



Orphan's Song

Gillian Bronte Adams

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Who Will Keep the Song Alive?

Every generation has a Songkeeper – one chosen to keep the memory of the Song alive. And in every generation, there are those who seek to destroy the chosen one.

When Birdie's song draws the attention of a dangerous Khelari soldier, she is kidnapped and thrust into a world of ancient secrets and betrayals. Rescued by her old friend, traveling peddler Amos McElhenny, Birdie flees the clutches of her enemies in pursuit of the truth behind the Song's power.

Ky is a street-wise thief and a member of the Underground—a group of orphans banded together to survive . . . and to fight the Khelari. Haunted by a tragic raid, Ky joins Birdie and Amos in hopes of a new life beyond the reach of the soldiers. But the enemy is closing in, and when Amos' shadowed past threatens to undo them all, Birdie is forced to face the destiny that awaits her as the Songkeeper of Leira. Book one of the Songkeeper Chronicles.

Orphan's Song Details

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From Reader Review Orphan's Song for online ebook

Sierra Faith says

Oh. My. Goodness! I want the second book right now!!!

Hannah White says

This is going to be an amazing book! I can't wait! Everyone go check out Gillian on her blog:
<http://ofbattlesdragonsandswordsofada...>

Gillian is hilarious and if you love reading and writing, that's the place to go. Cannot wait for this book's release!

Deborah O'Carroll says

I find it hardest to review the books I love the most. There's a reason I've never written a review for The Lord of the Rings, Narnia, Prydain, etc... Something about their greatness and the depth of my love for them makes it virtually impossible for me to even attempt to review certain books. It's a daunting task. How do I do justice to them? How do I sum up in a review with my own feeble words the vast awesomeness of how much I loved a book?

I'm going to try, though, in this case. Because ORPHAN'S SONG is definitely one of those books.

Before I can get to the useful part of this review, I just have to squeal a little. ALL THE FEEEEEELS!!! I CAN'T EVEN. When I finished, I was flailing around and babbling incoherently to my sister, trying to explain how much I loved it and how many feels it gave me. (...Much of which is spoiler-ish to even mention.) BUT SO MANY FEELS. AND THE CHARACTERS. I LOVE ALL OF THEM. YES, ALL. BIRDY AND KY AND AMOS AND CADE! CADE CADE CADE. AND A CERTAIN SOMEBODY WHO I CANNOT MENTION BECAUSE IT IS SECRET BUT OH MY GOODNESS I DON'T KNOW IF I EVER HAD SO MANY CONFLICTING FEELS BEFORE. AAAAAAH.

There is my overall opinion. ;) So now that's out of the way, here are the reasons WHY I loved ORPHAN'S SONG so much. The characters are a big part of it, but I'm going to get to them in a little while.

The plot itself was exciting and awesome--so much adventure and peril and epicness! I loved how it followed different points of view. When the characters all converged I was almost squealing with excitement! I love that feeling of following different characters and you see them about to come together and then they do, and just YES.

I loved the writing--it flows in a way that is natural but beautifully crafted.

And the SONG. I loved everything about the Song. It was done gorgeously! Eep. I also like Christian fantasy when it's done right, and I felt it was done extremely well... It fit in perfectly and was uplifting.

Sometimes fantasy worlds are hard pressed to hit the right balance between being full of fantasy, magic, wonder, strangeness... but also being believable. The world in ORPHAN'S SONG was beautiful and wild and dangerous, and I loved it. It felt somehow natural, and not even put on display like many fantasy worlds; it was all there, but neither over-stressed, nor too much in the background.

The Underground was awesome! Its literal undergroundness and all the youngsters organized like a delightful mix of Peter Pan and Ender's Game (the good parts of both).

I don't believe that I've EVER read a book with characters who were more realistically HUMAN than in ORPHAN'S SONG. And by human, I don't mean flawed, or relateable; I mean REAL. I like characters who are straightforwardly good or bad... I'm tired of the "flaw" argument for "realistic" characters. The bad characters and the good characters were all noticeably bad or good. But the bad ones... they had some spark of decency or something that made me connect with them; the good ones each had their own problems, and I even had uncertainties about some, being unsure if they would remain good or if they would make the wrong choice... But I loved all the characters (okay, with the exception of the Takhran), and they didn't seem to me to be crafted figments of an author's imagination, trying to have the right mix of virtues and flaws in appropriate balance to make them "real" or "human"... They WERE real and human. I can't explain it very well, but I don't think I've hardly ever read a book with characters like this, who seemed that much like real people. I don't know how Gillian Bronte Adams did it, but I'm in awe.

As for the individual characters...

Birdie was a fabulous heroine! I loved her and just wanted to hug her the whole time. It's actually rare for me to like a female MC very much, since normally they annoy me or are too wimpy or too much of a tough-girl. Birdie was perfect, though. She had a quiet strength, relateable but brave, that I loved.

Amos... What can one even say about Amos? He's an absolute awesome delight. I love his stubbornness and loyalty and occasional grumpiness and Scottish accent and just everything about him! EEEEEEE.

Ky was fantastic--I enjoyed him a ton and can't wait to see more of him! Clever thief-lads are some of my favorite kinds of characters, and he was just great.

AND CADE. The leader of the Underground, he's so awesome and probably my favorite, if I can even pick one (which is difficult). I absolutely loved Cade! SO MUCH.

THE GRIFFON. WAS. PERFECT. I wish there was more with him!

I also liked Hendryk. Is that weird? I just thought he was done really well as someone who's just a normal soldier, so we can kind of see his point of view even though he's with the badguys. I also loved how he kept popping up everywhere.

As for complaints... yes, I did have a couple. I was a little annoyed at how we kept being in a certain character's point of view, but we still didn't see all the secrets that character knew, even though we kept getting glimpses of them in thought-processes--but it would suddenly stop right before it got to the important thing. That's one of my particular annoyances in books, where the character whose head we're in lets us see everything they're thinking... EXCEPT for the one particular teeny-tiny-enormous secret that is deliberately being hid from us until "the right moment". Just. Meh. I understand why it's done, but it doesn't keep me from being quite impatient whenever I find it in a book. It would work fine in a movie, with microscopic flash-backs or whatever, but in a movie we're not in the character's HEAD. By the time we learned the secret

I'm talking of (which I do admit I was dying to learn), I had mostly guessed it already, so although it was awesome, I was still left a bit with a feeling of being annoyed with the device of how the secret was kept veiled.

One warning: the book sort of ends on a cliff-hanger. Like, a lot. But, unlike in most reviews where I talk of cliff-hangers, I'm not going to shriek incoherently about my need for a-sequel-right-NOW-get-to-it-at-once-author-do-you-hear? Nope. In this case, I want the sequel SO much that . . . I can wait. And I will. As long as it takes. Even if the author forgets about the series and goes on to write something else for a decade or two (which is, I hope, unlikely) before releasing the second book, I will still be waiting.

I will wait patiently for the moment when I can hold book 2 in the Songkeeper Chronicles in my hand, open it up to the first page, and continue this journey with the characters I love, in this intriguing fantasy land, by this author who has captured the heart of a fabulous story on paper and shared it with fortunate readers.

Okay, I don't usually write reviews with spoilers, but I have SO many conflicting feels that they must come out a little. So. Here at the end be the spoilers. ABSOLUTLY DO NOT OPEN THE SPOILER TAG UNLESS YOU HAVE READ THE BOOK, OKAY? REALLY. Because there are awesome twists and things in the story and you do NOT want them spoiled for you when you read it!!! (Because you must read it. You really, positively, absolutely, must read this beautiful thing.)

*****SPOIIIIIIILERS!!!!!! WARNING. DO NOT TOUCH. GO AWAY AND HIDE. AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY*****

(view spoiler)

(Technically, I did receive a free e-copy of this book in return for my honest review--many thanks to the author! But I also bought the paperback as soon as it came out because I needed to own it; and I read most of it out of that. All of that being said, I was in no way required to be positive and these are my own personal opinions.)

Jason C. says

I don't give 5 stars often. I try to save them for the best books. It's even less likely that I give 5 stars to a debut author, as there is always room for improvement with them.

But this debut by Gillian Bronte Adams breaks through with exceptional writing.

Birdie is an orphan who lives with a mean innkeeper and is used for cheap labor. She longs to escape but has nowhere to run. And she hears a strange but beautiful melody that no one else can hear.

When an evil Khelari soldier discovers her identity and captures her, it's up to a traveling peddler with his own secrets to rescue her. But there is more than anyone knows at stake, and it encompasses villages, pirates,

street children, and a mysterious creature with his own agenda.

Orphan's Song is a fantasy novel that has an interesting premise. It is not unique, but Gillian writes enough twists and turns that the plot can't be predicted. Her characters stand out and have distinct voices, and they are easy to cheer for.

What sets this book into the 5 star range is the beauty of the writing. Some books try to be fancy with words and descriptions and it becomes distracting. Gillian has a wonderful touch of giving evocative description and showing that flows along with everything in the book. The pictures she creates with her words elevates this from any standard fantasy.

I knew from Gillian's blog that she cared deeply about her craft and story, and the proof is in Orphan's Song. It has vaulted into the best book I've read this year. The only problem is that I have to wait to find out what happens! Great job, Gillian!

Katie Grace says

Before I even had the privilege of reading this book, I was expecting big things. I had been reading her blog for a while, and the short stories and writing articles were excellent. I had no doubt that Orphan's Song would hold my interest.

And Gillian didn't let me down. This book was absolutely thrilling. It most definitely held my interest, and on the way captured a few hours of sleep. *yawns* That's what good books do to you. :)

Orphan's Song had balance. It balanced two different plot lines to change the story up. It had enough light-hearted moments to make you laugh, but the seriousness of the situation was still there. Two sides of the scale were being measured, and Gillian evened them out.

When I first started the book, I didn't even realize that there were two different plot lines. I was quite surprised when the perspective changed to this new character, Ky. But I was surprised in a good way. His story (I won't say much in worry of spoilers) might have been my favorite part of the book. He seemed like such a sweet boy trying to act as a man. You can't help but root for him.

And then there's the other main character, Birdie. One of my favorite parts of her was the talent of the Song she had been given, but yet that was one of the most confusing parts for me. It felt like it was an allegory, but if it was, the point did not come across clear enough for me to understand. This was the biggest disappointment for me, but it was easy enough to overlook so I could enjoy the rest of the book.

There were a few deaths in the book that were quite unexpected to me, but Gillian didn't go into much detail. Violence-wise, it wasn't bad at all.

I will be buying this in paperback form as soon as I can so I can add it to my lovely shelf of books. :) I have such trouble finding good, clean books to read, so it was awesome to come across Gillian's work. I look forward to her upcoming books, and will most definitely read them as soon as I get a chance!

Shantelle says

This book fulfilled my hopeful expectations, I believe. Behind the absolutely gorgeous cover, we find an enchanting tale, akin to *The Chronicles of Narnia*, yet it's own.

Birdie is an orphan, just trying to protect herself from Madame's harsh words and the two terrors, the woman's spoiled sons. Strangely, she hears a Song that no one else seems to hear. Her peddler friend, Amos McElhenny warns her away from singing it ... but Birdie is determined to figure out what people are hiding from her.

This throws her into a perilous journey, filled with Khelari soldiers, old secrets, and the Underground. For better or worse ... Birdie's life will never be the same.

Alright. ^_^ I was so excited to read by Gillian Bronte Adams; because her books just look so beautiful and intriguing and filled with amazing fantasy. And they are! *Orphan's Song* caught me from the Prologue. The writing style. The promise of fantastic things to come. The wonderful fantasy creatures and ideas! I LOVED the whole allegory with the Song and the Songkeeper and all that lovely stuff. It was beautiful and awesome, and really touched my heart!

Speaking of the Song ... yes, *Orphan's Song* is a Christian fantasy from what I can see. The things weren't expounded a whole lot, I still saw a clear allegory and hoping for more to come in the next book! <3 Just beautiful. And poignant.

The characters were great! From Birdie to Amos, and Ky to Gundhrold ... I loved them! I was quite intrigued by the whole group of street orphans and their lives together. Ky was cool! *grins* Birdie was sweet and brave; I really enjoyed her character and discovering her story with her. Can't wait to read more of her!
smiles

Okay. Evil Khelari soldiers. Pirates. Griffons. Songkeepers. Protectors. Interesting cats. It was all so incredible! I was surprised and delighted again and again. It's all so simply intriguing and grand. Once again ... it really captivated me the way *The Chronicles of Narnia* does, in a lot of ways. I liked Gillian Bronte Adams's writing style. It was lyrical and humorous and just great. Kept you in the story and reading! And just, griffons!!!! EEP! <3 <3

There was a bit more violence and gruesomeness than I expected. I might still let my thirteen-year-old sister read it ... but not sure. My family's kinda sensitive when it comes to that sort of stuff. Caution to younger children anyway.

This book is for all fantasy lovers! Mystery. Allegories. Mythical creatures. Danger. Battles. Good versus evil. All kinds of wonderful things. Fans of C.S. Lewis and Anne Elisabeth Stengl will really enjoy *Orphan's Song* I believe.

All in all, *Orphan's Song* is an epic fantasy. I'm so excited to read Book 2 in The Songkeeper's Chronicles! Not to mention, Gillian Bronte Adam's standalone, *Out of Darkness Rising*!

Sarah says

My biggest complaint about this book: the fact that it ended.

Other than that (which, sadly, most books suffer from), *Orphan's Song* was excellent. I loved the characters, particularly Amos. His accent, his history (secrets! oh, the secrets!), his insults and other turns of phrase (I need to add "boggswoggle" to my vocabulary), his determination to protect Birdie (even if he sometimes goes about it the wrong way) . . . he's just awesome. Can he be real? Please?

The idea of the Song and the Songkeeper was also fascinating . . . at least the little I found out about it in this book. I would've liked a few more answers in that area, but as it's the first book in the series, I shan't complain.

Also, there's a griffin. A *griffin*. This makes me enormously happy because fiction needs more griffins and this one (whose name, by the way, is Gundhrold) is epic.

Plotwise, *Orphan's Song* was very good. The first switch from Birdie's plotline to Ky's caught me a little off-guard, but that's mostly because of what happened in Birdie's plotline right before the switch. My only real issue with the plot is the ending . . . which is a cliffhanger. Not the most evil cliffhanger I've ever read, but it's a cliffhanger nonetheless, and I need book two *now*. Please.

Overall, *Orphan's Song* is an excellent book which I would recommend to lovers of fantasy both young and old!

R.F. Gammon says

Not a bad little fantasy book. I didn't find it particularly amazing, but it was a fun ride. I think the biggest issue I had with it was that I was expecting the characters to be a little older (it did feel a lot more middle grade, honestly), although that's not really anyone's fault but my own :P I never really fell in love with the characters and found the world rather confusing, although I did love all the talking animals and enjoyed the prose (the descriptions of the Song! *swoons*) I'm giving it 3 stars, but not because there was anything wrong with it....just not my favorite.

E.F.B. says

All I can say is, I loved it! I loved the writing, I loved the characters, I loved the story, and I didn't want it to end! I neeeeed the next book! *grabby hands*

Leah Good says

This book has been sitting on my shelf since I got it for Christmas, waiting to strike my fancy in a moment I was searching for a new read. Fancy struck on Thursday, but my day was so busy I carried it around all day and only read the first chapter. However, on Friday my work got canceled because of snow, so I ended up plowing through almost the entire book in one day.

The first few chapters had me worried. The story had its unique points, but seemed to fall into the tired

pattern of many fantasy stories. You know the ones I'm talking about. Poor orphan with mysterious beginnings. Crotchety, abusive guardian. And a randomly talking animal.

Thankfully, uniqueness spun out of the mundane beginnings. The biggest strength of this story was the mystery. Gillian masterfully steered clear of explaining too much too soon. The mystery of The Song and the Songkeeper unravel slowly and require continued reading to discover what's going on. The roots of pain that hold Amos to his past and cause him to fight destiny are slow reveal themselves. The reader must keep on reading to learn what the prize the dark soldiers and the children of the Underground are fighting over is, and why it's important. And the talking cat? Well, he's a mystery too. ;)

At the end of the tale, I can't say I was overly amazed by the innovation of this book. Instead it settled itself comfortably in a comfortable, tried and proven path, and followed that path well. That's not a bad thing in my book. There was enough different to keep me intrigued and enough sameness to allow me a comfortable, relaxes read. I'll definitely be in the market for the sequel.

Claire Banschbach says

Second read - so I enjoyed this the first time I read it, apparently 3 years ago?? But I loved it so much more this time around even though I literally remembered like 2% of things that happened. Appreciated characters a whole lot more this time around. Read it in mostly one sitting. #noregrets

~

This was a really neat book with an intriguing premise. I really liked Birdie and her ability. The Song was beautiful and I liked how she struggled with accepting how it was a part of her.

Ky was really interesting and I loved getting back to his story. The Underground was really cool and I really liked getting to know more about the kids that roamed the streets. His story took a neat twist and I'm looking forward to seeing where his story will go.

Amos was...frustrating. He was a good character but he just frustrated me when he didn't let Birdie do something based on his vague past. He did have an interesting backstory and after that ending, I'm looking forward to seeing more of his story.

The worldbuilding was great. And it has gryphons which is a big plus. :P The world was full of neat little details that made it seem even more real.

Overall, it was a really great story and I recommend it to anyone who likes fantasy, books with Christian themes, and adventure.

Ashlee Willis says

What a unique book, and what a privilege for me to get to review it!

Adams writes in a fresh, imaginative, and descriptive style. Her main characters are quirky and lovable (and sometimes hate-able!), and - most importantly - believable. She writes in third person omniscient, floating from one person's inward thoughts/POV to another's. I don't read many books written this way, and I've always balked at writing this way. However, Adams does it in a way that flows completely naturally. I never felt it was awkward or jolting in the slightest. After having read the book, I couldn't have imagined it written

as effectively in any other way. In fact, I felt closer to the main characters because of it.

As a book lover, and a person who loves to see unexpected things combined, I was delighted by some of the things Adams incorporated into her book. Ky's character (and indeed his lifestyle) is very Dickens, which I adore! Rather "Artful Dodger," if you get my meaning ;) Birdie's story, on the other hand, reminded me a bit of Frodo's. Having something powerful, not knowing how or if to use it, not quite understanding it ... on a quest to discover more about it. Then of course there was Amos (and his contrary donkey, Balaam), whose past was shrouded in mystery, of which we get a clearer glimpse near the end of the book (no spoilers here!). Amos' story lends such depth to the story, and I was so intrigued to finally hear some of it ... cannot wait to hear more in future books!

The plot itself is gripping. I had a bit of trouble getting into it at the beginning, I'll admit. But the last 100 pages of the book (about the last third) just completely drew me in and made me truly vested in this story. This included a few unexpected twists that pleasantly (or not-so-pleasantly in some cases!) took me by surprise, a lot of action and character growth, the revealing of a couple of "mysteries," and the anticipation of ... "what will happen next?!" And yes ... what WILL happen next? This is the first of, I believe, three books in the Songkeeper series. The story ends on a cliffhanger, of which I approve (while still feeling the pain of it!).

The Songkeeper herself (and of course the Song) gives the promise of such a rich allegorical tale that, as a Christian fantasy writer myself, I am very excited about this book, and very impressed by this new young authoress! I recommend to any and all fans of fantasy, most especially Christian fantasy (although the allegory is not at all overwhelming or preachy). I believe Adams has a lovely and inspiring tale in store for us, and I can't wait to see where it goes :)

(I received a copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review).

Jenna says

A CLEAN YA READ! (so refreshing)

I was excited to read this book because I'd heard about so many people loving it, and now I see why. I really enjoyed this clean fantasy book. And OH MY GOODNESS I must get the next books before I die!!!

(also, I've started calling my brothers laddy-boyo :P)

Melody Jackson says

[his dark past and years as the thief Hawkness was not only an unexpected surprise, but very intriguing as well. (hide spoiler)]

Danielle says

This book is epic.

After all, it is in the epic fantasy genre, but still, it's amazing. I love Bronte's writing style, the beautiful descriptions, the good, the bad. And the characters. Wow...

I bought the first book on sale, and finished it a day or two later. As soon as I finished it, I bought the next book.

My only complaint is that the third book isn't released yet. *pouts*
