Clarion Review

Fantasy

Collegium Sorcerorum: Thaddeus of Beewicke
Louis Sauvain
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978-0-615-50329-5
Four Stars (out of Five)

Louis Sauvain's grand fantasy novel *Thaddeus of Beewicke*, the first volume in his *Collegium Sorcerorum Trilogy*, goes beyond mere imitation of celebrated fantasy series like Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, Rowling's *Harry Potter*, and Mary Stewart's *Merlin*. With *Thaddeus of Beewicke*, Sauvain has created something new and exciting. Taken from bits and pieces of history and from the mythological tropes of many different cultures, Sauvain's novel is a magical coming-of-age tale. Straight out of Joseph Campbell's book of comparative mythology, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, protagonist Thaddeus falls into the category of larger-than-life characters like Robert E. Howard's Conan the Barbarian and T. H. White's renditions of King Arthur and Merlin.

The novel begins as the teenage Thaddeus is placed as an apprentice in the care of an old man who reveals himself as Silvestrus Somerset, an ancient and powerful sorcerer. The author writes, "Silvestrus moved closer to the stream's edge and surveyed the young boy. He would be about fourteen, and was sandy-haired and freckled. The old man thought the boy's eyes were green—green as river water—and both earnest and curious. Good. The boy had an open manner as well. Excellent." Through Silvestrus' mysterious wisdom and the humorous, father-like protection of Asullus, a talking mule, Thaddeus meets up with two other teenage boys: Anders the intellectual, and the streetwise Rolland. The three are enlisted by Silvestrus as his apprentices and are to attend the Collegium of Sorcerorum to become real sorcerers. They also seem to be the key components to a mystical prophecy.

Thaddeus, Anders, and Rolland become life-long companions as they experience wonderful and dangerous adventures on their journey to the Collegium, including encounters with such creatures as an evil tree spirit, a dragon king, an army of phantasms, and a royal wolf-human hybrid. Along the way, the three friends grow into men. The physicality of their arduous

travels matures them, and they come to understand the power of belief, to recognize the true cost of magic, and to experience the bittersweet pangs of love gained and lost.

This book is more than an escapists' entertaining fantasy novel. With the addition of gorgeous maps and illustrations, the narrative comes alive. Also enriching the story is a list of the cast of characters and a glossary of terms for a language Sauvain enlisted outside help to construct. All of these serve to immerse the reader mind, body, and soul in *Thaddeus of Beewicke*'s universe.

Lee Gooden