

The Founding of Serillia: Book One of the Serillian Saga

Brad Bouchard

FriesenPress

(416pp)

978-1-03-910021-3

The Founding of Serillia is a fantasy novel about truth and the dangers of misinformation.

In Brad Bouchard's fantasy novel *The Founding of Serillia*, dark forces move against human beings in a land of magic and political intrigue.

Serillia exists in a state of uneasy peace. Five hundred years ago, its human army defeated the insectoid race, the Quilin. Now, several human factions rule over the land, including the honorable Blackhorns. The youngest Blackhorn, Dematris, prepares to follow in his father's footsteps as a high lord. During an imprinting ceremony meant to unlock his magic gifts, though, a betrayal sets him on the run with his father's general. Meanwhile, malevolent forces amass, hoping to claim Serillia as their own.

Dematris hopes to complete his ceremony, but the only cleric capable of helping is located in the perilous northlands. Meanwhile, Dematris's brother, Kadius, continues his quest to find human beings' homeland; he's not aware of what's happening with his family members. The brothers learn startling information about humanity's past—and about its true enemies.

With its intriguing magical elements, as with trained clerics who imbue people with special tattoos that unlock and channel their genetic abilities, this is a fascinating world. Some of its inhabitants have weak magic; others wield several kinds of power at once. But those who command multiple varieties of magic are of dwindling number, foreshadowing a major conflict.

As the story bounces between Dematris's struggle, Kadius's search, and the legend of Serillia's founding, unease develops related to a forgotten threat. Attentive to of-the-moment details, the prose is best at conveying elements of Dematris's present, as of the nature of the imprinting ceremony, the cultural quirks of his community, and the hulking creatures whom humans share Serillia with.

The storytelling is involving. For example, early on in the book, Dematris is seen sneaking around the castle, with subtle details about the lighting and sounds used to convey multiple characters' experiences of that event, generating a strong sense of place and holding interest well. Characters' conversations are more expository than this, though, as with a discussion of Dematris's abilities, and of the future of the kingdom, that takes place with his father.

The first book in a trilogy, *The Founding of Serillia* ends without clear resolution; instead, two major cliffhangers are used to compel further reading. This book's unique magic system and harrowing tale of historical subjugation anchor it, making it an intriguing fantasy novel about truth and the dangers of misinformation.

JOHN M. MURRAY (January 6, 2022)

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