



The Master

Claire North

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The Gameshouse is an unusual institution.

Many know it as the place where fortunes can be made and lost through games of chess, backgammon - every game under the sun.

But a select few, who are picked to compete in the higher league, know that some games are played for higher stakes - those of politics and empires, of economics and kings . . .

And now, the ultimate player is about to step forward.

The Master Details

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Author : Claire North

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From Reader Review The Master for online ebook

BluePhoenix5 says

I don't want it to be over! Serious book hangover after this series.

Princessjay says

[--centuries of scheming and planning, all for luurve-- (hide spoiler)]

William says

Combined review of a Superb novella series:

The Serpent

The Thief

The Master

As usual with my reviews, please first read the publisher's blurb/summary of the book. Thank you.

Once again Claire North provides superb prose, great intellect, astounding knowledge of foreign places and times, and a growing insight into the human heart.

I was astounded at her intimate knowledge of Renaissance Venice and pre-WW-2 Thailand. These are living places and peoples. The rural areas of Thailand are beautifully painted, and the common people are alive and fascinating.

The final novella traverses the modern world, and North shows her mastery of government organisations and apparatchiks. Her heart is clear, and the perhaps-evil manipulation of vast populations by the arrogant powerful and the super-wealthy are questioned, but not set as an absolute. We are honestly challenged. The ending here was just a bit drawn out and overwrought.

Overall, a fine series, but not quite as good combined as her other novels.

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Great action sequences throughout, and especially at the climax of this book.

“Do you see this victory?” he asked, face burning with joy. “The banks bet big and countries fall; the numbers grow and the numbers shrink but people – the clever, clever people, reasonable, rational people – they don’t play the numbers, they don’t play the maths, they just play greed. Lust! Lust and blood, that’s all there is, all there ever was. Behind every smile there’s only sex and need, in every gift there’s a debt that will be paid, power that will be reaped, this world, these people, they are the wild things, the savage things, just like I always said, just like I promised – I was right! There is no reason; there is only the fire and the dark!”

Kiwi Begs2Differ \ says

This series went downhill for me. I loved the first novel set in Venice, the idea of players moving people as pieces in a big game was original and the characterization superb, the second one, set in Thailand, was OK but repetitive. By the third book, set in the modern days and on the world scale, the novelty has worn off, even if the novella itself has a good pace, it didn't satisfy completely. To me it seemed more a contemporary action book, employing the pursued protagonist trope, rather than fantasy. 2.5 stars rounded down as the ending was a disappointment.

Paul Sparks says

Like the two other books that I've read by Claire North, I want more. "The Gamehouse", just like her previous two novels, was well fleshed out and felt real. Now I have to wait until next spring for her next novel. And I keep thinking, when do all of these separate works come together and we find out they are all a shared world?

Elizabeth A says

I listened to the audiobook which is wonderfully narrated by Peter Kenny.

Contrary to what all the movies and ads sell us, we know, deep down we know, that the house always wins. The game being played here is the ultimate one: a game of chess against the Gameshouse itself. Who would dare? Silver, of course. He's had cameo appearances in the first two novellas, and in this final one he takes center stage, and in this case the stage is the entire planet. Can Silver really win against the Woman in White?

Yes, I'll repeat myself with how much I loved the writing, the plot, the setting, the characters, etc. There are so many things that made me smile in recognition, and I flew through this one too. I docked a star because the point of view of the story changed, and I so loved the original format. Also, I had an inkling about the head of the Gameshouse, so was not really surprised. Still, loved that ending. It's a game after all, so why would you expect anything different?

I honestly can't put into words the wondrous experience of this trilogy. I've enjoyed every minute of my time in these worlds, and would highly recommend you give this series a try.

Daniel says

Fin zavrsetak serijala ali opet nekako slabiji nego ocekivan. I sama knjizica mi je dosta slabija. Dok je prva predstavljala uvod u igru a druga digla sve to na visi nivo i upoznala nas sam gomilom mogucnosti ova treca mi vise dodje samo kao ponavljanje druge sa vecom površinom za igrom ali u sustini istom pricom (bezi, bezi, bezi dok ne nadjes resenje). Stil pisanja je i dalje prelep ali jednostavno fali originalnosti u odmnosu na druge dve knjige.

Serijal je u svakom slucaju vredan citanja ali sam ipak malo razocaran krajem.

Robyn says

A satisfying conclusion to the three-novella series. Brutal, full of twists and turns. My only real complaints is the change in narration; I liked our sly, unseen narrator of the previous books.

carol. says

The third in North's triptych of novellas about The Gamehouse.

You keep using that word.

The Garden of Earthly Delights by Hieronymus Bosch

I know, I know, but I'm having a hard time finding another concept that so perfectly encapsulates the idea of what North has done. This is not a trilogy, precisely, although characters in one appear in another. The plot from one does not pick up and carry on to the next, exactly. What this is is three ways of looking at a Game, a game that is quite possibly rigged.

In this final panel, Silver does the unthinkable: he sets himself to playing the Gamesmaster. While they play, the Gamehouse closes up.

“Red brick above, a fire escape pushed awkwardly to one side as if the Gamehouse has transplanted itself into the architecture of this place, shuffling pre-established buildings a little to the left, a little to the right, to the confusion of the mortar around. Which, of course, it has.”

Pieces come into play, and some of the other Players have a very good idea what Silver and the Gamesmaster are risking:

“It's not your death that troubles me here, though I am certain that you will die—it's the death of every pawn, rook and queen the pair of you throw at each other as part of your game.”

The Game will range across continents and as predicted, draw endless numbers of pawns into their maneuvers. As before the setting is lovingly described, so despite the variety of places, they are all beautifully evoked.

“Mongolia is one of the most sparsely populated countries on Earth. Her beauty changes with the eye of the beholder. To a man freshly flung from a still-moving train, it is flat, vast, terrifying, a desert of grass where you might roam for ever, still bleeding, still stinging, and see barely another soul. To a tired wanderer, it is a blessed place, rolling hills and dry shrub where you might start a fire, a warning of mountains in the distance, but an infinite space between you and them.”

Characters are quickly and strongly created, with passion and enthusiasm in their mayfly lives.

“I smiled at the man, whose mighty beard and grubby cap declared that here was a man who served the oceans first and *la belle France* second. Poseidon was his god, the water was his lover, and Liberté,

Egalité and Fraternité would be welcome on board only if they were willing to row.”

Silver—and the Gamesmaster—are toiling under the weight of years. One gets the sense that they might have embraced cleverness and strategy without feeling the connection to an end goal.

“I laughed at that, and wondered when my own company had become so unpleasant to me.”

As a very small aside, I will note that this should have been proof-read at least one more time. While I can be largely indifferent to rules of grammar and punctuation, Claire North is a word-smith, and as such, I read her writing carefully. Imagine my surprise then, at at least three different typos, one confusing 'heroine' with 'heroin.' (!)

This is beautiful and sad, this is aging and tiring, this is change and staying the same. Close to perfect, except for that little homonym problem and some right-sided questions about the ending.

Lianne Pheno says

<http://delivreennlivres.blogspot.fr/20...>

Pas mon tome préféré de la série mais il boucle vraiment bien la série avec une fin surprenante.

Nous poursuivons notre exploration de la Gameshouse que nous avons découvert dans le premier tome de cette série. Tout au long des tomes précédents un personne récurant se préparait à lancer son assaut donc la maîtresse du jeu. Ce tome raconte donc la confrontation et tout ce qui en découle.

Nous savons tous que le casino gagne toujours, c'est une règle universelle et bien sur elle s'applique aussi pour la Gameshouse. Mais la ou un casino ne fait que gagne de l'argent, cette maison ci gagne des biens bien plus précieux. L'enjeu de la partie : la place de gamemaster, le contrôle de l'évolution du monde, un peu une place de dieu. Le jeu : un simple partie d'échec, mais dans laquelle les participants sont les rois à mettre en échec.

Le premier tome se déroulait sur une période de quelques semaines, le second sur quelques mois, et celui ci plusieurs années. Du coup le rythme est des fois extrêmement rapide. De longs passages, de nombreuses confrontations sont résumés en quelques mots, succession de phrases hyper courtes qui résumant des mois d'action. Je dois dire que c'est très réussi, on sent vraiment la complexité de leur bataille, l'intensité des combats et tout ça donne le tournis. D'autant plus que le style est très percutant, il n'y a pas de phrases qui ne servent à rien, tout est à sa place.

En fait le seul point qui me fait dire que ce n'était pas mon tome préféré, est que ce style la fait qu'on est moins pris dans le coté émotionnel du personnage comme on l'était dans le tome précédent. C'est un autre type de tension ici. Ça n'en reste pas moins très sympa mais moins prenant. Du moins sur un texte si court, je pense que si il avait été plus long ça aurait surement aidé.

J'ai vraiment aimé le fait qu'on découvre ici qui était le/les narrateur(s) des tomes précédents. Je n'aurais jamais imaginé ça.

Et la fin est vraiment bien trouvé. Elle a vraiment sa place dans l'ensemble, je crois que je n'aurais pas pu imaginer une meilleur fin même en y réfléchissant longtemps. C'est une fin ouverte vraiment réussie.

Au final j'ai vraiment bien apprécié l'ensemble de la trilogie. C'est assez spécial comme lectures et comme

style mais c'est justement ça qui les démarque du reste. Ce dernier tome était intense et une excellente lecture.

16.5/20

Phrynne says

This is the last of three novellas which really need to be read in order to appreciate the whole work fully. Let me say first that I love everything this author writes under any of her pseudonyms. She has an outstanding imagination and a real sense of the extraordinary.

So, Book 3 of The Gameshouse and the final instalment. The events of the first two books have been moved to a whole new level for the ultimate challenge, the Gameshouse itself is temporarily closed and two people compete for control. Their Game is Chess played using real people and events and ranging across continents. And I loved every single word of it!

As far as I am concerned Claire North is The Master:)

Lata says

An excellent conclusion to a set of three stories about the Gameshouse. This time, the main character is Silver, who's made an appearance in the previous two installments. Silver and the Games Master spend this book fighting, throwing their resources at each other. As these resources can be entire armies, police forces, or intelligence communities, with results being the destruction of an economy, a country or something else consequential, the stakes are huge. Where stories one and two were tightly focused on Thene then Remy, Silver is harder for me to get a sense of and the Games Master is shadowy, so I found a lot of the action to be remote. Silver is often in personal danger, but I found my reactions to his resources' peril to be somewhat muted, unlike the very real dangers Remy faced.

While the ending of this series is satisfying and little frightening, I'll say that I loved parts one and two, and really enjoyed part three.

Lindsay says

The first novella in this series was a young game player in her first higher league game playing for her freedom. The second novella was a jaded older game player playing a simple game but coming away with a new appreciation for the pieces and the game itself. In this final novella we have Silver playing the Great Game for control over the Gameshouse itself, and there's a feeling of death and finality across the event. Silver doesn't seem to be playing to win, or lose, but more because he's sick of waiting for the game to be over.

This story is an excellent completion of this book, with the motives of all the great players laid bare, explaining why they're playing the game, why the Gameshouse exists, and the stakes of the event. It doesn't have the fresh simple politics of the first, or the raw humanity of the second, and the game here (Chess) is a truly horrific one when played at the higher league level, but it makes sense in terms of the natural progression of the Gameshouse novellas. The last game *should* be brutal. It *should* be for the highest stakes.

The outcome is guessable through the novella. No surprises what happens when the game is won, and it's a

surprisingly satisfying way to end it all. Great series.

Carolyn says

In this conclusion to the Gameshouse trilogy of novellas, the Master of the Gameshouse is challenged by one of it's oldest and most experienced players, Silver. The game is Chess and it is played on the world stage with countries and armies at the disposal of the players as they play out their strategies. A brilliant ending to a brilliant series!

Alissa says

Thought-provoking themes, a brilliant story and a masterful execution!

Finally the narrator takes the stage. I had my idea, there were cues, but nothing is at it seems, much to my delight and continued entertainment. In modern-day New York the board is set, the pieces are in place, the players are ready (or are they?) and the greatest game of all, a game that transcends time whose board is the world and the pieces the players' own, has begun.

The coin turns, the coin turns.

Full circle. Hats off.

For so many centuries I have waited for this day, and grief faded with time.

Or did it? Perhaps grief never leaves us but is merely drowned out by a flood of life overwhelming it.

Perhaps the wound that bled once is bleeding still, and I did not notice it until now.
