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Severance Lost (Fractal Forsaken Series) (Volume 1)



Synopsis

The battle for the blood of the kingdom begins with the fist of Slate Severance. The land of Malethya needs a hero. The people believe they live in a time of peace and prosperity, but a dreaded Blood Mage is wiping out villages and turning friends into mindless soldiers in a personal army. When a hero emerges to save Malethya, will the people recognize their savior before it is too late? Rising from obscurity, Slate Severance wins the king's tournament and gains acceptance into the elite fighting guards of the king's army to protect Malethya from its enemies; he didn't expect to find a Blood Mage within his own ranks. Suspecting that the Blood Mage is one of his powerful instructors, Slate must decide where to place his trust. Will he side with a pacifist wizard, a duplicitous war hero, an assassin who speaks only from the shadows, or a host of other powerful people infesting a dangerous land? Slate navigates a world of wizardry, forbidden magic, and cloak-and-dagger politics that trace all the way to the top of the kingdom. Slate will stop at nothing to unmask and defeat the dangerous Blood Mage, even if the process turns him from a hero into the most notorious villain in the land. The hero that Malethya needs may be the man they fear the most.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

J Lloren Quill is a novelist, inventor, and biomedical engineer. He is the author of *Severance Lost* and *Shadow Cursed*, and is currently writing the third installment of the Fractal Forsaken series. He lives in Minnesota with his family.

I'm more a fan of sci-fi than fantasy, but thought I'd give this book a shot. I was pleasantly surprised. Quill creates an interesting world with flawed, but well-meaning characters. The story is a bit of an "origin story" for the main character, Slate, who isn't really trying to do anything, but ends up thrust into trying to solve the mystery of the rising evil in his world. You'll find the typical character classes of Warriors, Mages and Rogues that you would expect to find in a fantasy story. But I liked the mix of the classes in each of the characters: a rogue that uses magic, a warrior that can sneak up on you, etc. That made each character feel more real than just tropes. The highlight for me though, was the treatment of magic in the story. In some stories magic is more a religious mystery reserved for old guys with beards, but here it was presented more as a scientific study. Wizards would need to experiment with magic, find patterns in it and analyze the results of their spells. And the application of the results of those magical experiments for weaponry, armor and healing was much more in tune with scientific advancements. It makes me wonder if we can expect a fantasy-cyberpunk series (like something out of the Shadowrun universe) from Quill in the future. Overall, I really enjoyed it and I'm on to the 2nd book in the series and looking forward to more.

Severance Lost appears to be just the tip of the iceberg for this series and for Quill. Quill builds a world, cast and storyline in a way that pulls you in and gives you the answers you need, but keeps the pages turning. I feel that some books and series within this genre are far too drawn out, often covering in 3 books what could have been done in 1. For Severance Lost, it's the opposite. The action in this storyline could merit 3 books itself, but never feels rushed or without adequate detail. Characters are unique and surprising. The setting is a creative world that takes shape and evolves as the story progresses. The action is fast and satisfying. The story is driven by the exchanges of trust and allegiance among the cast. You find yourself questioning each character's motives and hidden agendas, along with Slate as he searches for answers to ever evolving questions. The final reveal of the Blood Mage was unpredictable and leaves you ready and anxious for Book 2. I also appreciated the approach to magic and spells. Quill does a nice job of offering what feels like a scientific approach and explanation of the magic used in the story. This is refreshing, as it gives Fantasy the right amount of Realism. Looking forward to more from the author.

I know what you're thinking: you're probably pretty skeptical. You're thinking that J Lloren Quill is an amazing name for an author, but you may be a bit concerned about this independent book. Is it a rough gem waiting to be discovered or a dead end that happens to have a beautiful cover? Well, let

me tell you, this book is incredibly fun, well-balanced, and entertaining. I loved it, and you will too. The characters are interesting and even minor characters are multi-faceted. The plot is well layered and very readable. I never felt that "wait, what is going on," feeling of poorly developed writing. It keeps moving and little descriptive nuggets (about the characters or the settings) drop out along the way as needed. The setting is also really interesting. Although it's set in a magical world, the magic is firmly rooted in natural laws (e.g., biology, physics) similar to our own world. The author is surprisingly capable at weaving in just the right amount of natural science to add depth without going overboard. Additionally, the story is really quite funny. It's not necessarily a comedy, but I laughed out loud a couple of times. Overall, this book is definitely worth the time and money. Just go for it.

I have long been a fantasy fan, and this book definitely appeals to any fantasy readers' desire for epic story, magic, and high stakes. I was very impressed with how well pieced the story was, everything fit and everything had a purpose. By about 100 pages in, I started racing through the book because I was hooked. The only thing I would have changed was the romance - I didn't really sense any chemistry between the two characters, and I wish they would have stayed just friends for longer and maybe developed feelings over time. I appreciated that the main character, while a hero, also made mistakes and had to deal with them. I also liked the idea of the guilds, especially Sicarious, and it was refreshing that the main character had no "spark" for magic but was still able to hold his own - in this world magic has limits. The storyline was excellent, and the world development is on a solid foundation in this first book - can't wait to learn more about Malethya in the rest of the series. I've already ordered the second book!

Full disclosure - I'm a friend of the author. I admit I was slightly concerned about it being awkward to review the book if I didn't like it. I needn't have worried; this was fantastic. I'm not always a huge fan of the fantasy genre, but much like my favorites, this novel takes place in a unique, interesting world, without being ABOUT the world. The setting is simply a backdrop for a story driven by well-developed characters and an intriguing plot that is rich and complex, without being confusing. The two central mysteries come together in a way that is surprising without feeling like a need or a trick. In retrospect, the hints were there, but I was too engrossed to devote much brainpower to playing detective! I honestly can't think of anything bad to say about this book, and I can't wait to start the next installment, which is conveniently available already! (Sorry, I couldn't resist being a shill for the author - I did warn you he's a friend!)

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