



# The Hunger

*Michael D. Young*

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**The Hunger** Michael D. Young

Feed your Hunger.

In a distant, war-torn land, every man, woman and child must either consume the magical substance known as Sustenance or succumb to the Hunger. Those who succumb develop deformities and face exile — or even death.

The scholar Azil wants nothing more than to lead a tranquil life and beat back the Hunger. But when a mysterious assassin tries to kill Azil, and a stranger shows up at his door challenging him to join her on a quest, he embarks on a dangerous journey to steal the sacred gems of Sustenance guarded in a forbidden fortress. To get there, Azil must venture through a land of floating cities, ravenous mage wraiths, ax-wielding warriors, and bloodthirsty bandits.

But with the sacred gems of Sustenance come volatile magic — magic so strange and dangerous, that the prophecies foretell it could usher in a golden age, or turn its wielder into the darkest of villains.

## The Hunger Details

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Author : Michael D. Young

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# From Reader Review The Hunger for online ebook

Alex ? Deranged KittyCat ? says

3.85 stars

I really liked this book. That's a bit of a shock to me because at some point I was sure I'd give it 3 stars as it felt too much like Brandon Sanderson's Mistborn.

Ok. We have Azil who's this scholar-actor-fashion obsessed-mage. He teams up with a very mysterious kick-ass lady (Evelet) on a secret mission to bring together 3 ancient gems so that they can bring *the Purge*. Why would they want to do that? Because their god's (Rahim) *golden age* can't happen without some genocide. To do that they also bring along a 18 year old orphan (Kaval) who's like a supermage although he does not know it yet. Throw in a young woan (because there has to be at least the hint of romance) and they're all set.

Now, why did this feel like Mistborn:

- the ingestion of Sustenance (metals anyone?) in order to perform magic. Also, different colors of Sustenance for different abilities (metals, again)
- godlike figure and prophecy
- diary entries at the beginning of each chapter
- wraiths who impale metal spikes into other creatures to make them one of their own (fortunately, there's only one scene with wraiths and they don't seem that important)

All that being said, The Hunger still worked for me.

I liked the three clans with their different skin color and their different set of abilities. I also liked how these clans originated from clerical organisations meant to serve the different Aspects of their god.

And talking about the Aspects of Rahim, I liked them. I liked how they are all sentient and realise what they are and that they hold only parts of the god's memories.

Moving on to the characters, I was impressed with Evelet. She has long braids that end with scimitars. And she can put up a fight. Also, she doesn't need Sustenance to perform her magic, she needs something else. As she uses magic, the color literally drains from her body leaving her some shade of white (her skin is dark).

Another interesting thing about this book is the Sustenance. All people must ingest it (like regular meals) or they are turned into Mals. Mals are deformed creatures who are usually treated as slaves or killed for sport. Azil's sister, Sarhah is a Mal. She became one (along with her mother) because her father kept all the Sustenance for Azil, his only son. He wanted the best for him even if that meant killing his wife and daughter in the process. Fortunately, Sarhah's deformity is rather small and located in the head's area. This gives her the opportunity to hide her status with her hair, especially as turning into a Mail didn't affect her intelligence.

All in all, The Hunger is a pretty amazing book and I highly recommend it. If you get past that Sanderson feeling at the beginning, you'll discover a very interesting world with its own set of rules.

\*I thank Future House Publishing for this copy in exchange for an honest review.

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## Scott Hitchcock says

It started out ok. Different magic, different sources and outcome. It became painful by the middle with the story going nowhere and a lot of grammatical errors and even on paragraph starting with the same sentence the last one ended with.

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## Dina says

**The Hunger** looks like it's the first of a series of books focusing on this realm. Filled with political intrigue, corruption of a religious figure, and filled with magic this book has more to offer than I first anticipated. There are a lot of religious undertones in the novel. The theme reflects on the religious ideas of finding faith and trusting in a god. If you share similar views on religion like me, the book is pretty heavy handing on turning a non-believer into a believer. As such I would approach this novel with an air of caution. While the fantasy elements in the story are the story, the exploration of spirituality can become tiresome.

**The Hunger** shares a lot of similarities with Brandon Sanderson's *Mistborn*. This is not to say it is a duplicate of *Mistborn*, but it certainly has some details that re-interpreted ideas about a magical world. Although, there are influences from *Mistborn*, Young adds more original content to allow **The Hunger** to grow organically.

**The Hunger** is the story of Azil, a powerful mage that carries a "slight" obsession with fashion. He agrees to help his friend Jamith on a mission to collect three gems to bring the *Purge*. Azil is paired up with Evelet a mysterious woman with dark braided hair and dark skin. The pair is tasked with finding a young orphan, Kaval. Along the way the group meets up with Azil's sister Sarhah and continue to search for different religious items Jamith asks them to find to unravel the truth of the world.

Thankfully in this book, although Azil is attracted to Evelet, Young did not make her a crutch romantic interest. Instead, he chose to forgo romance completely. I think for the subject matter in book romance might be the furthest thing from anyone's mind. Young allows his female character to be stronger women not simply subjected to the damsel in distress role. There is a bit of character development between Azil, Kaval, and Sarhah, yet it is profoundly simple. Character development as I stated before is more about finding faith a higher power. As such, the character did not growth improve the characters. They didn't find something within themselves to actually change for the better. Even, when each of them found a form of faith in Rahim they continued to behaved as they did before.

The people of this world are all capable of magic and everyone must ingest *Sustenance* every day. Prolonged disuse of Sustenance causes a person to turn into a Mal, deformed subclass of a human that people kill for sport.

The god Rahim is featured prominently in the book. Rahim, broke himself into six different aspects to prevent him from destroying his creations again in a fit of rage. Additionally, since the last age three clans have risen that reflect the "light" aspects of Rahim. The Scarlett, the Dorian and the Azura. Each clan worships Rahim in their own fashion, preferring to worship according to the mannerisms of his aspects rather than completely to him. Here is where the problem begins. Each clan believes they are worshiping him in the

correct way. As such they disagree with the other clans, sounds familiar...

There is a fairly decent amount of diversity in the book and I like that Evelet is depicted as a "dark" woman with braids all over her head. Young even goes so far as to have Azil feel something towards Evelet never once thinking about the color of her skin. Rather, he is concerned about her actions and the information she keeps hidden well.

The biggest problem with this book is where the story begins. I wish Young took some times and backpedaled a little with his opening. I wanted to get to know the characters a little bit more intimately, like spending time with Azil while he was a scholar not when he jumped to help his friend. Perhaps taking more time to flesh out the character's history would allow the reader to feel attached to the characters. While this is not a huge deal I think for flow and content it would have helped the novel along. Since the novel really opens in the middle of the action. Young explains a back story of one character through journaling but it is not enough to keep the reader arrested.

Young's endeavor into a fantasy world is mostly original and filled with fun and excitement. Again, I feel the religious aspect of the novel is really heavy handed. At times, it can be downright annoying to read Evelet telling Azil to have faith in Rahim over and over. Overall the story is fair and it is a fun book to pass the weekend. I would recommend this book for YA readers. There is a fair amount of violence but it is not overly depicted.

I would recommend this book, however, I would have never read this book based on the description. I don't normally read religious fiction.

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### **Julie Carpenter says**

This book definitely grabbed my attention from the beginning. I enjoyed the new world and creatures and rules that author Michael D. Young created. Each chapter begins with a journal entry from Jamith, who is researching and trying to find out if he and his friend Azil's theory is correct about the gods that their people worship. Each journal entry gives us a little bit more of a glimpse into the back history of the world and how it was created and about the "gods" and the magic that rules the land. Several chapters in I was really interested in what Jamith was writing and was almost tempted to skip to each chapter and just read the journal entries. But I am so glad I didn't. It really was pretty cool how the entries tied into the whole writing within the chapters and the book. There's a little twist with it that I just wasn't expecting but it really just made it a pleasant surprise and I really liked the book more for it.

After each journal entry we get more into the story of what's happening to everyone else while Jamith is off researching. Azil and Jamith have been friends for a long time and have set into motion a plan with Evelet, who is a very powerful woman who works for Ramith. Ramith is the main god in this story. The details of their plan are very vague for a little while but enough information is given to keep you guessing and reading forward in hopes of getting to the reveal of what their plan is.

A few chapters in the reader is introduced to another character, Kaval. Kaval has been raised in the orphan sector of town and he talks about wanting to escape what fate has dictated that he becomes. Kaval also introduces to why the title of the book is "The Hunger." In this world each person must consume food as well as sustenance. Every person has a hunger inside of them which can only be fed by sustenance. Each piece of sustenance is a different color and allows the consumer to channel a different type of magic. If the hunger

grows to strong and is not fed by sustenance then the person will turn into what is called a Mal. They will be incapable of magic and their body will become deformed. Mals are creatures that are despised, mistreated and used as the lowest of servants. The first time we meet a Mal in the story is when Kaval is in a tower and the creature finds him. It was a little intense at first because you're not sure what a Mal is and what it's intent is but I will say that I grew to like Kaval more and more as he came to better understand Mals and also knowing that he knew he could be turned into one any day.

Through some different circumstances Kaval, Azil and Evelet come together and set out on a mission. They must travel to the three different Keeps in their world. Each Keep is ruled by a differing clan who was given special powers and responsibilities to protect different aspects of Rahim's powers. The clans have been at war for years and years but peace was starting to come until the meeting of these three characters.

There are some pretty crazy and creative creatures written in this story. I sure wouldn't want to come across some of them and others I wouldn't mind as much. The mage wraiths are DEFINITELY ones I would avoid at all costs. There is an intense scene where Kaval, Azil and Evelet are trying to escape them. Actually there are several but the first time is pretty intense. They barely escape and make it to their destination: Kaval's sister's dwelling. Sarhah was a great strong female character. I enjoyed her and there are some little sparks between her and Kaval.

There have been many time periods in the history of this world called Epochs. Evelet is hoping to bring about what is called The Purge which will then usher in the final Epoch. To do so they must gather an item from Rahim's crown that is stored and protected well at each keep. So we see the group of characters working together to battle many enemies, even some possible friends, to survive and further their cause of bringing about The Purge.

There's quite a bit more than that but I really don't want to give away anything. This book is well written in the timing of reveals and I really enjoyed that about it. I was guessing and starting to think I had it figured out when a new piece of information was revealed and I had to recalculate what I thought about this world and what was coming.

If you are a fantasy reader and enjoy well created worlds, characters and creatures I think you might enjoy this one. There is a sequel so be ware that it doesn't tie up all the loose ends just yet, but I think it will be well worth the wait.

Thanks Future House Publishing for providing a copy in exchange for an honest unbiased review.

Happy Reading!!!

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## **Natalia says**

The author writes very well and this book is unlike any other world I have read about.

I liked the format of the book that alternated POV until the characters met up and the adventure began. Plus it always had a sneak peek of Jamith's letter on his studies as he sought more answers about Rahim (their God) and the current state of things. One thing he discovers, for example, is how the people have lost their way of worshipping Rahim and that needs to be rectified.

As the story moves on I quickly lost interest in this world because the characters lacked appeal. Azil is only going along in a dangerous adventure because he blindly trusts his friend but does not believe in Rahim which is the point of the entire thing. Then there is his sister who is a Mal but somehow doesn't really show all the dramatic deformities the book started describing from other Mals, like multiple arms.

I found the objective of their journey confusing and the religious connotations for a purified world annoying. I think this book has potential, and I know that it can be successful in a specific niche of readers. But if it weren't for the fact that I got an Advanced Reader's Copy in exchange for a review, I wouldn't have finished it.

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### **Gretchen says**

3.5 stars really. I have to say I eventually liked this book, but it took reading more than halfway to finally, REALLY get into it. So if you do buy this, stick with it. Each chapter begins with a diary entry by one of the character's best friends who is on a seemingly self-sacrificing, lone quest in the middle of nowhere, to find out what he can about the origins of Rahim, their world's version of God. This seems to tie in only barely to the rest of the story, despite the constant referral to said higher entity, as in "Oh my God/Rahim." The friend, Jarmith, says he's on this quest for, or at the behest of his best friend Azil, who apparently couldn't give 2 cents about said higher being. Yet this quest suddenly becomes all important. Where does the Sustenance come from!? How is it made? Where do you buy it? Initially I found myself skipping paragraphs, then pages, trying to get...anywhere. My eyes started to hurt with annoyance. I just didn't care about any of these characters, save perhaps for Sarhah. But how is she so lovely and adorable when her kind is supposed to be semi-zombies, virtually non-verbal and smell like rotten meat. Is she not what they say? Then along comes the referral to a book, which is suddenly the main quest of their search, all important. It has all the answers?! Once again, try to be patient. The premise for this book has great potential, and it isn't without it's enjoyable, yet brief, moments during the first half, but it felt disjointed, and the constant referral to the import of finding the true nature and circumstances of this higher being, almost ruined it for me. I stopped reading for a few days, but since I received a complimentary advanced copy of this book, by [futurehousepublishing.com](http://futurehousepublishing.com) in exchange for my honest review, it didn't seem fair not to finish.

The book definitely redeems itself, and becomes much more adventurous and creative. I love all the magical creatures, many being so original and well thought out. And the plot sort of starts to even out, and the explanations for all my above questions (except the origins of sustenance) are eventually answered. As for the characters, they become more relatable and complicated, and you begin to care about what happens to them. I was actually sad to have the book end, but it seemed obvious, at least to me, that there will be a sequel to this, which I expect will be much better since all the necessary intros have been made in the first book. I can also say, there will likely be no way to know what is going on in the sequel without first reading this book. If you get this one, and find it hard to stick with at first, stick with it anyway. You won't be disappointed. #futurehousepublishing

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### **Michelle Bray says**

Michael D. Young created a wonderful piece of fiction. I read it while taking a sick day. I thoroughly enjoyed my day and evening as I read 'The Hunger'. There was magic, supernatural elements, suspense, war, scholarly pursuits, intrigue, hope, compassion, mystery all wrapped up in a little humor.

I received a free, advance copy of 'The Hunger' for my unbiased review. You can get a copy here [http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_nos...](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_nos...)

#futurehousepub

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## Alina says

*\* I received a copy from Future House Publishing in exchange for an honest review, so here it goes.*

What I liked:

- each chapter begins with a diary entry of Jamith, Azil's friend (this is the only way he appears in the book)
- the distribution of the population in 3 different clans (Scarletti, Dorian and Azura - a big plus for the descriptions of their main cities), with particular skills (strength, motion and sight, obtained by consuming three different types of *Sustenance*) and skin color – although it clearly needs more explanations and development
- the fast pacing of the story

What I didn't like:

- I did not feel particularly attached to the characters (ok, maybe Jamith and Sarhah a little bit)
- Azil's obsession with clothing and fashion
- fuzzy objective and religious concept (plus, the religion seems to be a too big and take-it-as-it-is part of this novel for me)
- not very clear how not consuming *Sustenance* affects people so differently: some suffer minor deformities (like Azil's sister, who also is not affected in her thinking), some are deeply transformed (multiple arms, size, monster traits) and also seem to behave like an animal

Overall, it was rather enjoyable and I think that, with some work in the characters' department especially, the sequel(s) may be even better. It is probably best suited for YA readers.

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## Jana Brown says

Note: I received an ARC from Future House Publishing in exchange for an honest review. Thanks FHP.

This is another book which is probably around a 3.5 rating for me. It's good, but not amazing and it makes me kind of frustrated because it had the building blocks for amazing.

In *The Hunger* readers are thrust immediately into a complex magical world. The magic is complex (And reminds me more than a bit of Brandon Sanderson's *Mistborn* magic system). The politics are complex. The society is complex. The religion is complex. I don't mind any of those things, and I don't mind being dropped into the world and then having things explained. However, and this is a big however, if I'm dropped into the world that way I must have characters who I immediately latch onto, then I'm willing to take the ride with them even if there are problems with pacing or unanswered questions.

In this case while the characters, and there are at least 5 playing at main characters, are unique none of them



really stepped up as someone whose story I just HAD to know. At least one was only on the quest until something better came along. One was a non believer who was going along on the word of his friend. One came along because she insisted and there had to be a sort of romantic angle. When I don't have a character to really connect to then I find myself reading more analytically and under that all the things we didn't know became annoying.

I did like the glimpses we got into the world and the magic. I liked the uniqueness of Sarhah's knife work in particular and Evelet continually came up with surprises. Azil and his obsession with clothing and fashion was fun. I just needed MORE of all of it to come through and really carry me away.

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## **TS Chan says**

### **3.5 stars**

I received a copy of The Hunger from Future House Publishing in exchange for an honest review.

This is pretty good fantasy story with obvious influences from Brandon Sanderson at the start but eventually evoked enough originality to convey a voice of its own.

I liked the structure of the book. Each chapter is preceded by a journal entry before it goes into the main body of the story. It became quite obvious after a while as to how the journal entries teased out revelations that lead in very well into the progression of the main narrative. The exposition was well-handled in this sense, as the main story was filled with action from the very first chapter and it can feel awkward when the author info-dumps in the midst of all that. The world-building was also interesting. The magic system was based on three different types of Sustenance (colour-based) providing magical feats of strength/skill, motion and sight. Each of this Sustenance was governed by a clan. There are also mage creatures which seemed to be the creation of a god named Rahim, for which man's faith had gone awry.

The ending at first felt strange to me and after much contemplation, I realised that there was a bit of genre subversion happening at the end of this book. However, I can't really say much more about it without spoilers, and I believe the author paved the way for a potential sequel even though this book didn't seem to be marketed as a series.

The key aspect of the book which kept it from being great in my opinion was the characterisation. While the POVs were kept to 3 main characters in the central story and another in the journal entries, I felt disconnected from them until quite late in the story. Maybe the narrative had too much going on and not enough personal contemplation, albeit this is a hard balance to achieve lest the pacing suffers. Notwithstanding, it is a fascinating fantasy read for fans of the genre who are looking for newer ideas/concepts. And if there is a sequel to The Hunger, I will read it.

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## **ChrisDQ says**

The synopsis of The Hunger immediately reminded me of the Mistborn-trilogy. The need of sustenance to perform magic, the diary entry's at the beginning of every chapter, the important houses/keeps around the

world based on important families and the prophecy about a happier time. To compare a book to something like the Mistborn-trilogy before even reading it, is quite intense and maybe not a great way to go into a book (namely, I absolutely love the Mistborn-trilogy, so how could a book ever live up to it?). Yet, The Hunger didn't let me down.

*"I say," Azil said, pointing to the fallen door. "That door cost me a great deal in bribes to smuggle it out of Keep Azura. It is quite valuable and could conceivably be reused. If you are going to slaughter me, kindly refrain from getting blood all over the door. Couldn't we settle this in some other way?"*

So, our main character is Azil, who goes on an adventure to steal some very well guarded gems and with those wants to try to make the world a significant better place. He is accompanied by the mysterious yet very kick-ass Evelet and a young but seemingly powerful orphan boy named Kaval. We also read about his scholar friend trying to find out more about their god Rahim, who is supposed to make the "better times" happen. I really enjoyed these little pieces of investigation, that were placed before every chapter and taught us about the Aspects of Rahim.

*"Why didn't you tell us this from the beginning?" Azil asked. "You know that I hard no love for the clans, but if one is going to completely alter the course of the entire world, he should at least be given proper notice in advance. I would have worn an ensemble at least twice as heroic. Perhaps even a cape."*

The Hunger was a very enjoyable book. I loved the story, even though (or maybe because) it resembled the Mistborn-trilogy as much as it did. It is definitely not as good, but let's be honest, how many books are? Fantasy lovers will particularly enjoy this book, but I feel like most readers will.

I received a copy of The Hunger from Future House Publishing in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Sonia Lopes says**

The Hunger by Michael D. Young, published by Future House Publishing #futurehousepub, is a fantasy story very well written and nicely paced, though in the beginning it's a bit hard to follow given the number of characters with all their different backgrounds and complexities. Once you get to know the characters then it becomes much easier to get into the book.

The story moves around a big quest with the main characters going in search of the pure Truth and the eternal question of who was their Creator, wishing to improve not only their knowledge but also their society and bring on a New Age. All this happens in a world full of magical people and magical animals. Sceneries are very well described giving you a clear image of where the action takes place while the character go on their adventure.

The main characters in this story are set as an example of courage, strength, endurance, bravery, hope and self-sacrifice. It's a nice story that keeps you wondering what is going to happen next and you really want it to go on when you reach the end.

Michael D. Young very cleverly has two different parts of the story moving along each other and converging almost at the end making you understand even better the depth of this book.

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## Justin says

Okay so lets do this. The Hunger is a fantasy story based in a world where people need to consume substance (as well as food) to keep up magical reserves (as well as prevent them from turning into Mals). The story and the magical system were interesting and was interested where the author was going with everything.

Although I did enjoy Azil's perspective, I found the other perspectives a little flat and found myself wanting to get back to Azil. The fight scenes were well written and while there were some clever dialogue written for the characters, I found scenes outside of that were a little boring and didn't contribute to much to the overall adventure. Overall I enjoyed the book and will most likely read the sequel when it is released.

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## Tricia says

Honestly, this book wasn't for me although I love the fantasy genre. This book is a world full of magical people and magical animals, with several plot twists. The main characters are in search of the pure Truth.

The problem is figuring out who the main characters are. To me the book was confusing for too long. Each chapter begins with a diary entry from a different character. It wasn't until far into the book that you figured which of those characters was the main one, and what the plot of the book was. Overall, I found the book hard to follow and the characters hard to get behind. I had a difficult time wanting to read it. Overall it became a good book, and I understand what the author was trying to accomplish. But, if you don't hook me by the second chapter, I'm not going to want to read more, or pick up the book to finish it.

I received an advanced copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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## Kaya says

*I received a copy from Future House Publishing in an exchange for an honest review*

2.5 stars because it didn't evoke any emotions.

I won't call this a bad book, but I can't say I'd read it if I didn't receive the copy from the author. It has a focused plot and decent characters, but the dialogues seemed very unnatural to me. I really tried, but I just couldn't care about either about goal they tried to achieve nor about their well-being.

Azil teams up with resourceful Evelet on a secret mission to bring together three ancient gems so that they can bring the Purge, because their god's Rahim's golden age can't happen without some sort of the apocalypse. To do so, they also bring along a 18 year old orphan Kaval who could be the "chosen one" but doesn't know it yet. The story moves forward through the quest for the pure Truth and the eternal question of who was their Creator, wishing to improve not only their knowledge but also their society and bring on a New Age. The problem is, we don't know enough about their present society so we would truly believe it's that horrible and in a need for a revolution.

The magic system is based on three different color-based types of Sustenance providing strength, motion and sight. Each of the Sustenance was regulated by a clan. All people must ingest it like regular meals or they will be turned into Mals. Mals are deformed creatures who are usually treated as slaves. Azil's sister Sarhah

is a Mal and despite of it, she managed to be a strong female character. I enjoyed her and there are some interesting sparks between her and Kaval.

There are obvious influences from Brandon Sanderson, the main story is filled with action and it reminds me of a fairy tale. The start is weird because I'm just thrust in the middle of the conversation between two fellas and I have no idea whether they're important or not. Reader is thrown immediately into a complex magical world which was very confusing for me. The plot has a solid pace but adds nothing new to the genre. It was hard to follow with all the different backgrounds of all those characters and you never know who is really significant and who is not. As the plot moves on, I quickly lost interest in the world building because the characters lacked appeal. The whole book is written in one tone, so it's missing its dynamic.

While the viewpoints are held by only three characters - Kaval, Azil and Evelet, I felt disconnected to them from the start. Although they had an interesting dynamic, they all sounded the same voice. Also, it felt like they were too busy with everything happening around them to be real human beings with personalities. None of them really stepped up as someone who was remarkable nor really intrigued me. Perhaps spending more time explaining where the characters come from and who they were before they joined this "adventure" would allow me to feel some kind of attachment to them. Overall, there are too many dialogues, lacking in excitement and tension, with too little insight.

Kaval has been raised in an orphanage and all he ever wanted was to escape his dictated fate. He's an adventurous teenager, who wants to experience everything that life has to offer. In my opinion, he's the true protagonist of the story but even that didn't save him from the true indifference I felt towards him. Not that I mind ordinary characteristics, but I crave for something to steal some emotion out of me.

Evelet is a special girl because she doesn't need Sustenance to perform magic. As she uses magic, the color literally drains from her body leaving her some shade of white even though her skin is dark, so it was quite fun reading those parts. Out of all important characters, she was the only one who caught my attention.

Azil has only joined the quest because he blindly trusts his friend. He doesn't believe in Rahim, nor is present because of any significant motive so him being one of the main characters may be a bit pointless. He and his sister share some intriguing moments, but outside of that, he's as blank as the others.

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