



'One of the most extravagantly fantastical worlds I've ever seen' – Orson Scott Card on *Greatshadow*

JAMES MAXEY

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Book Three in the stunning *Dragon Apocalypse Trilogy*

Five hundred years ago, the famed Witchbreaker, **Lord Stark Tower**, launched a war against the cult of witches, nearly wiping them out. Today, only a handful of women still practice the craft in secret. A young witch named *Sorrow* has dedicated her life to changing this reality, vowing to wipe out the Church of the Book and launch a new golden age of witchcraft. In pursuit of her goals, she bonds her soul with Rott, the primal dragon of decay, giving her nearly limitless powers of destruction. Unfortunately, tapping this power comes at the cost of her humanity, leading her into a desperate quest to find the greatest witch of all time, Avaris, in hopes of mastering her dark magic before it destroys her. But she's not alone in hunting Avaris, as fate throws her into an uneasy partnership with a man who wants to be the new Witchbreaker. Can either of them survive their mutual quests when their journey leads them into battle with Tempest, the primal dragon of storms?

Witchbreaker Details

Date : Published December 25th 2012 by Solaris (first published June 26th 2012)

ISBN : 9781781080627

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Format : Paperback 403 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Science Fiction Fantasy

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From Reader Review Witchbreaker for online ebook

Mieneke says

Witchbreaker is the third in James Maxey's *Dragon Apocalypse* series. I tremendously enjoyed the previous two books, *Greatshadow* and *Hush*, and I was really looking forward to this book, which I thought was the concluding volume. The good news is that *Witchbreaker* is just as fun as the other books; the bad news is that although it is the last volume, the story ends on an open-ended note. It makes for a dissatisfying ending to a fabulous series and I'm hoping that Maxey will return to this world in the future to give us the rest of the story. Before it sounds as if I'm being overly critical, let's jump into the review and you'll understand my reasoning.

Where *Greatshadow* and *Hush* centred on Infidel as their protagonist, in *Witchbreaker* the focus shifts to Sorrow, the witch we first met in *Hush*. It makes sense in terms of Infidel's story arc and the way the previous books were narrated, as Stagger, the narrator, is now otherwise occupied. In Sorrow we get another interesting female point of view, though one which left me a little conflicted at times. While Sorrow's development throughout the book was interesting and I liked it a lot, she also feels as a mouthpiece at times. Perhaps due to the fact that I've been reading a lot about the treatment of women in SFF in the past months, I felt that there were a lot of parallels between that conversation and Sorrow's view of the world. While I'm convinced the book is meant to add to the larger conversation, not as snide commentary on said conversation, and the books in the *Dragon Apocalypse* definitely ace the Bechdel test in spades – not to mention Maxey's previous portrayals of women, such as Infidel, Aurora, and the Black Swan – it was a little unsubtle to say the least. Especially as much of what drives Sorrow's quest for power and her hatred of both the Church of the Book and her general hatred and distrust of men, comes from what seem to be daddy-issues. Of course, having your father hang your grandmother as a witch is bound to leave some scars, but then planning to destroy the Church that condemns witches might be seen as extreme, even if there are very good reasons to dislike the Church of the Book tremendously. What I loved about Sorrow's character development in the book is that while she never loses the desire to avenge herself on her father and the Church, she does learn that not all men are evil and to let down her walls and allow herself to care for and trust those around her, especially the Romer family. Her growth felt genuine and not spurred by her desire for a man, even if there is a clear love story in the book.

Maxey's dialogue in *Witchbreaker* is again quite snappy and funny and he manages to mix lots of humour in with some genuinely touching and emotional scenes. My particular favourite secondary characters were Slate, Sorrow's reluctant partner in the hunt for Avaris, Bigsby, the former-fishmonger-turned-princess dwarf, and the Romer family. They all have separate emotional journeys to travel during the book and they all teach Sorrow something about herself. I especially found Bigsby's acceptance of his cross-dressing needs touching as it meant he was able to embrace all of himself and it meant that he wasn't just meant as comic relief, his was a story in its own right. The same goes for the Romer clan, whose matriarch has to learn to let go, only to learn that her chicks can fly, but choose to remain in the nest for a while longer. Their close-knit family, the love they share and their natural inclusion of Sorrow as one of them is one of the bigger impetuses for Sorrow's growth along the way and they are really quite wonderful. We see even more of the various dragons and of the powers at play in the world Maxey has created here and both the dragons and the closer look at other parts of the world were fascinating.

All of which makes the ending even more disappointing. While there is a solution to this story, the ending does sort of leave our characters in medias res and I really hope that Maxey returns to this world in a new series or even in a standalone, as when I finished the book I really thought that there'd been a change of plans

and that there would be a fourth book, as the story doesn't seem done. So what does that mean for my opinion on the book? As the next book in the series and as part of the *Dragon Apocalypse* series it was a great book and a wonderful continuation of the story. As the final book in the series? I was left wanting, without the insurance of more to come. So would I recommend picking up this book? Yes, if you've read the previous two and enjoyed them a lot or you're a completist. If you haven't started this series yet, I'd definitely read books one and two, but hold off on *Witchbreaker* until you're sure that you like the world and its characters and/or it's announced Maxey will return to this story in a follow-up series.

This book was provided for review by the publisher.

Robert says

I was under the impression that this was the end of this series. It is not. This saddens and excites me at the same time. I'm glad to have one more to read, but I really thought things were going to be wrapped up this book. Plus I don't want to wait for the next installment. But enough bitching. Much like my previous reviews on this series I'll say this: corny as hell premise and wildly over the top fantasy, but great characters, character development and plot keep this adventure rolling right along. C'mon Maxey, stop GRRMing it and get with the finale already!! Lol

Ruth says

c2012: FWFTB: weaving, dragon, decay, primal, Sorrow. Utterly engrossing whilst I was reading it and I loved the turnaround of Sorrow. I knew that this wasn't going to be higher than a 3 stars, though, when I couldn't actually remember the ending a day after finishing the book. But I did remember Stagger! And one of the scenes was very reminiscent of a scene I watched during the original 'V' series on TV. Recommended to the normal crew. *"A wriggling rat had been a horrifying meal, but it wasn't at the top of the list of the worst things she'd put in her mouth."*

James says

I somewhat doubted that this third book in this series could be pulled off after reading the end of the second, but this was very, very well done. Maxey is very talented writer who seems to not get the credit he deserves. This series is soooo good and really needs to continue.

This book focused on a minor character from the 2nd novel and though I had my doubts Maxey worked his magic. He even wove in a few scenes with the previous main character which I enjoyed.

The thing I think I like the best about this series is how Maxey finds an interesting middle ground for his characters' magic abilities. What I mean is that usually magic is either under or over explained. Under like Lord of the rings for example, where we had no insight at all into "how", or over like Brandon Sanderson for example, where there could be a whole novel written explaining just the mechanics and rules of how that particular magic "system" works. Maxey uses a beautiful middle ground where each character's source of power is unique and fascinating. Genius that is underappreciated in my opinion.

Characters, plot, writing, etc is all solid, minus a few typos. Highly recommended to those who read the first two.

Melissa Hayden says

This is Sorrow's journey in what she wants and what she learns, sometimes they are connected but don't lead to the same result.

****FULL REVIEW TO FOLLOW****

Rob Slaven says

As is my usual preamble, I received this book as part of a GoodReads giveaway. In fact, I would like to thank the author once again because not only did he send me this book in specific, but also the two predecessors as well. Despite this very kind consideration, I give my honest feedback below.

So, you've no doubt noticed that in addition to this book I also made my way through the previous two books the author sent along. When I received the unexpectedly voluminous package in the mail I will admit that my first thought was, to put it succinctly, "I sure hope these don't suck." There's nothing worse than 1100 pages that you feel mildly obligated to read. Luckily, those thousand plus pages were really quite engaging.

In previous reviews I've gone on and on about Maxey's originality, his ability to stretch the typical "ogres and dwarves" platform to entertaining limits and his unique ability to mix sex, violence and fantasy in just the right ratios. In deference to those recent reviews I won't prattle on further about those characteristics. However, a new thing that I realized about the series in this book specifically was that he has a very solid way of just letting things go once they've played out. In a lot of modern books characters and plotlines carry on far beyond their welcome. They're like Joe Montana in a Chiefs uniform. You can understand why someone might have thought it was a good idea but ultimately you just wonder if it would have been better had things just ended. Authors seem to get married to their characters and drag them on and on through book after book. In Maxey's books when a character's work is done they just die. You mourn for a moment and then, like life, Maxey comes along with something else to entertain you. He's an author who's in love with his world, but like any God he's willing to just let bits and pieces go for the benefit of the whole. It's surprisingly refreshing.

In summary, I will relate a brief illustrative story. My fiancée perused a few pages on the strength of my previous reviews and after a short read she handed it back to me and stated simply, "reads like Tolkien." Early on I had the same thought but felt it rather cliché to put such a thing in a review but I think she's right. There's just something that rings true about Maxey's work, a richness that's missing in almost of all of his modern peers. It should be noted that my fiancée didn't express any desire to read the rest; this is clearly 'guy lit' but that should not diminish the positivity with which it should be regarded.

LaGina says

I would like to thank Mr. James Maxey for sending the first 2 books when I was told that I was a Goodreads winner of book #3. I tried to read book 3 so I could get a review up but I couldn't get into the book because I didn't know what was going on. So I had to start at book #1. With book #1 and 2 read I was able to get into the book # better and I have to admit that I was really drawn into the book. It was one of those books that I didn't know if I was going to like because it was outside of the main genre I read but I am so glad I did.

Denise says

I look so forward to book 4. One of my all time favorite series. I wouldn't normally pick up a series like this but so glad book 1 was lent to me. I'm right there with the characters from front to back.

Alan says

This is the third of this 4 book series and as much as I loved the first two, I have struggled with this one. The first two books were following our heroine Infidel and were narrated by Stagger her companion when we first come upon them. Although his role has many twists and turns. Book three however focusses on The Witch we encountered earlier in the series. Sorrow the weaver and Slate a sort of not quite human Knight. I don't know why but I just struggled through the book. I have started book 4, Cinder and it seems to be much more to my liking.

Gavin Gates says

In the third and final instalment of 'The Dragon Apocalypse' Maxey once again comes up trumps, as with the previous two novels the worlds and realities created are expanded upon and stretched to their absolute limits, from the opening chapter on Maxey delivers faultless high fantasy in an effortless fashion. The characters that were previously essential to carrying through the massive story lines aren't all necessarily kept on for the sake of familiarity or convenience, instead pushing old and new to the forefront with perfect results. The interaction between dragons, spirits normal men and women and everything inbetween is as sharp and entertaining as has come to be expected and the action is second to none and while the end of 'The Dragon Apocalypse' is left open, this adventure is wrapped up faultlessly and as far as I'm concerned the essential read of the past 18 months.

I really hope there is a follow on adventure in the making.

Searksa GreyRaven says

I'm torn on this one. On one hand, it had some truly amazing descriptions and a pretty solid plot. On the other...it many of the character interactions felt more like philosophical rants forced by the author than genuine character expressions. I found myself skipping page after page of this just to get to the good parts.

Still, it's a solid series with an awesome setting. Worth the read, if you can stomach the stream of existential debate.

Amy says

I admit to coming to this novel skeptically. The first two books in the series were wonderful, and the second novel granted such an excellent sense of closure that I didn't want to continue--particularly with newish characters who are, shall we say, "lacking" in certain heroic traits. I find it perplexing that this is to be the final novel in the series, particularly since we've changed narrative perspectives in this book. However, Maxey manages to make the antihero, Sorrow, into a character I don't mind hanging out with. She's all at once powerful and pathetic, and I found myself rooting for her despite her contradictions. I'm certainly looking forward to seeing what this author writes next.

Johan says

Yeah, watching Sorrow travel through the world after the events of the previous books really opened my thinking to how the characters interact and seeing how the world responds to them.

The primal dragons are crazy and and insane and magnificent in the way the author portrays them. Awesome

Peace out
