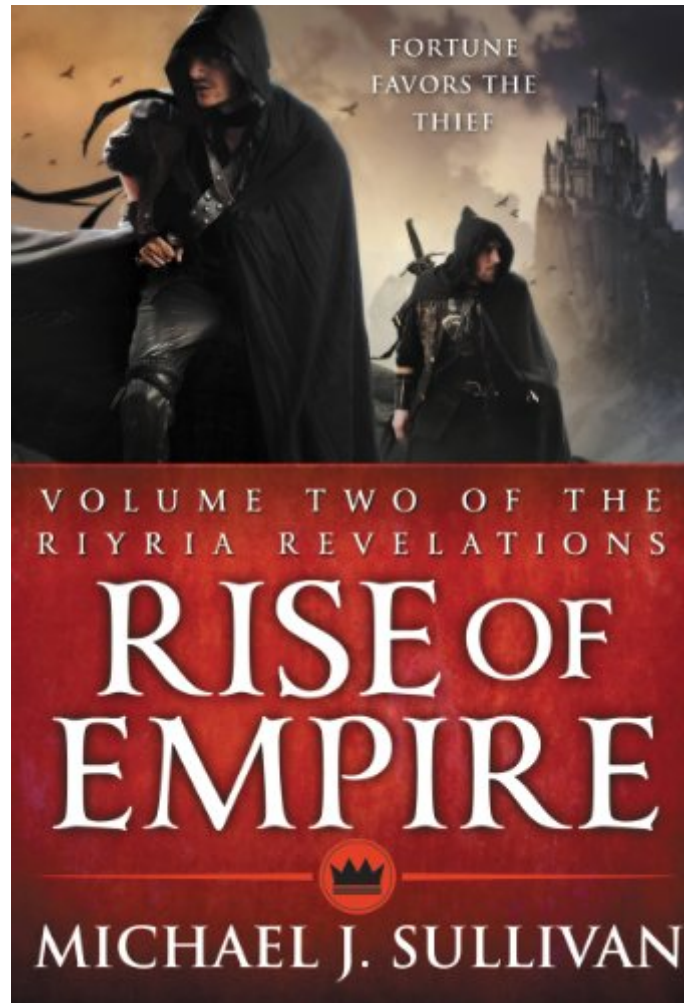


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Rise Of Empire (Riyria Revelations Box Set Book 2)



Synopsis

A puppet is crowned. The true heir remains hidden. A rogue's secret could change everything. War has come to Melengar and once more Royce and Hadrian are hired to make a desperate gamble and form an alliance with the Nationalists who are fighting the Imperialists in the south. But Royce has plans of his own and uses this opportunity to discover if an ancient wizard is using Riyria as pawns in his own bid for power. To find the truth, he must unravel the secret of Hadrian's past--what he discovers may end their friendship and break Riyria in two. And so continues the next volume of treachery and adventure, sword fighting and magic, myth and legend. This is the second omnibus (containing books #3 & #4) in the original series, The Riyria Revelations, from best-selling author Michael J. Sullivan. It takes place twelve years after the events of The Riyria Chronicles and the two series can be read in either chronological order or order of publication, although the author suggests reading in publication order.

Publication Order

Theft of Swords (Riyria Revelations #1 & #2): contains The Crown Conspiracy & Avempartha Rise of Empire

Nyphron Rising & The Emerald Storm (Riyria Revelations #3 & #4): contains Nyphron Rising & The Emerald Storm

Heir of Novron (Riyria Revelations #5 & #6): contains Wintertide & Percepliquis

Chronological Order

The Crown Tower (Riyria Chronicles #1)

The Rose and the Thorn (Riyria Chronicles #2)

The Death of Dulgath (Riyria Chronicles #3)

Other Books by Michael J. Sullivan

Hollow World (2014 - stand alone science fiction)

Age of Myth (2016 - Legends of the First Empire #1)

Awards and Nominations

2013 Audie Award Finalist

2012 Shadowhawk's Shade Best of the Best

2012 Audible's 5-star The Best of Everything

2012 Mathias Cavanaugh Top 10 Books

2012 AudioBookaneers Favorite Listens, Runner up

2012 Audible's Best of 2012 Editor's Picks

2011 Library Journal's Best Books for Fantasy/Sci-Fi

2011 Only the Best Science Fiction and Fantasy's Top 10

2011 Best Fantasy Releases by Barnes and Noble Blog

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Customer Reviews

Rise of Empire is amazing .While the first two books (found in Theft of Swords) were fantastic books, they felt much more like stand alones that happened to contain the same group of characters. Now in books 3 and 4 of the series, Sullivan turns this fantastic series into a continuous series. Readers finally learn more about the heir, we are introduced to new characters that play huge new roles (such as Modina, Amilia, Merrick and Wyatt). And older characters get to play bigger and more important storylines (especially Arista and Saulder). That said my favorite new aspect of the books is the introduction to Royce and Hadrian's pasts. Readers will get to visit the towns these two each grew up from, discover the source of Hadrian's amazing fighting skills, and even see who put Royce in prison. Each of the two characters are much more flushed out, and we really get to see what makes each of them tick. They are tested in ways we never saw in the previous two books and I have to say they will be tested further in the last installments. Of course I also loved Arista's growth and discovery. Arista goes from becoming a smart yet pampered princess to something altogether more. She becomes a real character that readers will sympathize with. Fans of the series will root for as she defies the odds and feel sorrow for as the people in her life die around her. Through Arista readers are also finally introduced to magic. As her powers grow, so does her importance in

the story, and lets just say she's darn important by the end of book 4. Of course while that's all well and good, other things to keep in mind are that this book is chalk full of great action scenes, as Hadrian and Royce battle everything from mythical monsters, to religious soldiers, to goblins.

The greatest difficulty in reviewing this book is that it is actually two distinct books. Overall I found myself extremely pleased with the first book, however the second suffered from several glaring flaws. First the positives: Royce and Hadrian continue to be a wonderfully entertaining duo to read about, the world and it's history are becoming well fleshed out, multiple points hint at mysteries to be resolved later in the story which builds tension well, and leaves you trying to guess what surprises await (reminding me of Brandon Sanderson's novels in this regard). However some negatives in the second book tarnish an otherwise positive experience: 1) Arista's phenomenally poor judgement becomes a tedious theme that the story repeatedly relies on to generate conflict. It almost has become comical that by this point in the story Arista has developed enormous personal power, but manages to get herself assaulted/captured/knocked-out in almost every chapter she appears in through her own phenomenally bad judgement. That she's the only female character with any agency in the story makes her profound lack of intelligence and basic planning all the more difficult to tolerate. 2) Violence. Reading the author's own description of this series, he seems to voice a desire to write a more classic fantasy novel, avoiding the excessive grimdark violence that has become a hallmark of modern fantasy. Yet in these books he seems to forget about that plan entirely. You will witness an innocent woman being flogged to death while our heroes watch, widespread cannibalism, dozens of slaves being burned alive, and minorities being loaded into cattle cars...er I mean cages to be racially purified.

Michael Sullivan's Rise of Empire is a compelling story. It resumes after about a year has passed from its prequel's finish, Theft of Swords. Business has been good for the Riyria; the assassins are now professionally employed by the new King Alric. However, foreboding is a constant taste in the air. The new empire is absorbing the entire land, threatening to assimilate Alric's tiny kingdom Melengar. His sister Arista is failing as ambassador to form any alliances willing to withstand the young empress. Yet the vivacious and sacrificial Thrace from the previous adventure who slew the monster and became empress is recognizable to no one. Catatonic with grief and abuse, she is a pawn of the archbishop who uses her name to further his own insatiable desire for power. On the smaller scale, Hadrian is dissatisfied with life, feeling like he should be doing something worthwhile. Royce knows Hadrian's true destiny yet, for ambivalent feelings, cannot bring himself to share it with

his friend. Princess Arista is herself feeling like a failure at life, and when her brother decides to replace her as ambassador with a man, she steals away from the castle, enlists the Riyria for one last job, and sets out on a harrowing adventure to find help for her kingdom. The book is an absolutely thrilling read. The complexity of the plot is mind-blowing, a mixture of castle intrigue and court politics, barbarian threats, relationship secrets, self-interests, and manipulated PR. The characters are a kaleidoscope of vibrant personalities; the quirky friendship between Royce and Hadrian especially is entertaining and endearing and gives the reader time to catch a breath after all the heart-stopping adventure.

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