the middle part of the book whilst events are on hold back in Bren feels a bit implausible. It may have been better for Jones to have restructured this series and allowed this journey to begin in the second volume (sacrificing the more tedious and disposable Jack scenes at the farm if necessary). As it stands, whilst Jack and Tawl are off having an epic adventure we have to endure quite a few unpleasant scenes of Melliandra being tormented in prison, which get redundant quite quickly.

In fact, given Melliandra's character growth in the second volume, it's disappointing to see her relegated to the standard damsel in distress role here, whilst Jack and Tawl get to do the whole traditional hero's journey, male-bonding thing. In fact, given that the trilogy moves away from the standard epic fantasy template several times in its earlier volumes, it's rather disheartening that the author returns so quickly to the genre's standard tropes in the final volume. Even one of the more interesting devices, of using castle guards Bodger and Grift to offer commentary on what's going on around them, is marred by having the two guards join forces with our heroes and become more central characters, which feels like an indulgence. More satisfying by far is Tavalisk's lazy villainy and attempts to manipulate events from afar, which backfire on him most amusingly.

Whilst the ending is problematic - and one character arc is left rather blatantly unresolved for the sort-of sequel series *Sword of Shadows* to address - there are still positives to take from it. Jones's actual writing and characterisation are reasonable and things are wrapped up satisfactorily without being too neat. The trilogy as a whole is definitely one of the better examples of mid-1990s epic fantasy, even moreso for being an example of the darker direction the genre was headed in regardless of *A Game of Thrones* (the first two volumes of *Book of Words* came out before it).

Master and Fool (****½) is a solid - if flawed - conclusion to Jones's opening trilogy, but is only a hint of how much better she gets later on.

Evgeny says

The prophesy, which was revealed practically in the beginning of the first book finally came to pass. Despite this fact it was not clear up until the middle of this book how exactly things will end: the world was too bleak and gloomy for ordinary happy end.

At this point I have to talk about the whole trilogy. The first book was really good; the series would have its place among the classic of the genre had the last two been on the same level. Unfortunately the second book was plain boring after the first one. The last one was a big improvement, and it came very close to the first one; almost, but not quite.

The characters varied from very interesting to annoying. Nabber is the best character in the series, bar none. He managed to stay interesting through all books, something everybody else failed. Tawl was good in the first book, completely boring in the second, and somewhat good in the last one.

Melli completely falls flat. I have yet to see the more annoying good character in a book. She always comes up as an entitled brat, even while being imprisoned. Speaking about being imprisoned, I think the main and the only purpose she served in the book was being a damsel in distress. At no point she did anything useful at all to try escaping. Instead all other good guys (and even not-so-good woman) kept rescuing her. It is not that the author cannot write strong women: Jack's mother IS a very strong woman; unfortunately she is only shown in flashbacks.

I really cannot say anything - good or bad - about Jack. He serves his purpose in the book well, but that is all. Bodger and Grift provide really good comic relief, if a little annoying at times. Baralis and Maybor are brilliant in the first book and fairly good in the next two. The head of knights would make a very good villain had he been given a POV in the book; without it his motives remain completely unclear through the whole series.

All in all, the first book was very good and this is what kept me reading to the end. Having finished the trilogy, I now also want to read the other fantasy books written by its author.

Coming back to this book, it was a great improvement of the second one, but not as good as the first one. I rated the first one with 4.5 stars, but rounded it down; I give this book 3.5 stars, but round it up, so the whole rating should even out.

Marit says

Each installment in the Book of Words trilogy is better than the last. Jones takes stereotypical fantasy characters, a fair knight, a beautiful highborn lady, a nobody boy with earth-shaking magical powers, and turns them into real people with depth whom you grow strongly attached to. The plot is intricate but never cobweb-messy and the pace is kept up by Jones' switching to different viewpoints within chapters. The writing itself is not remarkable but more straightforward and no-nonsense. I recommend this trilogy for anyone looking for an intriguing, fast-paced fantasy escape.

Benjamin Thomas says

A terrific finale to the trilogy! When I originally picked up the first book in the set, *The Baker's Boy* I remember thinking this would be a bit of a risk. It appeared to be traditional fantasy, similar to so much of what was coming out in the '90s and it would require some investment of time on my part. I even referred to the title of the first book as implying this would be an 'assistant pig-keeper' sort of fantasy trilogy...more fluff than anything else. Would it be worth my time? Fortunately the answer was yes and I was happily wrong about that first book. I was quickly hooked on the characters, the setting, and the plot that was being developed right from the beginning.

Now, looking back on the entire trilogy, I am happy as a pig in mud. The promises developed in book one were thoroughly explored in book two and rose to a crescendo here in book three. There are a lot of plot lines and subplots that came to a head, as one would expect from the final book in a trilogy. But little of it was predictable. The suspenseful buildup was extremely well done and the characters, somehow, became even more real. One can see Ms Jones' progress as a writer throughout each of these books (her first three published novels) and her reputation is well deserved. I love it when I finish the last page of an awesome series and feel completely satisfied. I look back over the story days later and it brings a smile to my face. I just sit back in my chair and sigh with happiness. This is that kind of trilogy.

Carrie Mudge says

The best of the series. A good plot twist kick starts the action, and the book proceeds at a quickened pace to its predecessors, with all the major characters becoming fully realised and even more interesting. A fairly satisfying ending - a couple of strands tied up a bit too glibly (the Knights' camp scene), but overall very well done. The only thing that was missing was resolution to the Kedrac sideline, he just dropped off the map. A wee additional epilogue, to link him in with Melli's ultimate situation, would have been the final tidy-up.

Ebi says

An engrossing conclusion to the Book of Words. J.V Jones breaks up a lot of tropes, but also uses a lot of them, so a mixed bag in that sense. Things don't turn out as you thought they might, but they turn out just fine. Isn't that what life is mostly about anyway?

Can't review it in greater detail without giving away spoilers, so I'll just say that the series is a good read. It won't change the way you look at things, it won't make you think too much, and it is lacking in depth, but it's a good trilogy to spend a week on.

Data says

Hurray! a trilogy that ends, before I got tired of the characters (and before they all died). A bit silly that I am so easy to please, but I just can't help myself sometimes.
