



## The Crippled God

*Steven Erikson*

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The Bonehunters march for Kolanse, led by Adjunct Tavore. This woman with no gifts of magic, deemed plain, unprepossessing, displaying nothing to instill loyalty or confidence, will challenge the gods - if her own mutinous troops don't kill her first.

Her enemy, the Forkrul Assail, seek to cleanse the world, to annihilate everything. In the realm of Kurald Galain, home to the long lost city of Kharkanas, a refugees commanded by Yedan Derryg, the Watch, await the breaching of Lightfall, and the coming of the Tiste Liosan. In this war they cannot win, they will die in the name of an empty city and a queen with no subjects.

Elsewhere, the three Elder Gods, Kilmandaros, Errastas and Sechul Lath, work to shatter the chains binding Korabas, the Otataral Dragon. Against her force of utter devastation, no mortal can stand. At the Gates of Starvald Demelain, the Azath House sealing the portal is dying. Soon will come the Eleint, dragons, and a final cataclysm.

## **The Crippled God Details**

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Author : Steven Erikson

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## From Reader Review The Crippled God for online ebook

**TS Chan says**

**A breathtaking conclusion to an outstanding series; the Malazan Book of the Fallen is a masterpiece of its genre and has affirmed its place as my favourite epic grimdark fantasy series.**

The Crippled God didn't leave much room for breathers and I am sure this is the least amount of time I've spent finishing a novel in this series - the exception being Gardens of the Moon, which is the shortest book by far. I will also not spend much time relating about this final instalment, save that it was brilliantly handled with an emotionally exhausting, and wholly satisfying denouement. All the major open threads and even some smaller ones came together most compellingly. The very end of this book was of the most sublime symmetry to the beginning in Gardens of the Moon.

The word *epic* does not even seem to do any justice to this expansive tale and the world in which it takes place. Erikson has skilfully crafted a story with such breadth and depth of worldbuilding and characterisation, and plot complexity, that it seriously challenges the readers. But, in spite of the work and commitment involved in finishing these ten books, it was also one of the most rewarding and fulfilling experiences I've ever had.

The Malazan Book of the Fallen is exquisitely soul-crushing and *yet* it can also make your heart soar - even when you're crying your eyes out. The narrative is crazily dense, filled with deep melancholic introspection and philosophical discourse, a mind-boggling number of intertwining storylines and a *huge* cast of characters. A stellar cast of characters for that matter, for whom any attempt to assuage emotional investment is futile. Believe me, Erikson will make you care – even for that minor side character that appeared for mere pages. He is a master at strumming powerful chords of emotion. So much grief, pain, sorrow and regret emanate from within its pages, beautifully tempered with empathy, compassion, kindness, loyalty and honour. These are stories of true friendships and enduring love; stories of the best of humanity in its darkest, and most dire, hours; delivered in a prose that is elegant and profound.

The violence in this series is brutal and visceral, but never gratuitous. The battle and action scenes are in equal measures sweeping and intimate; cinematic scenes of clashing soldiers and sorcerous conflagration seen from a wide-angle, and combat sequences in close confines, moving from one squad, or an individual, to another. Although the level of power or ability commanded by some of the characters can be ridiculously off-the-charts, it is somehow appropriate in the context of this world. To me, that is part of the fun of reading Malazan. Admit it, badass characters are the most memorable and to partake in fantasy is to get swept away by the unreal awesomeness that you don't encounter in literary fiction.

Having said that, while the story is told in a fantasy world, its allegory to our real world is staggeringly on point. To readers who scoff at the genre merely being escapism which never deals with real-life issues, I invite you to partake in this gritty epoch-spanning tale which echoes our actual bloody history – the horrors and grave errors perpetrated by humanity, repeated time and time again.

I highly recommend anyone who loves fantasy, especially fans of grimdark, to read this series. Be patient, and you shall be rewarded.

With choked emotions barely in check, I bid this world goodbye... for now.

And now the page before us blurs.  
An age is done. The book must close.  
We are abandoned to history.  
Raise high one more time the tattered standard  
Of the Fallen. See through the drifting smoke  
To the dark stains upon the fabric.  
This is the blood of our lives, this is the  
Payment of our deeds, all soon to be  
Forgotten.  
We were never what people could be.  
We were only what we were.

Remember us.

#### **Series rating:**

Gardens of the Moon: **5/5 stars**

Deadhouse Gates: **5/5 stars**

Memories of Ice: **5/5 stars**

House of Chains: **4/5 stars**

Midnight Tides: **4.5/5 stars**

The Bonehunters: **5/5 stars**

Reaper's Gale: **4.5/5 stars**

Toll The Hounds: **5/5 stars**

Dust of Dreams: **5/5 stars**

The Crippled God: **5/5 stars.**

Overall: **48/50 stars**

*This review can also be found at Booknest*

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#### **Carmine says**

##### **In marcia verso la fine**

"L'unica fine alla disperazione delle bestie sarà per mano degli umani - e ai Lupi consiglierei una grande pazienza. Non c'è bisogno che facciano altro, perché noi umani ci distruggeremo da soli. Potrà volerci un po' di tempo, perché siamo in tanti, ma alla fine è quello che succederà, perché una cosa è certa: siamo scrupolosi."

"Non siamo mai stati ciò che la gente potrebbe essere. Siamo stati solo quello che siamo stati. Ricordatevi di noi."

Siamo forse colpevoli di fronte alla storia, di fronte alla cecità comune che impedisce di realizzare quanto siamo impermeabili alle lezioni?

E perché dovremmo pagare, noi tutti, per tutti gli altri che mai sapranno?  
Siamo umani e sfuggiamo al verdetto di colpevoli; siamo umani e ci avviperemo, da soli, verso l'estinzione.  
Perseguiremo la via della dissoluzione interiore come ultima speranza; spezzati e spezzati ancora, finché riusciremo a dare un nome al signore delle tenebre e abbracciare il nostro completo fallimento.  
In un mondo dove la compassione è stata dimenticata, soppiantata dalla volontà del giudizio verso gli altri - teatrini che la storia ha già visto e continuerà a proporre -, noi ci ergeremo questa volta, l'ultima volta, per dare un esempio.  
Nel nostro sacrificio l'esempio; nel vostro giudizio le tombe e il beffardo potere della parola.  
Fate in modo che le nostre memorie non vengano dimenticate nella polvere della storia.

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### **Jenna Kathleen says**

Wow. Just wow. It took me a long time to get to this point, but it was so worth it. I can't say much about the book itself because I would just have to mark the whole review as a spoiler, but what I will say is Erikson has truly created a masterpiece.

Having so many characters and plot-lines makes it really difficult to tie together, and sometimes authors flop at the end or just never finish. Erikson is not one of those authors. He has one of the largest worlds, if not the largest, in fantasy fiction and yet he perfectly finishes this amazingly epic series.

If you're reading this review and you haven't yet started Malazan, now is the time to jump into Erikson's vast and beautiful world. Starting *Gardens of the Moon* is a daunting task: a huge book that is super confusing with 9 more super huge books to follow. I'm here to tell you that it is all worth it. This book, and this series, now proudly sits at the top of my favourites list and will likely not move from its position.

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### **Chris Berko says**

There were three different times in the last forty pages where I was embarrassingly sobbing. Thank god I was home alone and avoided having to explain myself to people that don't read. Explaining the impact of this stunning conclusion to those that need their entertainment spoon fed to them is beyond my capacity. That may sound judgemental but I try to explain books to friends and they look at me like I'm crazy, they just don't get it. But you guys get it, and for that I'm grateful.

As others have stated sharing any favorite parts would be spoilers for earlier books so I won't go there but the bringing together of all that came before is ten to fifteen minute standing ovation worthy and maybe the satisfying in terms of how everything concluded. I've only re-read maybe six or seven books my whole life but the complexity and flat out funniness of this story demands a second go around to which I am very much looking forward to.

All ten books took roughly seven months to read and every book is a step above everything else in any category IMHO.

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### **Ivan says**

And the journey ends. It's been a long one, after 10 books 9000 pages it's hard to say goodbye but like every

Erikson's ending last pages of The Crippled god where epic and satisfying. It's impossible to say something about last book without spoilers so I won't. This will be review of the whole series.

My journey started rough. Initially I DNF-ed first book @50%. It was because of enthusiasm of my GR friend Molly (sadly she hasn't been fully active in long time now) that I decided to give this series another go. On second try I managed to survive first book and seen potential. Rest of the series realizes that potential and Malazan book of fallen becomes everything people said it would be.

And what is Malazan book of fallen? What makes it so unique?:

Well it's combination of of heroic fantasy with heroes larger than life, gods, ancient evils and powerful magic and gimdark military fantasy with clash of big armies and how it affects common solider and people, all that with with spiced up with criticism of religion, capitalism but most of all strong anti-war message. What also makes this series unique is that it lacks classical protagonist. Instead, throughout the series we get several dozen of different PoVs and many more charters. Some have more screen time, some less but hey are all just pieces that paint much larger canvas. Canvas that has battles of gods, armies and mortals. Where magic, steel and gunpowder clash and heroes die. There are many story lines that intertwine and there are practically no wasted effort, everything that happens affects events later. Sometimes in next book, sometimes after six books. Since second and especially third book Erikson makes clear that nothing is sacred and that every character can die no matter how much you love him. Of course Martin is famous for doing that but Erikson's characters are much more epic and likable and I was genuinely sad when characters dies in Malazan book of fallen as Malazan contains some of most epic and intriguing characters in fantasy. Some deaths even broke my heart. What is also unique is Erikson's writing style. He doesn't even try to go for something realistic and instead dialogues are rather epic and absurd. It's one of main things that made me DNF first book and indeed some dialogues there were very weird but as series progresses Erikson becomes much better at that style.

Worldbuild:

Well simply put there is no book that matches Malazan book of fallen in this regard. This is most fascinating, complex world with hundreds of thousands years of history. Erikson seem to be more efficient and puts more events, worldbuilding and characters per page than any other fantasy author

Flaws? Three worth mentioning.

First, books in second half of the series sometimes drag on and felt bit too long.

Second, there is lot of philosophy in this book and sometimes it's intriguing and on point but sometimes it's boring and feels like verbal masturbation.

Third that comes from one of series's strengths. You need good memory or you need to read books in short span, preferably both. As mentioned above there are many characters and small events that affect story but not for several books.

Conclusion:

I didn't rate all books in the series 5 stars but as a whole this series deserves more than 5 stars and that's why it goes to favorites shelf. This is maybe the best fantasy series I read and something all other fantasy series will be measured against.

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## **Scott Hitchcock says**

Almost a year later and the 20th book total and 10th of the main series I'm done. What an epic ride that simply never disappointed. Not that I didn't have doubts early in the series a few times.

But this series really has it all and I mean that literally. Elf's, Dragons, Trolls, Ogres, shaper shifters, gods, magic of many forms and a system to back it up, religion, politics, humanity, violence, battles, war, love, history, ancient civilizations, action across better than five continents, divination, mysticism.....I could go on and on.

And yet all that doesn't begin to tell the story of why it's great. The compassion weaved into the world and characters is beyond comparison.

Simply the greatest series I've ever read.

As for this book it's really hard to say much without giving things away. I will say everything gets wrapped up. At the end there were tears in my eyes. So many characters had such crucial roles. Some always there unsuspecting.

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## **Evgeny says**

The remaining Bonehunters continue their march through The Glass Desert (more on this desert thing later). The long-lost army of Ganoes Paran finally shows up, and I still have no clue what it was doing between the events in The Bonehunters and this book; as to why it does what it did: I stopped wondering a long time ago - nobody gives an answer to this particular question in Malazan universe. A lot of forces gather in one place for the last showdown. Great battles are ensured.

As I mentioned above, I gave up on trying figuring out the motivations of the main characters, as well as secondary ones. The 180 degrees plot twist in the middle of the book was lame, in my opinion; I cannot give any details without huge spoilers, but people who read this will know what I am talking about - as this twist came up suddenly and without any kind of foreshadowing, or hint whatsoever. The battles are great and epic with good guys being rescued in the very last moment by deus ex machina type of intervention - all the time without failing. This is a really average book of the series, luckily the last one. One more thing to mention: the amount of unresolved plotlines boggles the mind. The people who were foreshadowed to play major role in the conflict resolution have around one page each where they do nothing really important.

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The whole series review:

Speaking about the whole series, I am relieved that I am finally finished it as well as disappointed. I expected a lot more from the hype surrounded the series. The first book blew me away, unfortunately the rest of the

series failed to deliver the promise. I am glad I finished it, but I will never reread it: there are better books out there. Now that I finished, I need to change the rating of some of the books. My main complains:

Nobody - and I do mean nobody - stays dead. Every person/being that died came back in one form or another, this means there is no emotional impact then a good guy dies: he/she will surely be back. I can only think of two exceptions of this rule: yes, in the whole series only two persons were gracious enough to remain dead.

The author never explains motivations of any character, the reader has to guess all of it; this really began getting old around book 8. It is impossible to tell whether somebody did some heroic action on purpose, or because he happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Despite the point above, we have a lot of inner monologues for any character, even ones who will disappear from the series forever without making any impact on the plot; everybody is a philosopher and miserable one at that. I would really like to see a happy person in Malazan universe, alas they do not exist; the kings and slaves are equally miserable.

To continue the point above, there are a lot of characters who are not related to the plot in any sense, still we have to suffer their long inner monologues - and all the monologues are somewhat similar. Why do we have POVs of these people at all, except as a filler material?

The last two points make books too long; what happened to editing? Every single book can be cut by two thirds without losing anything at all. Dear editors, when you charge money for your work, make sure you **ACTUALLY FREAKIN' DO IT!!!** If somebody could bother reducing the length of the series by half, the books would be really great; if somebody could manage to squeeze it all in a trilogy, the series would be a classic in genre, up there with The Lord of the Rings. As it is now, it is a torture to read most of the time.

For the major parts of the books people do nothing (except for philosophy part) even though they know what is coming; nobody bothers to do anything in advance. When the shit finally hits the fan, people finally react doing great sacrifices - something that can be avoided if anybody bothered doing something before the crisis.

Very frequent switching of POV, literally on every page, most notable in Gardens of the Moon and Toll the Hounds. This one is my major complaint, this technique works only during intense battles, and for the rest of a book it is really bad. I always have to scan the page first to see whose POV I read about at the moment - as it is not always obvious, and then come back to the beginning of the page to read carefully.

If there is a desert somewhere, people love wander in it aimlessly and endlessly. The moment I read about The Glass Desert in Dust of Dreams, I said: "Here it comes" and I was right. I imagine the Holy Desert Raraku looks like a downtown of a major city by the amount of people walking around in it.

A lot of soldiers (Bridgeburners and Bonehunters) are completely indistinguishable from one another; they lack individuality: after all, they all think the same miserable philosophical thoughts.

All in all, it is a major disappointment. What I am really scared of, is that from the immense popularity of the series some other fantasy writers will emulate this style. Oh well, there are a lot of older fantasy titles to read out there. I need to do some easy reading now, like The Critique of Pure Reason by Immanuel Kant.

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## **Jody says**

### **Full review now up!**

I can't believe I finally finished this series. Ten books, seven months, thousands of pages, and countless characters later here I am. Wondering how long it will take me before I re-read this series. I know I just finished it, but after spending so many months reading it I find myself out of my routine. I want to march the Chain of Dogs with Coltaine again, I want to fight the Pannion Domin with the Bridgeburners at Coral, and witness the Bonehunters at Y'Ghatan and Malaz City. Oh so many books on my TBR list and I just want to start this series over. Alas, it is time to move on.....for now.

Someone told me the end of this series was satisfying, but kept you wanting more. I have to say I strongly agree with that statement. Most of the storylines were wrapped up nicely, but I am left wondering about a few. No worries! I will not divulge my curiousness in this review, so you need not worry about spoilers going forward.

There are so many amazing things about this series. It is really hard to pick out what I loved most about it. Definitely some of the best and most memorable characters I have ever read about. A world so vast it boggles the mind that anyone could come up with such a detailed piece of art. Or maybe the raw emotion the story brings out in the reader. I can't pick just one, so I will go with all of the above.

*“You walk the steps of your life, and always that dream beckons, that dream waits. You don’t know if it can ever be made real. You don’t know that, even should you somehow stumble upon it, you won’t find it less than it was, less than it could have been – if only you could have kept that distance, kept it just outside arm’s reach. For ever shining. For ever unsullied by the all-to-real flaws of your own making.”*

The main thing that caught me off guard in *The Crippled God* was my feelings towards one of the characters. I had come to detest him so much throughout the other books, and at the end I found myself feeling only compassion for him. Erikson is always flipping the switch on the reader's emotions, and he really caught me off guard with this one.

With *The Book of The Fallen* series wrapped up I look forward to the other books in the Malazan world from Erikson and Esslemont both. Sooner rather than later more than likely. For anyone searching for the most epic fantasy series out there you can look no further. This has it all and much much more.

*“There shall be a Book and it shall be written by my hand. Wheel and seek the faces of a thousand gods! None can do what I can do! Not one can give voice to this holy creations. But this is not bravado For this, my Book of the Fallen, the only god worthy of its telling is the crippled one. The broken one. And has it not always been thus? I never hid my hurts. I never disguised my dreams. And I never lost my way. And only the fallen can rise again.”*

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## **Neo Marshkga says**

When you pick up a book, you want to experience a story. When you pick up a High Fantasy saga, you want to be transported into another world, a fantastic world, and you want to submerge yourself in it.

Normally, when reading Dark/Grimdark Fantasy, you don't expect the book to make you cry... but Malazan does. It keeps hitting you in the ground until you cry, it gives you a moment of freedom, so you can experience happiness and cry because of it... and then it proceeds with kicking you some more.

And you know what? It's FREAKING AWESOME!!!!

I have never felt this hooked to a story. Or at least i haven't felt like this in a LONG while.

It's a LONG journey. Long, complicated, treacherous, filled with different branches, with sorrow, friendship, camaraderie, hope, compassion.

This saga has been with me throughout this whole year, with it's ups and downs, and i am having a hard time figuring out how things are gonna be now that it's done... it feels, weird.

But the odyssey was worth it... it was long, it was hard, but it was needed. Your mind will be blown away, you will experience awe and it will be hard to get back to the genre after this beauty, 'cause it will be hard to top.

This is a beautiful saga, and you need to read it. Don't be afraid, delve into it, it's worth it.

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## **seak says**

I started reading The Malazan Book of the Fallen just over four years ago, so finishing the final book of this ten volume epic is kind of a big deal for me. It's been a big part of my life in fact and it's odd to be at the end even though I know there are plenty more to go.

So you can imagine this series has had quite the impact on my life. When I go through my books to see which ones to sell or give away I call it "culling the nobility." It's pervasive. :) (wait, are emoticons allowed in Malazan reviews?)

Gardens of the Moon was actually the first present my wife gave me for my birthday. We didn't have tons of money then (and still don't), but I couldn't have been happier receiving hours of entertainment and who'd've thunk how many hours it would end up being. Best. Wife. Ever.

I was immediately drawn in and stunned by the vast imagination that is contained within those pages of even the first book and to come to the end it's even more amazing to see how far the story develops. At the moment, I'm even doing a reread of Gardens, which is like reading a completely new (and easily understandable) book. To see these characters early on and how far they come has been pretty fun already.

The Crippled God actually has a lot of parallels with the first book and to warn you right now, we're headed into spoiler territory, but I assume if you've read this far, you've probably already read the whole series as it is anyway.

In Gardens of the Moon, I loved the idea of that the whole plan was to release something of great power that

would force your enemy to do battle and then your enemy would be weakened enough for you take on and beat. Yes, that is exactly how Erikson puts it, he's THAT good of a writer. :)

Gardens uses this to weaken Anomander Rake, at least that's the goal and The Crippled God a similar tactic is used by the Gods Errastas, Sechul Lath, and Kilmandaros, but on a grander scale - releasing the Otatarial dragon to weaken Draconus among others.

Both Gardens and TCG focus on the adjunct, although different adjuncts, and TCG mentions lots of events that happen in Gardens - talking about Lorn, the scene in the prologue to Gardens where Whiskeyjack talks to Ganoes, and Moon Spawn among others. We've come back around and I really appreciated these nods to the earlier work.

My one major criticism of this series is that it tends to be a downer for much of the book. Words like "gritty" and "realistic" follow this series and while for the most part it's true, I have a hard time saying something is realistic when it ignores the good in people and society completely and focuses and has a cynical outlook on just about everything. That's not to say this series does, there are moments of awe-inspiring goodness, but they are few and far between. I prefer to think of it as this world and its gods are unredeemable, which is to say it's not that realistic. I don't think Erikson has claimed as such either, it's been the reviewers and fans.

While I have had my difficulties with some of the previous volumes, they fail to take away from the fact that this series is incredible. Everything about it blows my mind and even some of the difficulties I've had I have been able to resolve.

One of those being the fact that everyone, rich or poor, old or young, seems to have the need to philosophize. It was in a recent interview or podcast (I just can't quite remember which) that Erikson mentioned essentially that those who have been through the most are the wisest among us. This is something I had actually already known, but needed reacquainting with the idea. Not that I am wise, I've lived quite the privileged life even without any money, but I've talked with people who've been through a whole lot more than me, like an African refugee who left his country because his government was trying to kill him, and he and his family could tell you what life's all about. For some reason I didn't realize until then how much it applies to these characters in this book who are really suffering.

There's really not much more to say than what I've said in my article, Why You Should Read The Malazan Book of the Fallen, where I've attempted to convince people to read the series. In addition, I just don't have time to really get into a good review (yes, I'm studying for the bar...again), especially one that this series deserves, so below are a number of quotes with some commentary here and there throughout.

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The humor is still there, at times even Tehol makes "appearances" though not actually in person, which is always a good thing since he's arguably my favorite character in the entire series. Here's one instance I found terribly funny especially in my stage of life (baby twins and two year old):

"Then I'm going with you. My wife can go somewhere else. She keeps talking about babies but I don't want babies - they get in the way of having fun, and people who end up having them spend all day talking about how great it is, but they look miserable even when they're smiling. Or worse, there're those ones who think their baby is the God of Genius reborn and even its poo smells like flowers, and all they do is talk about them for ever and ever and it's so boring I want to run away...'

'A rather uncharitable view, Ublala.'

'I don't give nothing for free, that's for sure. Whole people disappear when a baby arrives. Poof! Where'd they go? Oh, I know, they're crawling around making baby noises. It makes me sick.' He ducked the rock Ralata threw at him..." p. 522

But of course, Erikson delves deeper as well, leaving you to ponder your existence, to see the futilities, the baseness, but also very often he leads you to hope:

"I could run until I wear out. Every joint, every bone and every muscle. I could run until my heart groans older than its years, and finally bursts.

I could damn the poets and make the metaphor real. We are all self-destructive. It is integral to our nature. And we will run even when there's nowhere to run to, and nothing terrible to run from. Why? Because to walk is just as meaningless. It just takes longer." p. 389

This took me a few times, but it's dead on:

""When wisdom drips blood fools stand triumphant." p. 628 (Brother Diligence quoting Gothos' Folly)

I recently moved from a smaller town to a big city and this one really got me thinking:

"He wondered at all those lives, the way few would meet the gazes of their fellows, as if crowds demanded wilful anonymity, when the truth was they were all in it together - all these people, facing much the same struggles, the same fears. And yet, it seemed, each one was determined to survive them alone, or with but a few kin and friends offering paltry allegiance. Perhaps they each believed themselves unique, like a knot-stone in the centre of the world's mill wheel, but the truth was there were very few who could truly make claim to such a pivotal existence." p. 749

It's sad we tend to look away or even attempt to work things out on our own when it's unnecessary. Why can't we just help each other along through this existence instead of ignoring, judging, and leaving people behind. My wife says that this is why things like the shootings in Sandy Hook happened - people just don't get enough love in their lives. I can't say I disagree.

I fitting summary of the series title and it's meaning:

"In that Malazan Book of the Fallen, the historians will write of our suffering, and they will speak of it as the suffering of those who served the Crippled God. As something ... fitting. And for our seeming fanaticism they will dismiss all that we were, and think only of what we achieved. Or failed to achieve." p. 330

Here's one I found particularly humbling, I didn't know Erikson even read my blog:

"Gesler took her face in his hands and kissed her hard on the lips. 'Teach these lizards, Kalyth, only the best in us humans. Only the best.'" p. 771

Another very interesting quote that I heartily agree with:

"It is not enough to wish for a better world for the children. It is not enough to shield them with ease and comfort, to make the future's world a better one, then we curse our own children. We leave them a misery they do not deserve; we leave them a host of lessons unearned." p. 783

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The Crippled God is a fitting ending to quite possibly my favorite series of all time. It's more epic than I could have ever imagined and the action does not disappoint especially in the end of each book. Neither does Erikson's ability to drag emotions from you whether you want it or not. The Malazan Book of the Fallen will be the high water mark for epic fantasy for years to come, it's brutal, it's genius, it's an experience unlike anything else.

5 out of 5 Stars (A Masterpiece of Epic Proportions!)

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### **James Tivendale says**

Simple review. If you have gotten this far you do not need an introduction. If you have made it this far then you do not want me to spoil the plot. People have analysed that the ending of the series is weak. I completely disagree. This is up there with Deadhouse Gates, Memories Of Ice and Midnight Tides. Everything is written perfectly. Poetic. I cared about all the point of view characters. Even the storylines I did not care about too much in the prior instalment Dust Of Dreams, such as the Shake come to fruition here and you understand the necessity for the journey. You need to just read it. There are so many great scenes combining a huge amount of the big players that we have been following over what is a span of about ten years in this saga. Characters meet each other again after say 8-9 books apart and some of those moments are heart-wrenching. You will know the points when you get to them. There are so many amazing stand out dramatic scenes. A lot of the plots are wrapped up but you will still leave with so many questions. Ublula and Draconus are up there with Tehol and Bugg for their comedy gold. Forget this review. Just read this is you haven't already. Fiction especially fantasy will not compare to me anymore. I feel like part of my life is over now completing it. Take care all. Peace x.

[www.youandibooks.wordpress.com](http://www.youandibooks.wordpress.com)

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### **Stefan Bach says**

***"I have enjoyed our long conversation. What's three and a half million words between friends?"***

Dragons! Dragons everywhere! Magnificent ending of the best EF series that ever was and ever will be.  
RTF

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### **Traci says**

...OMG...

Standing ovation, bow,...grovel.

I wish I could thank Steven Erikson for writing this series. It is exactly what I have been searching for. Heroic fantasy for your brain.

I can however thank those of you here on goodreads. For some reason I had never heard of these books until I joined. And I might never have on my own. My book shelf would have remained incomplete. I'm serious. I have been reading fantasy for a long time and have seen favorites come and go. Truthfully I've been a little jealous over readers who have "the book". You know what I mean. The favorite above all favorites. Well, I don't think I need to be any longer.

Now for my review I suppose.

Book 5 stars (6!)

Series 5 stars (8!!!)

After 10,267 pages the story finally comes into focus. It combines what is great about the previous books. Especially when the focus is on the Bonehunters and Bridgeburners. It reminded me a bit of the fast pace of Gardens of the Moon. But with more clarity. With more attachment to the characters. With more investment in the story. I loved the end. It's not all happy. Not all tragedy. There are even some things left unresolved. I cried a little. Okay, maybe more than a little. I was holding up quite well until the last scene with Fiddler and Hedge. I laughed a little. And I never knew what to expect next. A very satisfying conclusion.

This series takes a certain commitment of the reader. And it's not for everyone. It seems you either love or hate it. My advice for new readers is to keep notes on character names. This was three fourths of all problems I ran into personally. And I will be doing this when I do a reread. Probably sometime within this year.

Favorite character without a doubt Fiddler. I usually go for the "cool" characters. The Kalam. Quick Ben. Cotillion. Rake. But somehow with all these unique interesting characters the one that won my heart was the average soldier. The reluctant hero who was uncomfortable with his role. One of my favorite parts (there were many) was the Bonehunters "last" march. Perfectly written.

Also loved Gesler and Stormy. Icarium and Mappo (I don't "mind" how this ended but I would still like to know more about this duo). Toc the younger (his last scene was another teary moment). Onos T'oolan. Tehol. Bugg. Brys. Can't forget Bottle. Onrack. I missed Trull. I would've loved to see him again. I was left wanting more of Karsa Orlong.

I loved the two epilogues. Korlat and Whiskey Jack. Another teary moment. And how the book ended in an almost full circle moment.

I'm at a lost on what to read next. I'm glad to have finished but sad to be leaving. Even though I know I will return. Probably sooner than I am thinking.

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## **David Sven says**

### **Reread Review**

Some six months after reading this book the first time I, along with some other hardcore Malazan veterans, with a lot of virgin Malazan readers in tow undertook the epic task of rereading the entire Malazan Book of the Fallen series. Sixteen months later here we are, finished again. Well done.

I'm not going to change my initial review of the book itself because I feel what I have already written(below) is sufficient for that purpose. What I really want to comment on is the experience of rereading the entire series. Having a look at my initial comments here I see that reading this series the first time around was at once very rewarding, but also quite frustrating at times. I am happy to report that the reread was a far superior experience to the extent that I would say the reward for reading this series is in being able to read it again.

A lot of my frustrations in not being able to connect the dots initially to a lot of the plot arcs turned into the satisfaction of discovering nuggets of missing links that had eluded me, and possibly would always have eluded me except I had undertaken to search for them retrospectively. On top of this was the added enjoyment that could only come from the discussion and sharing of ideas with new and old Malazan readers alike at The Malazan Fallen Book Club. I think this series, more than a lot of epic fantasy out there lends itself well to in depth group analysis and conversation. I think that the result of both the density of content in the books as well as Erikson's use of the unreliable narrator. I think there is only one or maybe two times in the whole series where we get an impartial omniscient view of the lay of the land. Most of the narration otherwise comes from POV characters who are imperfect and have an incomplete and often flawed perspective of what is actually true in the story. As such, you can have a single event described in different and often contradictory ways depending on who is telling a story. As such, even right at the end, there is no consensus of interpretations among members of the book club - which I like even if everyone else is wrong.

I think Erikson has succeeded in simulating somewhat the experience of archaeologists and anthropologists (of whom he is one) who must try to put together pieces of the past from fragments of scrolls, and ancient ruins, and bits of bone. Like all stories of the past we attempt to reconstruct, the evidence does not necessarily speak for itself (contrary to what Grissom on CSI says) - all evidence, particularly of the past, is interpreted through the filters of our individual biases and opinions and experience. And so we have had a book club that looks at the same book, the same evidence, and yet at times comes up with a variety of interpretations that has made for some very satisfying interaction.

I would also like to think that we have left behind a useful resource for other readers of the series who come after us - I'm not sure of anywhere else online where there is a separate non-spoilery thread for each and every chapter for each and every book of the whole Malazan Book of the Fallen series, so that regardless of where someone is in the series they can *safely* look for answers that may have eluded them.

To those Malazan fans who were there from the beginning, to those who joined us on the way, to those who contributed for a portion of the way - I salute you all. Thank you for marching with me through the oases as well the wastelands of this series and making the journey all that more enjoyable.

### **Initial review**

Here ends my epic read of an epic series. I consider the completion of these 10 books as a personal achievement. To say I have enjoyed the series would be over simplistic. Certainly there have been some very memorable moments and some very memorable characters throughout the series. But there have also been a plethora of generic and non interesting characters. There have been story lines/arcs that have been fast paced - but also a lot of story arcs that appear painfully slow, pointless and uninteresting. The writing style also is difficult at times with Erikson having the annoying habit of assuming the reader should know or remember small tidbits or clues to puzzles so that when the final piece is delivered there is no need for him to describe the final picture. And often he doesn't. While this can be very rewarding at those times when I figure stuff out on my own, there are a lot of times when I'm not sure if I got everything or if I missed something on the way.

Having said all this, I have yet to read a book in the series where I felt I wasted my time. The battle and action sequences are intense. The world building and magic system is generally consistent and interesting. And the interesting characters are really interesting. I will hold on to a lot of memorable moments like Quick

Ben outwitting Korbal Broach and Bauchelain, Anomander Rake and his sky keep, Kruppe moving deftly through the streets of Darujhistan using his immense powers to steal and consume cakes from venders, Ganoes Paran who became "Master of the Deck," Fiddler and his explosives, Kalam the Assassin, Whiskey Jack, Icarium Lifestealer, Tehol and Bugg, and there are more.

Reflecting on the series now I remember nearly giving up on the first book thinking that there were very few characters I cared about - but by this last book I have found myself attached to many of The Fallen and so take a moment to shed a tear for comrades lost either to battles within the pages or to those I have had to leave behind to fates I will never learn . . .sniff.

#### ***Spoilers for anyone who hasn't got this far yet***

But enough of that. In this last book of the series we rejoin Tavore and the Bonehunters on a gruelling march across a glassy waste to cheat the gods and to right an ancient injustice. By the end of the previous book we have an almost complete picture now of the plan for the Crippled God - a plan hatched by Shadowthrone and Cotillion along with Rake, Hood and later on Ganoes Paran. The plan was simple - just release the Crippled God from his chains so he can go back to where he came from. What's so hard about that? Forkrul Assail for one. An elder race who intend to feed off the Crippled gods power to bring an end to the universe. And maybe we throw in some Elder god has-beens who intend to release the Otatal Dragon and bring an end to the world.

So did Shadow have a brilliant plan for countering all this magic and universe ending power? Well that's what the mere mortals are for. With blood and steel and a special one finger salute for anything with the word "elder" or/and "god" in front of it.

4 stars from me.

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#### **Michael Britt says**

##### **"And now the page before us blurs. An age is done. The book must close."**

Wow, all things considered, that was the best ending I could've hoped for for a series so tragic. I'll share my thoughts on this book and then the series as a whole. Keeping it spoiler free, per usual.

After the slow pace of Dust of Dreams, this installment seemed more fast paced than the other books. I think going in with low expectations helped, as well. Even though we didn't get resolution on *everything*, we still got closure on so many other things. I did feel like some characters were under utilized, one in particular, in these last 2 novels. While I was disappointed that we didn't see him much, Erikson more than made up for it with some of my older favorites. The OG's, if you will.

There's not really much I can say about this novel without spoilers, so I'll conclude with this: this is a book that ramps up the epicness of this series from a 10 to a 20. And he also gives us a conclusion that is as fulfilling as you can hope for without sacrificing the tragic theme for sake of having a happy ending just because.

##### **"What's three and a half million words between friends?- from Acknowledgements**

Now, on to my thoughts on this series as whole, since this wraps up almost all of the plots. There are so many. So many that I'm pretty sure I missed a lot of what others might have seen clearly.

This is by far the most epic series in all of Fantasy, in every sense of the word and in every aspect. The cast rivals any series out there. I can't recall any series to use a cast this big. And with this big of a cast comes so many different story arcs. All of this is my favorite part of the series, but it was also the focal point of many of my frustrations. Especially in Dust of Dreams. Sometimes you won't see a character til 3, 4 or even 5 books later. Usually that's not a big problem, but keeping track of a cast this size can get pretty exhausting. I had to forgo the Dramatis Personae and very carefully wade through the wiki.

This is the most rewarding series I have yet to read. While it gets frustrating having to remember who is doing what, the payoffs from all that work far outweighs any frustrations. While most of the books have a relatively slow beginning, the payoff you get, when you finally get there has never disappointed.

Now, onto my favorite part of any series, the characters. One of the things I love most about this series, in particular, are the characters. More so their development. I also love how grey most of the cast is. Some do some terrible things, but for reasons you can't quite comprehend just then. I also love how he wrote most of his female characters. Most of the time I couldn't discern the males from the females unless there were either anatomical descriptors or a he/she put after the sentence. We got some really bad ass females in this series, too.

All the different plots and story arcs were interesting. Or they were to me, at least. I never found myself disliking the arcs for any specific race. Although, the K'Chain Che'Malle were among my favorites, by far.

That's really about all I have to say regarding this book and the series. All-in-all, I highly recommend this series to anyone looking for something that's more epic than any Epic Fantasy series out. Plus, **IT'S AN EPIC FANTASY SERIES THAT IS FINISHED.** Which finishing a series seems like a hard thing to do, so I felt I should mention it.

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