



The Eternal Crown: Dawning of the Red Sun

Michael Lopez

Ashley Torruella, Illustrator

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The Eternal Crown is character-driven fantasy novel in which a young woman rises to power as darkness encroaches on her uneasy land.

In Michael Lopez's fantasy novel *The Eternal Crown*, a young woman trains to become a champion in a troubled land.

Myra knows little beyond the sheltered walls of her home, where she spends her days training under her merciless mother. Myra's tendency to rely on her inborn magic cripples her ability to fight with standard weapons, an oversight that her mother refuses to let slide. While Myra can channel the light of Elora, the goddess of Ezra, doing so comes at a great cost.

When Myra is blessed by Elora to become the next cleric, she faces a trial to determine her worth. Meanwhile, Blair, her father and the current cleric, travels on a diplomatic mission to recruit the help of twins who bested a drake, a massive armored dragon. The twins, Koro and Kira, are told that they are going to participate in an arena battle, but Blair has secret designs to have them help Myra, too.

It is revealed that Myra's training, Koro and Kira's battle, and Blair's diplomatic efforts are all connected to a forgotten prophecy. As the backstory goes: Ezra was once split by a great war between gods, though the truth of that war has been forgotten by Myra's time period. Nonetheless, the prophecy unfolds, and an ancient enemy returns. While the people of Ezra fight among themselves, darkness gathers.

The world's mythology and magic are explained in tantalizing snippets, through references to ancient texts and portions of the prophecy. The narrative's proper focus on Myra and the twins is engaging, too; in its course, even moments of exposition are helpfully coupled with action and dramatic sequences that retain interest.

The story alternates between the perspectives of Myra (who is naïve but eager to enter into the larger world), the twins (who grow into their roles as eventual protectors), and an enemy ruler who is eager to stir chaos in Ezra. Their individual, singular understandings of the events of the book help to expand the world building even further. Repetition is avoided, and the tension of the revealed prophecy is maintained.

Though they are separate from each other for much of the book, Myra and the twins move toward a meeting in the book's concluding chapters, which feature an explosive arena battle. By the end, strong relationships have been formed, and enough of the prophecy has been revealed to carry interest forward into the next book of the series.

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JOHN M. MURRAY (April 8, 2022)

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