



## The Hourglass of Souls

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For decades Hudich, the leader of an evil army, had been held prisoner in a world called Pekel. Before releasing him last summer to save Max's friend Cindy, Max's grandfather neutralized Hudich's magical powers with the aid of an advanced high-tech collar. Unfortunately, Hudich's escape allowed him to relay a centuries-old secret to his followers that helps them find a powerful weapon. With the aid of this new weapon, an ancient magical gateway, the enemy kidnaps Max's mother and forces him to do their bidding by threatening to kill her. To keep his mother alive, Max will embark on another perilous adventure into new worlds with hidden dangers. Convinced there is a spy among his friends, Max must decide who he can trust, if anyone, in his attempts to rescue his mother and destroy the enemy's plans. His failure could free Hudich from the collar and leave innocent lives across the universe at the mercy of ruthless beings.

## The Hourglass of Souls Details

Date : Published June 4th 2009 by Dark Moon Publishing Inc. (first published April 4th 2009)

ISBN : 9780979720239

Author : James Todd Cochrane , Beth Peluso (Illustrator) , Susan K. Szepanski (Contributor)

Format : Paperback 278 pages

Genre : Fantasy

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## From Reader Review The Hourglass of Souls for online ebook

### Kevis Hendrickson says

I have made it no secret that *The Hourglass of Souls* by James Todd, the sequel to *Max and the Gatekeeper* is one of my most anticipated books of the year. Now that I have had a chance to take this book for a spin, I am compelled to share my thoughts on it. The big question is, how does *The Hourglass of Souls* compare to *Max and the Gatekeeper*? To put it simply, not only is *The Hourglass of Souls* a worthy sequel to *Max and the Gatekeeper*. It actually surpasses it.

Now bear in mind that this is no small feat considering that *Max and the Gatekeeper*, like many first books, is not only a labor of love, but also a completely original and compelling story which introduces us to a whole new universe conjured from the fertile imagination of Cochrane. More often than not, sequels tend to lose the unique flavor that of the introductory tale in order to venture off in some strange, new unexplored territory. Although I must admit, that there were times when I had to wonder if the sequel hadn't lost some of the magic of the original book, the story kicked itself into overdrive in the second half of the book and delivers a riveting and very satisfying tale.

In *The Hourglass of Souls*, thirteen year old Max Rigdon's mother is kidnapped by the evil forces of Hudich who wants him to steal the key which will unlock the magic-dampening collar which was placed around Hudich's neck in *Max and the Gatekeeper*. To ensure that Max carries out Hudich's will, both Max and his mother are subjected to cruel torture. Max fears for his mother's life and is convinced that he must steal the key to Hudich's collar from his Grandpa and use it as a bargaining chip to save her. Max's plight becomes much more complicated when he learns that Hudich has discovered a magical gateway by which he can enter any world in the universe. If Hudich is able to remove the collar from his neck, he will regain his deadly magical powers. Everything that Max and his friends suffered to defeat Hudich in *Max and the Gatekeeper* will have been for nothing if an all-powerful Hudich and his forces are able to use this new gateway to invade other worlds. Max must find a way to rescue his mother from Hudich without giving up the key.

From the harrowing plot it is obvious that *The Hourglass of Souls* is much darker tale than *Max and the Gatekeeper*. Cochrane has raised the stakes for Max in this sequel and in the process draws his readers more deeply into the explosive conflict of his book. To be certain, there is no lack of action in this excellent sequel. However, the area where I think *The Hourglass of Souls* doesn't quite match up to the original is in the sheer scope of its imagination. Although *The Hourglass of Souls*, which is the namesake of this book, is a quite creative plot device, the overall story seems to be lacking the wow-factor which blew me away in the original book. This is not to say that *The Hourglass of Souls* doesn't feature its own cleverness. I think much of the way the story shapes itself has to do with the darker, more violent tone of this new story. Cochrane is not pulling any punches in *The Hourglass of Souls* and it is clear to see that he is weaving a tale that is not only more frightening, but also quite emotional.

I definitely enjoyed reading this book and am now an official fan of the author. I recommend this book to everyone who enjoys a wonderful tale of adventure. Better still, if you like your fantasy stories to have a bit of substance to go along with the spectacle, look no further than *The Hourglass of Souls*.

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### Trina says

I ordered this second book as soon as I finished the first *Max and the Gatekeeper*. The first one was a great

story but the writing was less-than-polished. Some sentences were choppy, as if the author was trying to write simply for a younger audience. I was pleasantly surprised by the improvement in the flow of this book. The writing did not interfere with the story at all. Another difference in this sequel was that it was a bit more graphic. There was a scene of torture early in the book that pushed the limits of what I could tolerate, and I wondered if a pre-teen reader would be disturbed by it. The action was great, the characters developed well, and the reader is left anxious to find out in the next installment.

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## **Rosa Cline says**

### **Not as good as book 1 but still good**

This book starts off right where book 1 ends; although if you hadn't read book 1 I don't think you'd be lost since the author does a good job keeping you in the loop of things where you wouldn't be lost. I didn't like the, what I thought, was excessive descriptions of things in this book. Many times I fast read over parts and didn't feel like I lost out on anything. I may or may not read book 3. As to recommending to my preteen and teen readers yes I think they would enjoy this book very much, and actually kind of reminds me of the movies the lord of the rings.

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## **Deborah says**

The second book in the series, Max and the Gatekeeper was a very good book. I was a little surprised by the torture scene, as I had thought that this book was written for a younger audience. I found that the writing style has improved, and the narrative flows a little better.

Mr Cochrane is still very good at telling a story, creating interesting characters and writing action sequences. I loved the new characters, and the opening scene caught my attention right away.

I found that I was slightly stressed out over some of the characters problems, and I wanted to shake him when he kept his secrets. I think that makes the book even better, as I was emotionally involved in the story.

I finished this story and bought the 3rd book. I would recommend it for teens and not pre-teen, as the content has become more graphic.

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## **Justin says**

While not without its flaws, I was entertained enough by James Todd Cochrane's Max and the Gatekeeper to give the sequel - The Hourglass of Souls - a try. Set one year after the events of Max and the Gatekeeper, 13-year old Max Rigdon, a new recruit in a secret magical war, is once again thrust into the midst of conflict when his mother is kidnapped by agents of the dark sorcerer Hudich. They offer Max a terrible choice: betray his friends and their cause, causing untold misery across multiple worlds, or lose his own mother to torture and death.

Like the first volume in the series, *The Hourglass of Souls* is pretty much all action, all the time. This is good for a couple of reasons. The rapid pace should hold the attention of younger readers, and Cochrane really has a knack for writing cinematic action/adventure scenes. The fight scenes in particular are very dynamic, though having teenage protagonists running around yelling spells as black-cloaked bad guys is perhaps too close to Harry Potter at times.

It's when the pace slows down that the story starts to fall apart. The way characters are divided into "good" and "evil" categories is completely arbitrary. We know Alan and his son Larry are evil, but have yet to be told why (though they do apparently live in the evil section of town, so that might have something to do with it). Aside from Max and perhaps Cindy, the characters in *The Hourglass of Souls* are very one-dimensional. Even major characters like Grandpa and Hudich seem like poor stand-ins for Dumbledore and Voldemort. The dialogue is also a weak point, especially that of Max and the rest of the kids in the book. Kids, especially young teenagers, just don't talk that way.

I enjoyed the action and the story's fast pace, and Max seemed to develop as his own unique character in this book much more than he did in *Max and the Gatekeeper*. Younger readers looking for a Harry Potter surrogate should find Cochrane's books quite enjoyable. Unfortunately *The Hourglass of Souls'* flaws will be harder for adult readers to overlook.

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### **Jeanette says**

Another good one! I enjoyed the second one in the series just as much! This writer knows what he's doing.

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### **Steve Hikida says**

Continued all the positives that I mentioned in the first book. Interesting, well rounded characters, story is well thought out, imaginative plot, etc.

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### **Megan (ReadingRover) says**

Review to come

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