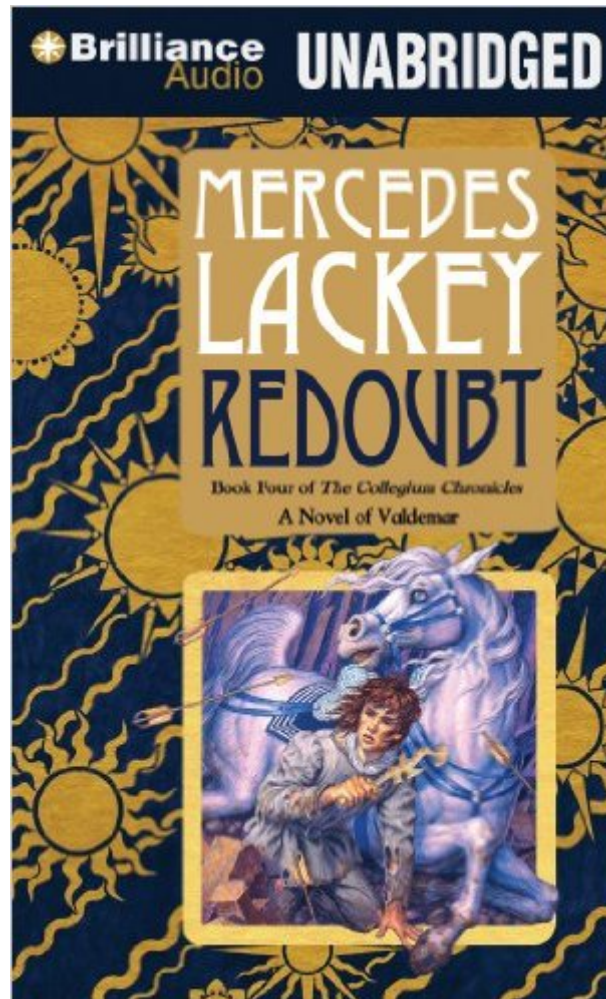


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Redoubt: The Collegium Chronicles (Valdemar Series)



Synopsis

Life at the Herald's Collegium in Haven had definitely improved for Mags. He'd even become something of a hero since risking his own life to rescue Amily's daughter of Nikolas, the King's Own Herald from Karsite kidnappers. Things had improved for Mags' small group of close friends, too. Mags' friend Bear had become a bit of a hero himself; though still a Trainee, he had performed a difficult and complicated medical procedure on Amily and restored the use of her legs. Now Bear was accepted as a peer by the Healers, and Amily was slowly gaining strength, walking on her own for the first time in her life. Lena, the Bard Trainee, was relieved to be free of the crushing disapproval of her now infamous, exiled father. Bear and Lena were in love, and so were Mags and Amily. Mags had his Companion Dallen, classes, his friends, Amily, and kirball. He was no longer the "foreigner" so many students distrusted. Life was good. But Mags still didn't know who his parents had been, and Bear, who had his own demons, was not one to let him forget: "You gotta deal with your past, Mags, you have to. If you don't, it'll just keep coming back to haunt you, and one day it'll do something to you that you can't get out of." Mags began his special training as Nikolas' undercover partner and future spy for the crown. Disguised, they worked at night in one of the seedier parts of Haven, where Nikolas had set up a false identity as a pawnbroker and fence. Mags posed as his deaf-mute nephew, covertly watching and listening from behind the desk. He was especially good at the trait that had kept him alive in the gem mine—ferreting out hidden motives. Fading into the shadows, as he had done as a child laborer, his extensive knowledge of gems was a multifaceted benefit, for he could identify specific stolen treasures and also separate the real from the fake. And Nikolas could trust him to chase down leads. Mags had grown extremely strong, agile, and remarkably adept at running across rooftops, slipping down drain pipes, and sneaking unseen along dark alleyways. He knew there were still skilled, determined assassins hunting for him, hired by Karse, Valdemar's long-standing enemy. It was necessary for Mags to be always on his guard. Now Mags has graduated to a new role: Nikolas' partner and information broker. Mags channels his old cunning self from the mines and discovers that he's quite good at his new job. So good, in fact, that Nikolas decides to let him open the shop alone one hot summer night. Mags has barely unlocked the shop when everything goes black in a blinding flash of pain. He wakes with an agonizing headache, bound, blindfolded, in a conveyance of some kind. But worst of all, he's head-blind. No Mindspeech—he can't even sense Dallen. And if he can't sense or hear Dallen, then no one can sense him. And if no one can sense him, no one can come to his rescue.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Let me start off this review with a condolence to those who chose this book to be their first adventure into Mercedes Lackey's Velgarth and the Heralds of Valdemar. This book is not an accurate indication of her previous (almost profound) books, which are in short, outstanding. I find that it's difficult and somewhat silly to say that a book "hurt" my feelings, but frankly I've never been this disappointed with a literary work before. In the previous books of the Collegium Chronicles many people had problems with Mags' country bumpkin speech pattern. I didn't have as much of a problem simply because Lackey alluded that this was part of the face, part of the work that Mags' would be doing. That being said, I liked the loss of the bumpkin speech, it's just too bad that the loss of his accent came with a loss of his character, and the tragic loss of actual plot. (Ladies, this book is like watching Magic Mike, you don't show for the story, you come for the so called "eye candy". In this case, the candy is not half naked men, but a white creature with four hooves and a person in uniform) I'm trying to avoid spoilers, so I'll make my criticisms brief. Once again, there is little resolution with regards to Mags' past. The little we get is practically useless, comes at the bitter end of the book, and makes no sense. There's no character development aside from Mags coming to terms with certain fears, Amily being able to walk, and a kerfuffle for Bear & Lena (primarily Bear). The 100 or so pages of Mags' dreams do little to add to the story or to character development. Imagine reading a nightmare journal, and that's about half the story. The other half is a recap of Kirball (fun but not exactly worthy of a plot point), and stolen recaps of the other books.

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