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Master of the Five Magics by Lyndon Hardy: A Timeless Fantasy Classic ===== Hardy's Master of the Five Magics is a seminal work in the fantasy genre, published in 1980 and still widely acclaimed today. This novel has stood the test of time, captivating readers with its intricate world-building, complex magic system, and engaging protagonist. The book follows Alodar, a journeyman magician learning the five arts of magic, as he navigates his quest to distinguish himself sufficiently to wed Queen Vendora. As a must-read for fantasy enthusiasts, Hardy's novel has been consistently praised for its meticulous attention to detail and logical explanation of magical laws. Critics have noted that the book is an early example of hard fantasy, with its focus on magic systems and world-building. The author's work has also been compared to that of other notable fantasy authors, such as Robert Jordan and Robin Hobb. The novel's success can be attributed to Hardy's masterful storytelling, which balances action, adventure, and character development. Alodar's journey is both personal and epic, as he faces challenges and obstacles that test his skills and resolve. The supporting cast, including Aerial, adds depth and complexity to the narrative, making it impossible not to become invested in their fates. With its richly detailed world-building and innovative magic system, Hardy's Master of the Five Magics remains a beloved classic in the fantasy genre. This is a book that will appeal to fans of science fiction, as well, with its exploration of logical magical laws and rules-based magic. The novel's enduring popularity is a testament to Hardy's skill as a writer and his ability to create immersive, engaging stories that continue to captivate readers today. Fans can find the first edition of Master of the Five Magics available on various platforms, including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, GooglePlay, or Apple Books. Thaumaturges wear brown capes, and are treated as common craftsmen, using their art to fix leaks in roofs and increase the yield of crops. To become a thaumaturge, one has to apprentice themselves to a master. After proving a certain level of mastery, they become a journeyman. And once they prove themselves, they can become a master thaumaturge. Cunning is the most important attribute a thaumaturge can have. Magical Objects and Rituals in Master of the Five Magics ===== Rituals are a crucial aspect of magic, with different sequences having numerical values that can be combined to create powerful objects. These rituals require dedication and study, often involving large Orders of magicians. The more complex the ritual, the greater the reward, but also the longer it takes to master. Magical Objectives The creation of magical objects is a central concept in Master of the Five Magics. By arranging numerals in a mathematically perfect sequence, powerful objects can be created. These objects have numerical values that reflect their power and complexity. Initiates and Acolytes Initiates are neophytes who perform simple tasks and aid in rituals, but are not allowed to study magic. Once they've proven their knowledge, they become Acolytes. To become a Master, it takes significantly more study and dedication. Sorcery Sorcery is the control of one mind by another, often involving eye contact and recitation of charms. The Rule of Three governs sorcery, requiring each charm to be recited three times. Once committed, a charm cannot be abandoned or misspoken, as this can have severe consequences. Wizardry Wizardry is governed by the Laws of Ubiquity and Dichotomy. The Law of Ubiquity involves using fire to open a passage to the realm of demons, while the Law of Dichotomy requires a master and slave, with the wizard being stronger or the demon being stronger in a contest of wills. Metamagic Metamagic is the art of manipulating the seven laws that govern the other five magics. It involves suspending the current rules, replacing them with new rules, and then reinstating the rules. This skill allows for greater control over magic and can lead to significant breakthroughs in understanding and application. Influence on Popular Culture Master of the Five Magics has had a significant impact on popular culture, inspiring works such as Megadeth's song "Five Magics" and influencing authors like Patrick Rothfuss and Richard Garfield. The concept of magic systems in fantasy literature has also been influenced by this book. The author's initial impression of the book was lukewarm, largely due to a dislike for the main character, which gradually changed as the story progressed. Given the book's age, the characters can be seen as somewhat one-dimensional, but the character development and overarching theme make up for this. The magic system is a significant strength, with all five magics working well individually and blending together in a pleasing manner. The book is highly recommended for those interested in compelling magic systems and satisfying stories. ===== The characters in this story are stiff and unnatural, with dialogue that could benefit from some starching. The women in the narrative are largely one-dimensional, with only a few being genuinely relatable. The Queen is depicted as busty and beautiful, while a reheaded character serves as an alternative love interest. Ultimately, the hero emerges victorious, defeats his enemies, and wins the heart of the Queen. The plot has its moments, but it often feels like a hindrance to reaching the conclusion. The pacing falters at times, making it difficult to become invested in the story. However, the ending could be waved off as filler, lacking the engagement that the previous chapters struggled to provide. Overall, this book falls into the category of being "good bad." It has enough flaws to be considered objectively terrible, yet avoids some of the more egregious mistakes that make a book truly bad. Unfortunately, it lacks sufficient redeeming qualities to elevate it beyond mediocrity. I recall working in the maintenance department at the University of Houston during the late 1980s and discovering Rick, a carpenter with an appreciation for books. He recommended "Master of the Five Magics" and handed me his battered copy. I read it over several days, enjoyed it, but didn't give it much thought beyond that initial enthusiasm. Revisiting this book 30 years later has provided new insights, revealing its value despite some shortcomings. The novel's influence can be seen in various forms of media, including a Megadeth song and the "Kingkiller Chronicles" series by Pat Rothfuss. Its detailed system of magical laws serves as the backbone of the narrative. The story follows Alodar, a hero who must master five arts to restore his family's honor. He becomes entangled with the Queen, Vendora, but also develops feelings for her advisor, Aerial. The journey takes him to battle against the Demon Prince, and while it has its moments, the pacing is inconsistent. My initial impression was that this book was enjoyable but forgettable. However, my perspective has shifted over time, revealing that "Master of the Five Magics" is a more engaging read than I initially thought. Its unique magical system and influence on popular culture have contributed to its enduring appeal. The Master of the Five Magics, written by Jack L. Chabot, has undergone a renaissance in recent years, with many readers rediscovering its charm. This author's earlier works had sparked disappointment due to a perceived decline in quality; however, this book stands out as an enjoyable reread. ## The story benefits from a more cinematic view in the reader's imagination, allowing for better understanding of the plot. While character development is somewhat lacking, the characters' roles are well-suited to the narrative. The intricate magical system, however, serves as the standout feature, showcasing Hardy's dedication to crafting a believable universe. ## Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that the author focused on developing a logical magic system rather than creating a richly detailed world. By doing so, he successfully introduces five distinct schools of magic, each with its own rules and limitations. The action picks up significantly in the final stages as Alodar confronts the Demon Prince. ## Ultimately, this novel falls into the realm of genre-pulp fiction but excels within it. With an enjoyment factor that trumps rating considerations, I found "Master of the Five Magics" to be an entertaining read. Its follow-up, "Secret of the Sixth Magic," has already been deemed a worthy successor, and my review will provide further insight once completion is achieved. ===== The world of epic fantasy is slowly shifting towards a new model, one where each book serves as a self-contained novella with its own unique plot, offering a more satisfying experience for readers. ===== A well-crafted execution can elevate this genre, and the author's vision shines through despite any flaws. The story is driven by action and narrative, making it an easy read for those who enjoy fast-paced fantasy. A recent re-read of this book revealed that its appeal lies in its unique blend of Arabian Nights flavors and a hard magic system, which set it apart from other works in the genre. Characterisation: Alodar is driven, determined and rather too lacking in actual convincing emotion although we are led to believe he is struggling against having feelings for Aerial, and she, too, is rather thinly sketched whereas other characters are thinner still to the point of sometimes being caricature as in the case of the Queen. But it is a good adventure tale with the added spice of the magical systems so I rate it at a 3-star read overall. ===== February 27, 2017 This book is like Aladdin where average person rises to be the best but that didnt make me enjoy the book less. The story immediately draws you in and doesnt tell you things instead it shows. Like aladdin the main character makes mistakes and keeps trying because he's so determined. In fact every time he thinks he has achieved his goal something bad happens. The five magic systems are explained very well and even has a good explanation for how the hero can learn magic faster. ===== August 13, 2020 Ah, '70s sci-fi/fantasy. This one is cheesy at times—mostly the romance subplot—but it works. Some boring parts but its a clever idea and unique story. This book was set up with simple rules of magic, and then found clever ways for characters to use it. If this was written today, it would definitely be a 5+ book series. - IIRC this has been on my to-read list since high school. Not sure if there are many of those left. Edit: He wrote 4 sequels years later, so it is a 5-book series LOL 100-books-2020 fiction first-read-2020 March 31, 2009 Its been a long time since I read this series, but my recollection was that the first book was excellent, and the other two were just ok. The first one in particular has some very creative ideas that I haven't seen elsewhere, and was a very well written and engaging story. Update: I just reread the book. In retrospect the book had some really elegant ideas, but there were also some pretty serious plot holes. Still, a fun read and a pleasant way to pass an afternoon. May 6, 2014 This is probably one of my favorite books of all time. No, its not high literature but it was a huge influence on my thinking and how I look at magic. In the 80's I probably read it about a dozen times, I loved it so much. To be honest I dont recall more than the overall plot line at the moment, but what I do remember is the sheer joy I felt in reading it. February 7, 2016 Excellent fantasy story. Very interesting take on magic and its uses and the cause and effect of things, looking forward to reading the next 2 books in the trilogy. Very recommended! January 21, 2022 Well, here we are, everyone. My long-awaited review for Master of the Five Magics is finally here. I mean, its taken me well over a month to read. Its a loon ass book! I know, I wanted a nice meaty epic fantasy again for a change, and I knew what I was getting myself into. I guess im just not "reading fit" anymore. I enjoyed the story though. In the beginning the copy-editing was dodgy, and I noticed quite a few quotation marks that weren't closed (not caused by multi-paragraph talks that are so common in fantasy), but that got better as the story progressed. And the language was stiff, even by epic fantasy standards, but I got used to it. And it dragged on a bit, to where, by the last part, I was wishing it would just wrap up already. But I think thats mostly because it took me so long to read it and I was getting tired. But I enjoyed it. I liked the glossary at the end, and the authors afterword was very insightful. The struggles that traditionally published authors go through. Those lead times to get responses to submissions are insane! I'm so glad indeeds dont have to go through that. I'd have given up long ago. What's also nice is that, from the looks of it, we can read the books in this series in any order. Which is rare these days, so I'm looking forward to reading the next one. Click here to find out where you can get your hands on a copy: Note: That's an affiliate link, so if you click through to a store and end up buying anything, I might earn a commission from your purchase. June 20, 2023 An entertaining and light fantasy adventure that slightly overstays its welcome. A forerunner of hard-magic systems the magic in this novel doesn't feel like the rpg/video game magic rules that some novels tout today. Instead it features a thoughtful and imaginative application of classical concepts of magic sourced from history. While there are broadly established rules, there's a lot open for creative applications. This was a first novel, and I may pick up the second in finding a Tighter Plot and More Satisfying Character Arcs. Probably deserves a star for nostalgia factor alone. I've had this book since high school, and it's still a favorite of mine. The story is pretty simple: Alodar, a young thaumaturge, wants more respect than he gets. During a siege, he saves the queen, but doesn't get the credit. He decides to marry her to earn respect, which takes him on a journey through various magical crafts. I think the author does a good job with the system of magic. It's cleverly done, with missteps and setbacks that move Alodar forward. However, the dialogue can be a bit cheesy at times. The main principle explanations are often forced into conversation, which can feel stilted. Overall, I enjoyed the book, but it had its flaws. The romance attempts didn't work for me, and some descriptions were confusing. That being said, if you're interested in fantasy and magic systems, this might be worth reading. If you like epic fantasy with a detailed system of magic, you'll probably enjoy this book. But if you're looking for something more polished, there are better options out there. This book is a quirky one - I both enjoyed it and disliked certain parts at the same time. It's hard to review, especially since my memory of the first edition is fuzzy. Reading the series again was a mixed experience. The main character's struggles with limited resources and perseverance are inspiring, but the writing can be lacking. The author's enthusiasm for his magic system is endearing, even if it's not particularly impressive. If you're a fan of fantasy and don't mind some cheesy dialogue, this might be worth checking out. Master of the Five Magics is a book that excites those who do not think too deeply about it. ===== I was looking forward to reading it again, but I don't remember much about the other books in the series except for this one. I decided to bump up my rating from 3 to 4 stars because I enjoyed the story so much. While it's not a masterpiece in worldbuilding, plot development, and characterization, it's still a fun read that makes you feel like you're power leveling on a well-defined magical system before kicking butt. I think I would have liked this book even more if I had read it when I was younger. Now that I'm older, I just enjoy it as a fun story without thinking too much about it. Perhaps one day I'll buy the sequels and see how they turn out. They've been in my Amazon cart for a while now. This book is like a pretzel you eat at the park - it's fun to read, but don't expect anything more than that. It's written in the great pulp tradition, which means it's entertaining if you don't think too deeply about it. The author's approachable writing style and unique take on the "chosen one" trope make it enjoyable. I also appreciate how he defines and sticks to his magic system. On the other hand, some people might find this book bland because it focuses more on establishing rules for multiple magical systems than on developing characters or strengthening the plot. However, for fans of fantasy who are interested in building a magic system, this book is definitely worth reading. The author's influence can be seen in several popular fantasy series, including Kingkiller Chronicle and Dresden Files. His use of demons as a key element of his story has also had a significant impact on the genre. While this book may not be groundbreaking or well-written compared to others, it's still an important step in the development of fantasy literature. It's like Brian Eno's quote about music - while it may not be revolutionary, it can inspire and start something new. Overall, Master of the Five Magics is a fun read that makes you feel like you're part of something bigger than yourself. The protagonist's journey is a test of his character, skill, ingenuity, and willpower, and he often finds himself struggling to make it despite all odds. Although some scenes may seem implausible, they are well-crafted and believable, making it easy to sympathize with the character, even if their fixation on a particular princess seems irrational. The story's conclusion is satisfying as everything comes together nicely, and the protagonist must combine his skills to save the day. This book has had a significant impact on many other works by introducing unique magical systems, making it a staple for those looking to improve their world-building skills. ===== The author's writing style was unfamiliar, but it didn't detract from my reading experience. I discovered that this was the start of a series, but I couldn't judge this book as part of it since I hadn't read the other books. The story played out like a series of short stories, with the protagonist jumping between jobs and consistently doing everything right, yet never receiving the recognition he deserved. His natural intelligence and resourcefulness ultimately led to his triumph over others, which was satisfying despite the somewhat predictable outcome. ===== I first read this book in the 80s, but I'd forgotten most of it by my last read. When I finally got the e-book version, I decided to re-read it, and I'm happy to say that my experience was just as enjoyable as before. The story follows the protagonist's journey as a Thaumaturgy expert, with four other disciplines emerging throughout his adventures. The book is well-written, providing an excellent exploration of these magical systems. While the plot has its typical elements, it's satisfying and engaging, with the author even adding an afterword that provides new insights into the story.