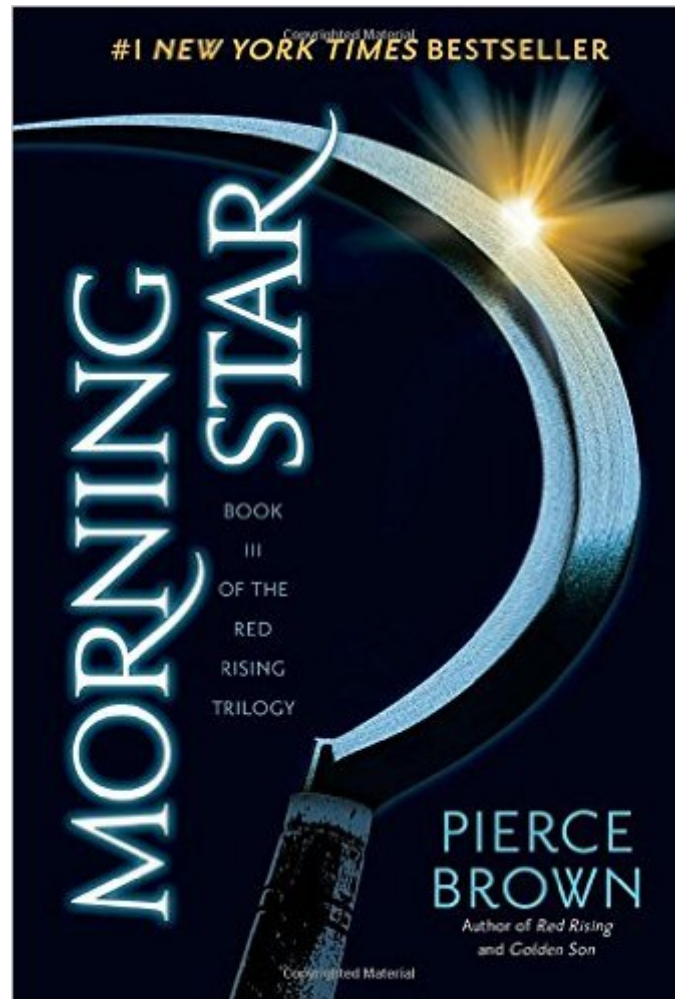


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Morning Star: Book III Of The Red Rising Trilogy



Synopsis

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • Red Rising thrilled readers and announced the presence of a talented new author. Golden Son changed the game and took the story of Darrow to the next level. Now comes the exhilarating conclusion to the Red Rising Trilogy: Morning Star. Darrow would have lived in peace, but his enemies brought him war. The Gold overlords demanded his obedience, hanged his wife, and enslaved his people. But Darrow is determined to fight back. Risking everything to transform himself and breach Gold society, Darrow has battled to survive the cutthroat rivalries that breed Society's mightiest warriors, climbed the ranks, and waited patiently to unleash the revolution that will tear the hierarchy apart from within. Finally, the time has come. But devotion to honor and hunger for vengeance run deep on both sides. Darrow and his comrades-in-arms face powerful enemies without scruple or mercy. Among them are some Darrow once considered friends. To win, Darrow will need to inspire those shackled in darkness to break their chains, unmake the world their cruel masters have built, and claim a destiny too long denied—and too glorious to surrender. Praise for Morning Star • "You could call [Pierce] Brown science fiction's best-kept secret. In Morning Star, the trilogy's devastating and inspiring final chapter, . . . he flirts with volume, oscillating between thundering space escapes and hushed, tense parleys between rivals, where the cinematic dialogue oozes such specificity and suspense you could almost hear a pin drop between pages. His achievement is in creating an uncomfortably familiar world of flaw, fear, and promise." • Entertainment Weekly • "There is no one writing today who does shameless, Michael Bay-style action set pieces the way Brown does. The battle scenes are kinetic, bloody, breathless, crazy. Everything is on fire all the time." • NPR • "Morning Star is this trilogy's Return of the Jedi. . . . The impactful battles that make up most of Morning Star are damn near operatic. . . . It absolutely satisfies." • Tor.com • "Excellent . . . Brown's vivid, first-person prose puts the reader right at the forefront of impassioned speeches, broken families, and engaging battle scenes . . . as this interstellar civil war comes to a most satisfying conclusion." • Publishers Weekly (starred review) • "A page-turning epic filled with twists and turns . . . The conclusion to Brown's saga is simply stellar." • Booklist (starred review) • "Multilayered and seething with characters who exist in a shadow world between history and myth, much as in Frank Herbert's Dune . . . an ambitious and satisfying conclusion to a monumental saga." • Kirkus Reviews From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

Series: The Red Rising Trilogy (Book 3)

Paperback: 544 pages

Publisher: Del Rey (September 27, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0345539869

ISBN-13: 978-0345539861

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.1 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (1,539 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #3,688 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #79 in [Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Hard Science Fiction](#) #82 in [Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Dystopian](#) #203 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Science Fiction](#)

Customer Reviews

Pierce Brown blasted onto the scene with his debut novel RED RISING, a captivating book that shattered all expectations and not only lived up to the hype built around it but exceeded it.

Fortunately I didn't get around to reading RED RISING until GOLDEN SON released and so I able to read them back-to-back. Somehow GOLDEN SON was even better than RED RISING, Fans will also know that GOLDEN SON left readers broken and bleeding on one of the greatest cliffhangers in the history of genre fiction. We had to wait one brutal year for MORNING STAR, the conclusion to what has become one of the most important series of my lifetime. I'm an avid reader but I haven't held this much anticipation for a release since the final Harry Potter novel came out. Despite conquering the dreaded "sophomore slump" with style, the finale was always going to be the most difficult thing to pull off. I had low expectations going into RED RISING and with GOLDEN SON my expectations were high but not astronomical. Going into MORNING STAR my expectations couldn't have been higher. Unsurprisingly Pierce delivers -- and in a way that was equally refreshing and satisfying. Pierce's imagination is a wonderful, beautiful, bastard of a thing. He started with what could have easily been a typical YA novel premise with society being segregated into a hierarchy of colors with Gold at the top and Red at the bottom. He introduces a rebellion when a Red told to "break the chains" and "live for more." Honestly the reason I was so reticent to begin this series is that it sounded like another cookie cutter YA novel. It's even been hailed as the next HUNGER GAMES. The RED RISING series is so much more than that. There's some HUNGER GAMES in its DNA but you can also find ENDER'S GAME, DUNE, STAR WARS, WARHAMMER 40,000, GAME

OF THRONES, and (according to a recent interview with Pierce Brown) even the video game RED FACTION. The space opera universe that Pierce brings to life is so vivid and imaginative. He borrows from history and mythology and acknowledges it in his writing. As impressive is the world building is, none of it would mean a thing if Pierce didn't populate it with a colorful cast of amazing characters. There are so many powerful personalities at play in MORNING STAR. Pierce gives you villains you love to hate and villains you can almost respect. He gives you heroes that you can root for in triumph and suffer with in defeat. And boyo does he make them suffer. The way GOLDEN SON leaves off left me clutching my chest, unsure how I could go on with life. It's a bit of an exaggeration but for real -- I finished reading it right before class one day and it was extremely difficult to concentrate for the rest of the day. Darrow is as dynamic a character as I've ever known. His character arc isn't linear. He learns and loves, he makes mistakes and takes hits. He is always growing, even if it's not necessarily always in the direction he needs to be growing in. His pride and arrogance are often his greatest weaknesses. As for his greatest strengths? His friends. And the greatest of his friends? Obviously it's fan favorite Sevro au Barca, Goblin King and leader of the Howlers. Seriously, Pierce Brown deserves an award for the creation of Sevro. He's the Han Solo to Darrow's Luke Skywalker...if Han Solo was a brash, crude, vulgar, dangerous, hilarious, loyal, lovable, blood-soaked maniac. Sevro might steal the show in every scene he's in but that's not to say the cast of MORNING STAR wouldn't be fantastic without him. In addition to the returning favorites (some quite unexpectedly), Pierce introduces some new characters. I'm particularly fond of new characters Holiday and Quicksilver. It's important to remember that as with GAME OF THRONES no one is safe. My wife actually told me she tried not to like a character too much because she was afraid it might seal their fate. It's a legitimate fear because MORNING STAR is filled with bombastic, explosive, high-speed, kinetic action. From space battles to boarding actions to ambushes and duels, MORNING STAR features the stylistic hyper violence that fans of the series have come to expect. Just when you think that there's no possible way Pierce could raise the stakes and ramp up the action he does. I know that there's a RED RISING movie in development but I'd love to see what the right developer could do with a RED RISING video game. I think the property would lend itself well to that medium. But the violence isn't all there is to MORNING STAR. The cinematic battles are thrilling but it's the ideas and philosophy that Pierce explores that will cement the place of the series as a true sf/f classic. Each book deals with the issues of morality, revenge and justice, leadership, and more. MORNING STAR examines the difference between terrorism and fighting for freedom. The Golds aren't all bad, even the ones in opposition to Darrow's rebellion, and the Reds fighting for their freedom aren't all good. Some of the things that Darrow himself does for

the sake of his people and the Rising aren't what could be considered moral. He is forced to make strategic decisions and sometimes that results in the death of innocents. It's all very thought-provoking and prevents MORNING STAR from being simple "popcorn" fiction. And given the morally ambiguous nature of the story told by the trilogy I was curious/anxious to see how MORNING STAR would end. Much of the series has felt like a proper Greek tragedy and I couldn't help but wonder if Pierce would end it like one. Potential pitfalls dotted the battlefield in ending on too high a note or too low of one. Like the master he is Pierce deftly maneuvers to bring the trilogy to a close on his own terms. VAGUE SPOILERS AHEAD. BE WARNED. TURN BACK NOW OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES. The ending is nearly perfect. Considerable progress is made but not without a cost. Compromises have to be made in order to reach the endgame and I can see where it might leave an opening for future novels set in the RED RISING universe (perhaps told from different perspectives). In any case I read the final page of MORNING STAR with teary eyes and a smile on my face. It's a satisfying conclusion to what has become my favorite book series in years. I thank Pierce Brown for taking readers on such an incredible journey and I cannot wait to see what Pierce has in store for us in the future. I'll buy whatever he writes, I'll tell you that much.

Okay, so, Morning Star isn't actually the best book ever. Catchy title, though, no? Let's get a couple things out of the way up front. Morning Star has a pretty shaky middle portion where things happen, characters wander, pages are turned, and not much else seems to happen. It has an ending that "while perfect in the eyes of this particular reader" will be received by many as "shall we say, enigmatic?" It has a twist that should be harrowing, but somehow is predictable and comes across as tense, but ultimately not entirely threatening. Fortunately, however, even when lumped together these characteristics amount to about 10% of the book, maybe 50 pages or so of a 500+ page book. The rest of it, my lovelies, is bloody damn fantastic. Look. I know you're busy. And if you're not busy, your time is still valuable, so let me say a couple things up front and spare you the bluster. Morning Star? Incredible. 9/10. The Red Rising Trilogy? Yeah. Perfect, even with flaws. 10/10. Book Two: Golden Son was the worst at 8/10, Books 3 and 1 (Morning Star and Red Rising) tie for the best at 9/10 each. Others will disagree, of course. Many think Golden Son was the best. Yet what matters is, we all seem to agree that the Trilogy, considered as a whole, is the best thing since sliced bread. Better even. So I give the Trilogy a 10/10, because it's great for everybody for different reasons, at different times. This review, to call it that, is less a review of one book and more an explosion of emotion about a trilogy that came into my life and changed it for the better. I won't go into plot

details, or spoilers, or any such nonsense. If you want plot details, read the summary on the back of the cover or higher up on the page under the information block. If you want plot spoilers (Why on earth would you?) just go poke around on the internet and eat your fill. Even without these things, I have a lot to say, dear reader, so this is your chance to make a clean break. Either brace for impact or run like hell. An ocean of words is coming, and hell follows with it. I spent the last day or two desperately trying to figure out how I was going to conduct my review. I wrote no reviews for *Red Rising* or *Golden Son*, and it's unlike me to have such a visceral reaction to a pair of books and remain silent about them. Yet something kept me from discussing those books. Something "apparently wise" told me to wait for the end. Now the end has come, and I feel at last I can speak about what Pierce Brown, that devilish and handsome man, has wrought for us. First and foremost, I believe there are three groups of people in the reading world. There are those who have read Pierce Brown's *Red Rising* Trilogy, those who are currently reading it, and those who have not read it at all. The third group - those beautiful *Helldivers* who have not yet seen the stars, are probably the easiest to address, so I'll start with them. To all of you curious and uninitiated readers who have by now heard the distant thunder of this towering Trilogy, with its mysterious, dangerously misrepresented story and devoted cult-following that puts the fanatic back into fanbase "welcome! We live in a strange time. No doubt everyone says that, and no doubt everyone is right. Our time is made stranger, however, by the fact that the best book (story?) out there right now is sitting on a Young Adult shelf in your nearest bookstore, waiting patiently for you to discover it, nestled somewhere amongst *Divergent*, *Maze Runner*, *The Hunger Games* and *The Fifth Wave*. Do not be deceived. The *Red Rising* trilogy is no Young Adult fiction "least of all *Morning Star*, the gruesomely violent and emotionally blistering conclusion to the bruising, inspiring, heartfelt and truly epic trilogy that preceded it. This trilogy of books (best imagined as one incredibly long book) will be remembered as the *Ender's Game* of our time - *The Lord of the Flies* set in space with nuclear holocaust and city-sized *MoonBreaker* Starships populated by wonderfully human, loveably cynical and perpetually drunken malcontents who explode onto the page, steal our hearts and make us want to go to bloodydamn war. It's a complete trilogy, and at the same time, is only a beginning. I laughed, I cried, I bit my nails and I read for nearly twenty hours straight. I want to go back and start from page one of book one. The Trilogy is over "and *Morning Star* is a triumph. Okay, so maybe I'm overhyping you a little bit. I really don't think I am, but I'll add the caveat, just in case. You'll have to forgive me - *Red Rising*, as a trilogy, makes me giddy. These books are why I read, and more specifically, why I read science fiction. They, like their main protagonist and his oh-so-delicious posse, have flaws and make terrible

mistakes. Yet also like their protagonist, these books overcome said mistakes and punch their way forward, always somehow better than they were before, battling uphill towards a conclusion that is *“if not necessarily transcendent - entirely satisfying, and one that rewards its readers for all they have endured.”* Story? Check. Characters? Double Check. World Building? Triple Check. Twists? A check in scarlet. (Is that blood? Wait. Is that MY blood?) Heartbreak? Check Check Check Check Check. What do you want from your stories? I’ll bet you almost anything that this trilogy has it, somewhere. If you are looking for a new book to read *“please. Act now. Go and buy this book, and the other two books in the trilogy. Start at the beginning, and read. Don’t come up for air, just read. (If you can stand it, of course. This story is vicious.)* I urge you thus for a whole different reason beyond my obsession with Pierce Brown’s story and the universe tucked away within it. The film rights for Red Rising have been purchased. Without the intention of offending anyone, I fear the film will be terrible. I say this without even knowing who is chalked up to direct the damn thing. I prematurely cast aspersions only because I’m unsure how a film based on this trilogy could ever be achieved, let alone achieved well. That said, even if the film wins best picture (it won’t), you owe it to yourself to read these books and come to know the characters before someone else comes along and tells you who they are, how they conduct themselves, or what they look like. You owe it to yourself to read the revelation that is Pierce Brown’s first person narrative, to love and fight as Darrow of Lykos; to drop in an Iron Rain, to claw your way through the bowels of Mars, to orchestrate titanic battles amongst the stars. Half of the experience here is in the telling *“and Pierce Brown’s writing only grows from great to greater over the course of his three books. More than once, I re-read a passage from Morning Star to taste the prose. At the height of his power (when he isn’t setting the page on fire), Pierce Brown can write with the best of them. In an age when Young Adult fiction is at once helping to keep the printed word alive and making literary fiction writers everywhere lament, the Red Rising trilogy marks the beginning of a new hope for the genre, and for the art of writing itself. Pierce Brown challenges his readers to categorize his books. I am reminded, in many ways, of what J.K. Rowling accomplished with her Harry Potter books a series initially perceived and sold as children’s books, but grew through her characters (and indeed, her readers) to adulthood. We no longer consider the Harry Potter books children’s books. We consider them masterpieces. Pierce Brown’s trilogy, I believe, will be remembered not as Young Adult, but as a shock to the collective system of reader expectation. It is accessible and crystalline, profound and cheesy. It defies categorization, reaching for the impossible and “by God” occasionally succeeding, with euphoric results. Morning Star is not the best book ever. Morning Star*

is a triumphant ending to a triumphant series, deftly proving that a trilogy can be simultaneously self-contained and introductory; accessible and profound; exuberant and manic depressive; youthful and deeply wise. This trilogy makes no excuses for itself, for its characters, and most importantly, makes no excuses for its readers. We are expected to grow with its characters, regardless of our age. We are expected to invest and to think. Whereas Rowling reminded us of magic, Brown reminds us of the stars, what they mean, and how all the celestial galaxies in the universe aren't worth a damn thing if they are devoid of love. I close my review by acknowledging my fellow Howlers, those who finished the books, and those who read this far down the page. Favorite character? Darrow, actually. I loved him. Then, maybe Ragnar. I'm not entirely angry at Mustang for what she did or rather, what she almost didn't do. I think she is a character independent of perfection she moves free of it, as flawed as our hero, and I forgive her for such flaws. I love her for them, even. It's why she's as real as the rest of them. It's why she's Mustang. To Pierce Brown, thank you. Thank you for reminding me why I read. I'd nearly forgotten. (I'm working on a skyscraper of my own.) And to those about to begin "I am so, unbelievably happy for you. And so unbelievably jealous. Per aspera, ad astra.

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