ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

FANTASY

Collegium Sorcerorum: Thaddeus and the Master
Louis Sauvin
Louis Sauvin
978-0-615-58451-5
Four Stars (out of Five)

The second book in the Collegium Sorcerorum trilogy by Louis Sauvain, *Thaddeus and the Master*, will draw in fantasy readers with its sense of adventure and mounting mystery. As a rich backstory and hints of magical secrets begin to unfold, readers will become more and more engaged, and by the novel's end, will look forward to the trilogy's final installment in search of answers.

The young sorcerers from the first novel, Thaddeus of Beewicke, Anders of Brightfield Manor, and Rolland of Fountaindale, have finally arrived at their new school to begin their education in magic. When they meet and befriend a fourth sorcerer, Prince Zoarr of Mauretesia, the four young men confirm their suspicions that they may have a part to play in an important prophecy. Against mysterious events and a growing sense of danger, the bonds of friendship among the four strengthen as they rely on one another in the face of peril.

Given the setting of a magic school, comparisons to another popular fantasy series are inevitable. Removed from the whimsy that is often associated with magic, the sorcery in the novel is a mental and physical endeavor, and its performance comes at a great cost. To that end, when readers do get glimpses of the classes, they see an emphasis on philosophical and even physical training. The more fantastic elements, such as a shape-shifting she-wolf of sorts called Bellis, are unique, and they are included in the story in a meaningful way.

The work overall is very clearly a piece of the larger story line of the trilogy. The plot often serves to further the relationships between characters and only hints at the larger mysteries the young men will find themselves facing. For example, while ample time is spent preparing for a type of ball game, Thaddeus's telepathic conversations with the marble guardians of the school (and the questions that arise from them) are left unresolved. Similarly, the apparently very important Minaret of Power is addressed sparingly. At times, the inclusion of so many incidents along with glances at lesser-known characters slows the pace of the narrative. Reading this book could leave a reader confused regarding the major threat or objective.

That being said, the numerous events of the plot keep the reader interested and invested in the fate of the characters. Once the novel approaches its satisfying climax, the level of suspense is considerably heightened by a fight scene and the dramatic use of sorcery. The aftereffects open up further avenues that readers can look forward to traveling in the next book.

Sean Bodley's illustrations fit perfectly with the text, and his comprehensive map complements the idea of a long-ago setting, echoing the style of Tolkien. The detailed work on the cover, however, almost hides the book's title.

Ultimately, the reader's interest in this fantasy series will be piqued by the intriguing and still-mysterious overarching story line.

Alicia Sondhi