



The Orphan King

Sigmund Brouwer

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The future of the Immortals is in the hands of an orphan

My greatest fear was that they would find us and make of us a sacrifice beneath a full moon. Now you, Thomas, must help us destroy the circle of evil.

The last words of a dying woman would change the life of young Thomas. Raised behind monastery walls, he knows nothing of his mysterious past or imminent destiny. But now, in the heart of medieval England, a darkness threatens to strangle truth. An ancient order tightens their ghostly grip on power, creating fear and exiling those who would oppose them. Thomas is determined to fulfill his calling and bring light into the mysterious world of the Druids and leaves the monastery on an important quest.

Thomas quickly finds himself in unfamiliar territory, as he must put his faith in unusual companions—a cryptic knight, a child thief, and the beautiful, silent woman whom may not be all she seems. From the solitary life of an orphan, Thomas now finds himself tangled in the roots of both comradery and suspicion.

Can he trust those who would join his battle...or will his fears force him to go on alone?

The Orphan King Details

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Author : Sigmund Brouwer

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From Reader Review The Orphan King for online ebook

TL Ray says

While the storyline is nothing new, the book is well written and a good, quick read. I did get a bit confused about which character was doing what, but I think it will be more clear as I read books 2 and 3.

Julie says

I wish I would check before I read a "book one" of a series to determine if any other books in the series are published or if I am going to have to wait many years for installment number two to be published. You would think I had learned SOMETHING from J.K Rowling!

This is book one (obviously) and Book 2 is not due out for another year or so, by which time I am certain to have forgotten what this book was about or that I was even mildly interested in reading more.

I say "mildly" because I feel in a way as though I was tricked by this book. I believe all books with a religious slant should come with a warning - the way music comes with an "explicit lyric" warning for consumers. Unfortunately there was no such warning on this book and of course I was more than 100 pages in before the whole "why would a loving God allow this to happen" conversation and preaching took place. On one hand I am glad I picked the book up because it turns out the author is a Canadian and I am committed to reading 5 books by Canadians in the next year, but had I known Brouwer was a well known author of evangelical books I would have passed on this one.

Thomas was raised in a monastery where he was ill treated. His mother (who he was taught never to reveal and anything but his nursemaid) has taught him to read and write in French and Latin and he has continued to read and learn past her death. Without knowing his full role in fulfilling prophecy and unaware of his allies and enemies he leaves the monastery and begins to follow a path laid out for him by his mother prior to her death.

Alexis Neal says

Thomas has had it up to here with the servant's life. As low man on the abbey totem pole, he is little more than a slave to the corrupt monks. And yet, until now, he has been content to bid his time, studying the secret books his mother left him and preparing for the destiny that awaits him. And now, finally, it is time. With the assistance of a lone knight, an impish young pickpocket, and a pretty deaf mute who is more than she seems, Thomas sets out to find and reclaim the mysterious and impregnable castle Magnus from the cruel Lord Mewburn. But there are forces at work behind the scenes, sometimes helping, sometimes hindering Thomas's plans. Who can he trust? What is he to make of the dark tales his mother told him--tales of shadowy Druids and powerful Immortals? And what of Thomas himself? Is he on the side of right, or merely a tool in the hands of another?

This is, at its heart, a perfectly serviceable young adult novel. At just over 200 pages, it's not too intimidating, and it's got plenty to draw in young readers: Knights! Castles! Science masquerading as magic! Bandits! Chivalry! Disguises! Dungeons! Secret societies! Hidden knowledge! And no fewer than *two* damsels in distress!

And there's some substantive stuff tucked in as well. Thomas's years at the abbey, surrounded by heartless greed, corruption, and cruelty, have turned him off to the idea of God. Yet, in his showdown with the monks, he uses their sin to prove that they have nothing to do with God at all--that their behavior is inconsistent with the character of the God they purport to serve. Later, when he is confronted by someone whose faith is demonstrated by kindness, integrity, and courage--someone who remains confident in God's sovereignty and goodness despite extreme hardship--he finds himself rethinking his dismissal of God. Some of the religious stuff is a bit awkward and ham-handed, and even slightly anachronistic, as when Thomas is told that 'God grants you peace when you accept Him'. Granted, I'm no expert, but I feel like a lot of the 'accept God' language is a more recent development. But there's a lovely (and fairly subtle) point about the contrast between physical beauty and the internal beauty that manifests itself through actions and service and a kind heart.

Not that it's a *great book*, mind you. The characters are decently drawn, and there are a few good action sequences early in the book. Sadly, the climax, when it occurs, is rather rushed and, well, anticlimactic. In the wake of Harry Potter, we've seen more and more fantasy series emerge onto the young adult literature scene--many of which are more analogous to a multi-part novel than a series of connected books. It is not uncommon for an author to be so eager to build suspense for later books that he (or she) ends the initial book without resolving *any* of the major conflicts in the story. Brouwer does a good job of actually resolving the central plot point (Thomas's plan to conquer Magnus) while leaving intact plenty of peripheral questions to be addressed in future installments.

Bottom line: If you're looking for good Christian-adjacent young adult fiction, particularly for actual young adults (as opposed to adults like myself who enjoy the occasional YA read), you could do a lot worse than this book. Brouwer has upwards of a dozen YA series under his belt by now (and more than 100 titles), and this particular series (*Merlin's Immortals*) is actually a revised and expanded version of his *Winds of Light* series from the early '90s. I'm not familiar with the original series, so I don't know if it's good enough to merit revision and expansion, but hopefully Brouwer's learned a few things in the last 20 years and will produce a solid series.

I received this book for free from WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group for this review.

Atticgirl says

The character of Thomas is very strong in this novel. He is brave, admirable, and unstoppable in the face of danger. In my son's words, this character is "epic." He works toward fulfilling his destiny to conquer Magnus castle and the druid order. It's a classic battle of good vs. evil, all of which will appeal to teens who are fans of Arthurian lore. There are great themes of faith, friendship, trust, courage and hard work.

The author weaves a great plot with twists and turns that will keep the reader guessing as to the back story behind Thomas' supposed "friends". My son enjoyed details about the time period and was drawn in by the story's setting and author's descriptive language.

The ending leaves you hanging and asking a few "why's." We both look forward to the next book in the series.

Disclosure: I received a copy of the book for review purposes from Waterbrook Multnomah's Blogging for Books program. No other compensation was received and all opinions are my own.

Liz Terek says

The Orphan King Book Review

Many stories deal with the classic fight of good versus evil. I'd describe 'The Orphan King' as a mix of fairy tale, fantasy & historical fiction.

Thirteen hundred & twelve is the year and times are dark. Science is regarded as evil & the wealthy reign. Thomas has served four hypocritical monks for the length of his childhood. Believing himself to be just another penniless orphan. He's tended their garden & weathered their brutality.

Before her death, his mother had provided him with several veiled clues as to his destiny. Upon finding evidence of his true identity, Thomas flees the abbey.

Hangings were common in this era, even for minor offenses. Following his flight from the monks, Thomas attends one, but not as a spectator. One of the Knights Templar has been sentenced. William, the knight, has been expecting Thomas. True to his calling, Thomas initiates a rescue. But why is he to rescue William? Who is Thomas, really, & what is he set to accomplish?

Secretive twists fill the plot. Every character is in on the mystery, except the reader. Puzzling at times while straightforward in others, one must remain an alert reader. It's not as if the plot is terribly complicated. One can connect the dots with minimal effort. New characters were dropped in unexpectedly which caused frequent breaks in the action.

Vivid imagery & colorful metaphors are plentiful. Dissecting the emotions of the two main characters, it is easy to see why they do what they do. Knights Templar members have always been popular in fiction. Their adventures are timeless. Even after taking this all into account, I wish we'd come to the point sooner. We're well into it before everyone's relations become clear. It's well-written, but the waiting game of explanation was too long for me. Grab my attention & keep it. I wasn't able to keep my mind focused on the plot.

Being well-written, but disappointingly not well grounded gives it a sufficient 3 of 5 stars.

More info on the author, Sigmund Brouwer, and the book are available through www.waterbrookmultnomah.com. I received 1 eBook & 1 printed book to write my review without further compensation.

Kristin says

"The Orphan King" by Sigmund Brouwer is the first book in the "Merlin's Immortals" series. The next book "Fortress of Mist" becomes available in February of 2013. From what I understand, it is an updated or revamped version of an older book. This is the first book I've read by this author, so I'm unable to shed much light into that.

In this book we meet a young man, Thomas. An orphaned boy who has been raised in a monastery by gluttonous and greedy monks who would rather fill their own bellies and wallets than help needy villagers. Set in the heart of Northern England in AD 1312, the world is a dark and discouraging place filled with corrupt lords and impoverished lands.

Thomas escapes the monastery. With the help of a knight, a mute girl and a pickpocket he sets out to fulfill

his destiny. Along the way he is mentored by the older and wiser knight, secretly falls in love with the girl and obtains a bit of brotherly affection for the young thief. Their adventures along the way form trust and friendship that will either help or hinder the success of Thomas' quest.

I felt like this book had a lot of potential and it was a very enjoyable fast read. But I felt that while the characters were fleshed out really well and had a lot of life to them, it just seemed a little rushed. The fantasy part of the story was very appealing to me. I enjoy a good fantasy story and its a genre I read quite often. However, I felt that the idea of Merlin and Druids all seemed a bit conflicting for the Christian theme. Now, granted, I am not opposed to mixing fantasy and Christianity, especially in the setting of an allegory but I felt as if this story just didn't really nail it. Did I enjoy the story? Yes. Will I read the next? Yes. But I just felt it was a little rough around the edges.

I received *The Orphan King* as a complimentary gift in exchange for review from Waterbrook Multnomah Publishers. My comments and opinions are my own.

Jill Williamson says

Review by Jill Williamson

Thomas is planning an escape from the corrupt monastery he grew up in. He has many secrets left for him by his dead mother. But when he sets out to accomplish that which he has been planning for years—to take the castle Magnus—he finds himself in the company of an odd band of companions. Some know things they can't possibly know. Who to trust? And who are the Immortals?

This book was so cool! I loved it. My kind of story. 1. Medieval. 2. A mystery. 3. Mentions of King Arthur and Merlin. The characters were wonderful. A young orphan, a mysterious knight, a pretty girl, and a pickpocket boy. Who to trust? What is going on? So many questions that all played out to a satisfying conclusion. And at only 224 pages, a really quick read. Highly recommended!

Mitch says

The Orphan King's a medieval fantasy with a lot of potential, but for a couple of reasons I don't think that potential's been realized. There are actually two plots going on, the first with Thomas as an orphan trying to reclaim his birthright, and the second's a bigger, overarching conspiracy with druids and templars. Honestly, only the later really interested me, and this book seems to have left so much of that plot unexplored and unresolved, I just have so many questions about what's going on, it left me really unsatisfied.

Anyway, the start's pretty standard, some fairly melodramatic stuff with Thomas being mistreated by a bunch of selfish monks. And right away, I start noticing a common theme with a lot of these secondary characters, besides Thomas and William, the cryptic knight who joins him on his quest to reclaim Magnus, nobody's

really that well developed. Like these monks, they're so over the top nasty and easy to hate, I didn't get into the story until Thomas flees the abbey and gets on with his adventure. And even then, the supporting characters aren't great at all, John's the typical scamp slash thief character while Katherine and Isabelle, while not weak damsels in distress, aren't really that well developed and make a really lame triangle. I just wanted to see more, motivations and character and personal moments, from these characters than what I got. Like Katherine, how does she feel about having to hide under all her bandages? Or Isabelle, how does she feel about her conflicted loyalties? And I'm disappointed I didn't get that. Oh, and maybe I'm also disappointed the villain's really more of a villain in name only, I don't think he even appears.

I did like Thomas though. He's sort of like the typical hero character in that he has a lot of strengths - he's brave and chivalrous and does all sorts of stuff nobody else thinks of doing, but he also has weaknesses - he's got a big head and is too eager to do right, so he's far from an annoyingly perfect character. Acting without thinking, yeah I can relate. And William is a pretty good foil as the gruff, experienced advisor who knows a thing or two and can keep Thomas in line. But I think I would've enjoyed the story more if it hadn't jumped around from point of view to point of view. A lot of William's point of view I think kinda killed the story for me. Instead of letting me figure out what William's plans and goals are, I'm kinda beaten over the head with it by William just straight up telling me, it really ruined the intrigue and killed off any complexity to the story.

And while some things like William's motivations are over explained without any subtlety at all, other things are under explained. I really thought Magnus, for example, was a sword for the longest time, until, yeah, it's actually a castle. Woops. Then there's the whole cat and mouse game between the druids and the templars, which appears to happen independently of but is related to Thomas's quest to reclaim Magnus. It's all so intriguing, definitely captured my interest, but in the end, I really have no idea what to say about any of it because I don't even know if the group opposing the druids is just the templars, or it includes others as well like the mysterious Immortals. One of the first questions Thomas asks in the book is who the Immortals are, and after finishing this book I know exactly as much as when I started, which is that they're connected to the plot and Magnus, somehow. I realize of course more will be revealed by the sequel, but the complete lack of information is really frustrating.

Maybe if this book was longer and certain parts were rewritten, I'd have really liked it. But as it is, it really feels like wasted potential.

Mary Beth says

Excellent book! the fast moving and interesting plot kept me on the edge of my seat and quick to turn the page. Brouwer has such a straightforward way of writing and gives agreeable depth to his characters along with a good touch of wit and wonder.

Sarah says

Ever since I was 11, if it had to do with the Middle Ages, I was all over it. Books set in the Middle Ages were hard to find. Most people thought that if it looks anything like history, kids will run away. Maybe most kids will, but I know I loved it.

When I saw the cover of The Orphan King, I was pretty sure I wanted to review it. When I read the description, I knew I did. I ordered it and waited for it expectantly. When it came, my youngest sister (13) begged to read it. The next day she handed it back to me and said she thought it was great.

I opened the book one day, wanting something to relax with, and pretty soon I was drawn into an exciting story, full of adventure, intrigue, and non-stop action. It kept me turning the pages until I finished.

Sigmund Brouwer, in only a few pages, builds a world in vivid descriptions. Even though this is a smaller book, the characters were well developed and so were the locations. I loved the setting as well as the band of misfit characters that make up the story.

There is a hint of romance, but it is very small, and there is even a good lesson about beauty not being everything. Parents of boys especially will like the subtle message of guarding your eyes. The only thing that I really didn't like about this book is that I have to wait until February until the next book is out.

If you are looking for an action-filled, adventurous book, this is for you.

I received this book from Blogging for Books in exchange for my honest review. I was under no obligation to write a positive review. The opinions in this review are entirely my own.

Elizabeth Ruth says

Weirdly a strong Christian influence in the book but not over powering. The book make you ready for the next in the series. I check it out from my local library.

Linda Smith says

Thomas is an orphan who has been raised in a monastery by four corrupt and violent monks. He makes his escape to pursue a destiny that he doesn't quite understand. He starts his journey with three unlikely companions that he saves from the gallows - a knight, a pickpocket and a beautiful deaf-mute young woman. Together they travel to the kingdom of Magnus to overthrow its evil lord. This is a good story and is part one of a series. I probably will not continue with the other books because of inconsistencies and too many unexplained loose ends.

Renn Shearin says

The Future of the Immortals is in the hands of an orphan.

"My greatest fear was that they would find us and make of us a sacrifice beneath a full moon. How you, Thomas, must help us destroy the circle of evil."

The last words of his dying mother would completely change the life of young Thomas. Raised behind monastery walls, he knew nothing of his mysterious past or fulfilling his imminent destiny. But now, in the heart of medieval England, a darkness threatens to strangle truth. An ancient order tightens their ghostly grip on power, creating fear and exiling those who would oppose them. Determined to defeat these mysterious

enemies, Thomas leaves the monastery on an important quest.

He quickly finds himself in unfamiliar territory, as he must put his faith in unusual companions - a cryptic knight, a child thief, and the beautiful silent woman who may not be all she seems. From the solitary life of an orphan, Thomas now finds himself tangled in the roots of both camaraderie and betrayal.

Can he trust those who would join his quest....or will his fears force him to go on alone?

I have read most of Sigmund Brouwer's books, and I have enjoyed almost all of them immensely. However, the Orphan King fell flat for me and did not meet the expectations I have for a Sigmund Brouwer novel. The plot line was interesting, but I did not like the pace, nor the way the author revealed unknown information. The book was too short at only 200 pages, so the storyline felt as if it was crammed into a very short space. There were also times when the story moved too slow, and there were also important aspects of the story that were skimmed over. The novel almost felt as if it squished together and watered down to make it a young adult novel, and the worth of the story suffered as a result. There were parts of the storyline that I enjoyed, but as a whole the plot did not flow well. At the end of the novel there were still many aspects of the plotline that were still in the dark, which left me confused about many of the connections the author was trying to make. While a few strings left untied to be solved in a sequel is a good thing, I felt like I was tangled in a mess of strings.

The characters were decently developed, considering the length of the novel. Most of the characters were left in shadow and mystery even at the end, so I still had little information about them. Thomas was the only character with any real development. The rest of the supporting characters were static and one dimensional. I hope that the next book in the Merlin's Immortals series reveals more about these characters.

Overall, Orphan King was only an alright book. The plot was interesting but confusing and too short to explain anything. The characters had very little to no development. I will read the next book in Merlin's Immortals series in order to clear up the mess the first one left, but only for that. If anyone is interested in reading a novel by Sigmund Brouwer, this is not the first one I would recommend. The Sam Keaton: Legends of Laramie and the Nick Barrett Mystery series are both excellent series that Sigmund Brouwer has written.

I received this novel for free from Waterbrook Multnomah Press in exchange for an honest review.

Angel says

Posted in (<http://angelroman.ccijovenes.org/>)

First, I was attracted to the book for its cover, not just the design but the name itself: Orphan, King, Merlin, Immortals, that's sounds cool, the mysterious guy and the "medieval feeling" attached to it.

The narration pace flows well, you can get some details from here and there, and know where you are, and whom the characters are. It's easy to identify the main characters but also you can feel identified with one of them, their personalities are nicely crafted. The "team" formula while simple remain powerful through the story.

As a Christian book, a message of faith and confidence on God unfolds from beginning to the end. It's not an

“in your face” message, which is good, and takes more strength from the plot itself, so nothing seems forced.

In the other hand, the feeling I had with the book was like when you push fastforward to a movie. Yes, you get the glimpse of the story, but some details get lost. In some parts I just couldn’t relate to a place description because there wasn’t enough detail. There was more potential with details on places, characters, and action. Talking about this topic, being a historical-action-medieval story I expected an epic climax full of action, fighting and maybe some, just some little blood, but instead there’s a weak solution to solve a strong conflict.

At the end, the book finishes very well. Left me wanting to read the next book, which is expected to be released early in 2013, and also wishing the story to be more developed and exciting.

Disclosure: I received this book for free from WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group for an honest review.

Kami says

The story had so many gereranlitites and vagaries that it felt like being on a wild goose chase.

There were all these questions and no answers. I don’t feel like anything was offered at the end to give even a hint of what was happening (in the long term).

Thomas was a weak character and the moments he was made to appear intelligent- such as his discovery of Isabelle’s treachery or his confrontation with the monks- didn’t follow character.

There was much too much repetition- I never want to have to read the chant about being released from oppression by an angel - NOT EVER!

So much of what happened was so unreal it was positively ridiculous. From not killing attackers because it was kinder to spare them to the non-battle and take over of Magnus which read a little too much like a fairytale. There was no true conflict. Everyone followed and surrendered without a fight - Pffff...*that would never ever have happened in the 14th or any other century for that matter.*

Everything was way too neatly tied up. It’s like you could feel the author’s aversion to violence because even in the moment that someone had been killed or wounded there was an underlying philosophy of compassion which never fit the moment. You’d have to be a saint to feel compassion for an enemy who’d tried to betray, attack and kill you; most humans are not capable of that kind of compassion immediately - *maybe with time, people are capable of forgiving such awful intentions but it certainly doesn’t occur right after the event.*

This book needed to be more refined, needed more detail, less repetition and a more solid destination.
