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BOOK REVIEW

Book Title	The Traitor God
Author	Cameron Johnston
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Stars	

I read the last 20% of this story in one session. I couldn't put it down. Not just because the events are so exciting or because I had no idea how things were going to develop but because I'd invested so heavily in the characters. Yes, this is an action-packed, exciting, thrill-a-minute story and, in less skilled hands, characters would be overwhelmed by such things. But not when Cameron Johnston is in charge.

The best stories, as far as I'm concerned, is when you get behind a protagonist and their allies as though you're fighting with them. You cheer them on, groan at every set back, gasp at their injuries and hope they can carry on. This is what happened with me and Edrin Walker, and I'm pretty sure it wasn't because he was controlling my mind with his special brand of mental magic. It was definitely the writing.

Because Cameron Johnston is one hell of a writer. There's his clarity for a start, as he whisks us into a world based on such complexity; the human degradation, the arrogance of the magicians and the power of its gods. It's all defined in crisp description, punchy dialogue and effective set pieces of conflict that are tight and where every word works to its full potential. This guy can write!

Edrin Walker is a wonderful piece of characterisation. I love his brusque disregard for authority, his humour and his readiness to run when required. He isn't your typical hero but neither is he a typical grimdark hero either. He has a moral conscience but it's tempered by his own inadequacies and insecurities. However, at its foundation is the love of his two friends who he's returned to rescue and avenge.

The premise, a character who's had part of his memory sealed shut, is not entirely original perhaps. Amnesia has been used before in lots of ways. But this premise is different because its consequences keep shifting as the protagonist faces unexpected twists of events. We're never certain where we're going to go next and I find that exciting, that unpredictability.

The final action sequence is visceral, epic and destructive in so many ways. It is a fitting climax to a narrative that winds itself up like a coiled spring until its explosive release. I cannot wait to launch into the next story in this series, 'God of Broken Things'.