



Siege Perilous

E.D. deBirmingham

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Ocyrhoe, a young, cunning fugitive from Rome, safeguards a chalice of subtle but great power. Finding herself in France, she allies with the persecuted, pacifist Cathar sect in their legendary mountaintop stronghold, Montségur. There she resists agents of the Roman Church and its Inquisition, fights off escalating, bloody besiegement by troops of the King of France, and shields the mysterious cup from the designs of many.

Percival, the heroic Shield-Brethren knight from *The Mongoliad*, consumed by his mystical visions of the Holy Grail, is also drawn to Montségur—where the chalice holds the key to his destiny.

Arrayed against Percival and Ocyrhoe are enemies both old and new who are determined to reveal the secrets of the Shield-Brethren with the hope of destroying the order once and for all.

Alive with memorable characters, intense with action and intrigue, *Siege Perilous* conjures a medieval world where the forces of faith confront the forces of fear. Choices made by characters in *The Mongoliad* reach their ultimate conclusion in this fifth and concluding novel—and all of Christendom is at stake.

Siege Perilous Details

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From Reader Review Siege Perilous for online ebook

Elar says

Lack of story makes this not as good as a previous book in the series, but still quite nice end to series.

Jack Repenning says

Ties many arcs together well

Several story arcs launched in the first four books draw together at last. And yet, are they complete? Or only resting?

Eric Schudy says

Good ending to the series

And a nice setup for the next set of brave souls who continue the story in future volumes (hopefully). And well done with characters lives.

Rob says

Best book in the Foreworld series. Now you should still read the previous novels as the characters and a bit of their past lead into Siege Perilous. Book 5 is a good ole-fashioned castle siege. Throw in the French army, some Roman-Catholic papal influence, the holy roman emperor, and our friends from the shield-brethren. I think this story reads much faster due to the single author (deBirmingham). I love castles. People defending them to the last is good story.

Jennifer Jones says

Mongoliad Siege a delightful time well spent.

i view the whole series with great pleasure, well written, enjoyable and satisfying. discriptions emotions and scenery are brought to life making the Mongoliad Series a delightful read!

Pavlo Tverdokhlib says

This book completes the "medieval cycle" of the *Foreworld* saga, which is an alt-history take on the 13th

century. I'm not familiar with the rest of the saga- the "side quests" and other material (most of which are comics/graphic novels), as I've only focused on the novels so far. "Siege Perilous" is a direct sequel to both "The Mongoliad" and "Katabasis"- the Shield Brethren successfully completed their mission to the Mongol Empire bringing back the twig from the Khan's banner; we also follow the Binder orphan Occyrhoe, who's been entrusted with a mysterious chalice.

The book deals directly with the last episodes of the Cathar, or Albigensian crusades in southern France. The Shield Brethren and the Livonian knights get embroiled in the conflict and the siege of Montsegur- the last fortress refuge of the Cathars.

The book flows well. The description of the siege is lengthy, but it never felt like it dragged on, and all details were relevant. I can't really say that the over-arching plot was particularly compelling- the semi-mystical mumbo-jumbo with the chalice and the twig may make more sense with the "side quest" novels, but as someone who only read the main novels, it felt a bit tacked on, and.... artificial?

That being said, the actual characters-focused story was decent. Nothing particularly earth-shattering, but it works. Most importantly (for me), the story did provide closure, and pretty much every character had an understandable motivation in a very complex and messy conflict.

Overall, the book is a suitable conclusion. it's not particularly "epic" or outstanding, but it works.

Dmitri Poletaev says

The best of the series

This is the best of the series novels, so far. However, the preceding books are required reading. Very powerfully done.

Caitlin says

Occyrhoe, renegade Binder, is hiding from Rome with the chalice that holds some kind of supernatural power in the right hands. The Pope wants to use it for his own purposes, so she hides with a sect of heretics on a mountain with hidden entrances--a stronghold that is soon under siege by an army of impressed men, unable to desert because of the punishments. This uneasy siege lasts for some time, with supplies being smuggled up--until their enemies grow serious, and the attack begins in earnest.

The citadel would have soon fallen, except for Percival being drawn by his visions to the chalice's location--and followed by other Shield Brethren determined to bring him back. Once they are there, the knights can't abandon people in need, so together they face down old enemies still determined to destroy them, and new ones who seek to go through them to the pacifist order.

Up on that mountain, there's several reunions, and the characters' relationships shift and change while trapped there. Despite the war between religions, power-hungry enemies, and even some questionable motives among the knights, the story has time for a few unexpectedly sweet moments, which helped enliven the siege. However, the end didn't live up to the promise woven by dire dangers, tense situations, and a

fanatically determined bad guy. For the last book of the series, the ending is a little anticlimactic. After all that work, the ending seems easy and unresolved. And there weren't some of the happy endings for characters that I was hoping for, with the unhappiness feeling rather arbitrary, so I felt a little let down by this book.

terpkristin says

Audiobook from Brilliance Audio

Narrated by Angela Dawe

Length: 14.25 hours

And so it ends. When I started The Mongoliad series last year, I thought it was just a trilogy. I had no idea what to expect with the series as a whole and with the idea of "group fiction." I had no idea I'd be getting into a historical fantasy-type book (series) with a little mysticism thrown in for fun, had no real idea the breadth that the series would take. Now that I'm done with the main series of Foreworld books, I'm a little sad to see them go. Certainly I've liked some better than others, but this book, *Siege Perilous*, was a fitting and mostly satisfying end.

If you've read my reviews of the previous books (Book One, Book Two, Book Three, and Book Four), you'll recall that my biggest frustration with these books is the expanse of story that is covered. There are multiple plot lines with widely varying characters across a wide geographical area. This makes it hard to keep track of who is who and what's going on in any given story line, and made the books less "fun" to read. This book didn't have the same problem. There were still a few story lines (3-4), but they quickly came to all be in the same setting; we were able to see the same event from a few different points of view. Without the confusion of the world and the various goals each person was trying to meet, since those had all come together, it was much easier to follow, and as such made the overall story more enjoyable to read (listen to).

This may have also been helped by the fact that this seems to have been written by only one person. Previous books in the Foreworld Saga were written by at least 3 authors. I'm not sure if these were group writing events, where everybody weighed into each plot line, or if everybody wrote a separate story, but the end result was a difficult-to-follow main story. At first, I wasn't sure if E.D. deBirmingham was a real person or if it was a pseudonym for a group of the writers, but this 2012 Sword & Laser Google Hangout with the authors from the series demonstrates that she's really just one person. She also seems to be one of the only women in the project, if not the only woman. I think the woman's touch on the writing--the battle scenes in particular--was observable in the book as the battle scenes were not as...well, drawn out in this one, as they were in past books.

Plot-wise, this book wraps up the story of the quest for the Holy Grail. Early on in the series, it became obvious that Percival had visions and was on a quest of some sort for the Holy Grail. All of the movements of the Knights Brethren was driven by that. They met and worked with the Binders and the Shield Maidens, they fought the Mongols and the Levonian Brotherhood, all along their quest. When we left the Knights Brethren in *Katabasis*, the Mongols had been left to decide their new Kahn of Kahns, Ferronantus had died trying to preserve the Spirit Banner, and Raphael found himself talking to Leanne and Gonsuk to get the small sprig of wood that was important to the Spirit Banner and the Mongols. Back in Rome, Cardinal Vieshi had been elected Pope after mad Father Rodrigo was killed by Ferrens after trying to kill Ohseriweh (a Binder orphan). Ohseriweh was sent away from the Holy Roman Emperor (King Frederic) to protect the Holy Grail that Father Rodrigo had held/used, and Ferrens became a member of Frederic's court. This book

more or less starts with that setup, and takes us along with Raphael, Percival, Ferrens, Ohseriweh, Cardinal Vieshi, and Levonian Herrmeister Deitrich. Through various means, they find themselves in Carcassonne, in a part of the Crusade involving the Cathars and an isolated mountaintop fort. I don't want to spoil the plot, so that's where I'll leave it, but suffice it to say that the book mostly takes place here, through the eyes of these characters, as they struggle to find the rightful vehicle for the Holy Grail.

As much as I enjoyed this book, I did not particularly enjoy the audiobook version. The narrator for this book was Angela Dawe, a break from the previous books' narration by Luke Daniels. Dawe's voice had some quirks that didn't work for me with an audiobook. Quite often, it seemed like she had an higher voice at the end of the sentence than the beginning. This made it sound like some of the sentences were questions, rather than statements. Her pacing was odd, too. There were longer-than-normal breaks between each sentence, the silence lasted just a beat longer than expected. Oddly, the narration didn't seem to take a breath or pause when I would have expected there to be commas. Further, and this may be due to editing, there wasn't much of a gap between section breaks within a chapter. This made it hard, sometimes, to know immediately that a new point of view was coming and would make me confused until my brain registered that there was a section break. I'm not sure what lead to this narrator's selection, but I wasn't as happy with it as I was Luke Daniels' narration.

All in all, I'm glad I read the series. I actually will not be leaving the world quite yet, as I have a few of the SideQuest Adventure books and another side story in the world. I'll be reading those soon, to keep up my familiarity with the world. I definitely think that listening to this book shortly after finishing Katabasis helped keep the overall plot in my head. To those who might be interested in reading the Foreworld Saga books, I do strongly recommend reading at least the 5 main-line books in order and in close time proximity to one another. Siege Perilous, while in many respects an outsider in the saga, may have in fact been my favorite, and provided a mostly satisfying end to the Saga.

Aaron White says

Not a bad conclusion to this series. It wraps up (mostly satisfactorily) the loose ends and mysteries that yet remained. I found the book in general to be a bit lower quality. There was only one storyline throughout, unlike previous books that had 3 or 4 alternating ones. I found quite a few more typos in this book as well as a number of unclear sentences. But, regardless, I enjoyed the story as a whole.

Mitchell says

This is the final book in the main Mongoliad cycle of books. While the third book ended with the end of the Shield Brethren's quest to assassinate the Great Khan in order to stall the Mongol advance into Europe, the fourth and fifth books have focused more on the supernatural aspects of the story. The fourth book was centered around Kiev and the ever-living sprig of the World Tree that was taken from the Mongols. Book 5 continues what was, for me, the least appealing of the story lines from the first three; namely the Rome storyline which culminated in the appearance of a cup with strange powers. Percival, the knight of the Shield Brethren, and probably most chivalrous of them, has had visions off and on throughout the Mongoliad that apparently were leading him to this same cup.

This book wasn't bad. It was nice to be able to continue following the story of characters that I really enjoyed

in the first three books. Raphael, Vera, Percival, Ocyrhoe, and Ferenc all return for the last book. The style, however, is very different from the other books. You can tell that Neal is no longer writing for this series. There was much less emphasis on fighting techniques until the very end. I found Percival's personality to be noticeably different as well. Also, the first three books tended to focus more on the physical and (semi) historical. These last two books have been much more supernatural.

When I finished the third book I was a little upset about the number of loose ends left; very typical of Stephenson books I think. Now, most all of those are tied up, but I'm not positive that I am any more satisfied by it. But still, an entertaining read.

Jim Edmonds says

Excellent!

One of the best historical/fantasy series I've ever read. Wonderful characters. Truly epic events. Loved it! Great fusion of authors, seamlessly integrated styles.

Althea Ann says

I previously read the first book of 'The Mongoliad' and thought it had a lot of promise, but suffered a bit from committee-itis. (too many authors, not enough focus).

So, I skipped forward to this one, which is #5 in the series, and written by a single author. It is, indeed, much more focused. The story is solely about the character Ocyrhoe, and although I clearly missed some events since the first book, I thought it worked fine as a self-contained, stand-alone work.

Ocyrhoe ends up at Montségur, during the famous siege of the heretical Cathars at the end of the Albigensian crusade. It's a fascinating moment in history, but although events are complicated both by Ocyrhoe's being the custodian of a cup that may or may not be the holy Grail, and her new-found emotions for her old friend Ferenc, whom she's coincidentally been reunited with, well, being besieged can get a little tedious.

I also felt that the book is stylistically consistent with the first novel in this series – which is undoubtedly appropriate, but it just didn't fully resonate with me. It's not bad, and it's definitely recommended for fans of the series – I just didn't love it as much as I wanted to.

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Sdluvingit says

This is the fifth and last book of the Mongoliad series. As an individual story it is excellent, as the end of the series it leaves much to be desired. The strength of this series has been the portrayal of the 13th century world, the western martial arts and the transformation from the old religions to the new. All in all the series is very good and relies very little on fantastical elements. Some of the books drag a bit but they did cross Russia and back on horseback; that takes a while. All these books led up to this whimper of a climax. Up until the last few chapter though it was a solid effort and is due mainly to the plot choices they made, not the writing.

Ruby deBruyn says

5th Novel of the derided was wonderful to read

The Mongolia's is a great series, enlightening and historically well researched. One is transported to other times and values, this book is a grand continuation of the novels.
