



Quest for Revenge

RLK

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In the historical novel Quest for Revenge, a man reconsiders his beliefs, even as the times move away from his way of thinking.

In RLK's sweeping historical novel *Quest for Revenge*, a betrayal forces a Musketeer to reconsider the meaning of loyalty.

In the waning years of the eighteenth century, King Louis loses control over his nobles, and distrust spreads throughout Paris. Among the few standing by to defend the king and what he represents are the legendary soldiers known as the Musketeers.

James Carson rises to the top of the Musketeers, assuming a position from which he protects the royal family—and a secret of the king and queen's. But then betrayal sends him down a dangerous path, testing his loyalty to his job, his king, and even his country. In the aftermath, James embarks on an epic adventure, moving from France to Canada, where skirmishes break out with First Nations people.

James is a fascinating lead—a decorated officer whose steadfast loyalty and unwavering moral code anchors the story, and who is endearingly devoted to his family. Copious space is made to detail James's adoration of his daughter, who plays a large role in the story early on, resulting in a narrative hole when James goes to North America and she remains behind. The book's secondary characters are a less distinctive group.

Even after all goes awry for him, James is unrelenting, committed to his sense of right and wrong; this drags him into situations of increasing tension and danger. His romantic interludes with a rescued colonist reveal his tender side, even as his intense moral code threatens to shatter.

Conversations are used to convey background information; they also reinforce established characterizations and introduce new layers of their speakers, as when attendees at a royal event react to James by referencing his renowned history. Characters' voices are distinctive, too, thanks to the incorporation of their accents and differing speech patterns, making new arrivals in conversations easy to identify.

But beyond the book's thrilling sword battles, many scenes are underdescribed. It is not always made clear where James is headed next, or why; he ends up being more reactive than is suggested early on in the book. The writing leans on short, clipped sentences that are too modern for James's time period. And once James arrives in Canada, the book's movements become less decisive; the ending teases next developments in his story, but ultimately feels unresolved.

In the historical novel *Quest for Revenge*, a man reconsiders his beliefs, even as the times move away from his way of thinking.

JOHN M. MURRAY (December 4, 2020)

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