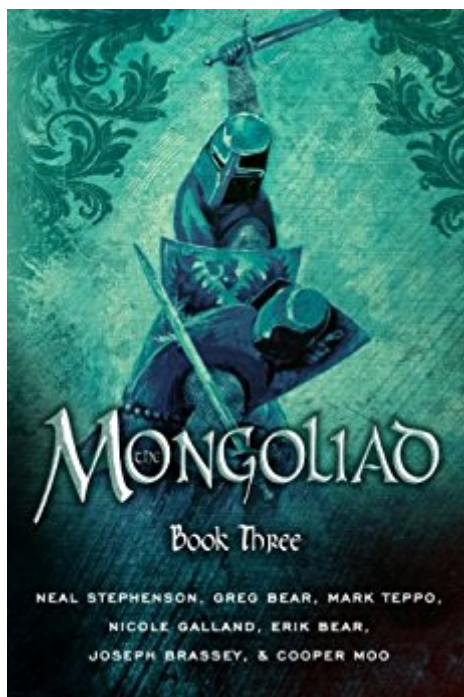


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The Mongoliad (The Mongoliad Series Book 3)



Synopsis

With bonus material! This Kindle edition features extra content only found in the Collector's Edition of The Mongoliad: Book Three, including an illustrated character glossary and a Foreworld map. The final book of the Mongoliad trilogy from Neal Stephenson and company tells the gripping personal stories of medieval freedom fighters to form an epic, imaginative recounting of a moment in history when a world in peril relied solely on the courage of its people. The shadow of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II hangs over the shattered Holy Roman Church as the cardinals remain deadlocked, unable to choose a new pope. Only the Binders and a mad priest have a hope of uniting the Church against the invading Mongol host. An untested band of young warriors stands against the dissolute Khan, fighting for glory and freedom in the Khan's sadistic circus of swords, and the brave band of Shield-Brethren who set out to stop the Mongol threat single-handedly race against their nemesis before he can raise the entire empire against them. Veteran knight Feronantus, haunted by his life in exile, leads the dwindling company of Shield-Brethren to their final battle, molding them into a team that will outlast him. No good hero lives forever. Or fights alone.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This review contains plot spoilers. I picked this up on Prime figuring it would be fun, well-researched historical fiction along the lines of Stephenson's Baroque Cycle. Well I was totally wrong about that. I'll go through it piece by piece: Characters: Way too many POV characters, makes it hard to care about any of them. The heroes are all noble, selfless boy scouts and the villains are so cartoonishly evil it's a wonder they never twirl their mustaches while yelling "Curses! Foiled again!". None of them really evolve or develop over the course of the story, except maybe Ocyrhoe who no one cares about anyway. Plot: Conflicts are introduced in the first 100 pages of the trilogy, and get resolved (kind of) in the final 200 pages. The middle 80% of the trilogy is just people hanging out, sending messages back and forth, traveling from point A to B, fighting a few low-stakes skirmishes, and holding staff meetings. I'll grant that the Epic Journey can be done well, but The Odyssey this ain't. Also, the entire Rome subplot was dull, overlong, and totally superfluous to the rest of the story. This book is advertised as an adventure about Christian knights facing off against Mongol invaders, so don't bait-and-switch me some side story about random useless teenagers getting mixed up with a bunch of squabbling Catholic Church bureaucrats. Lastly, the ending was a huge letdown; major questions are left unanswered and there's no resolution of the characters' fates. What's the deal with the Spirit Banner? Will Gansukh and Lian wind up together? Will the knights make it back to Europe alive? If you felt entitled to have these questions resolved as a reward for grinding through the whole trilogy, well the authors beg to differ.

Finally! Finished! That was my most overwhelming sentiment upon completing the final book in the Mongoliad. An important note: there is a reason why each of these books have the same name. It is all "The Mongoliad". This was not a sequel to Book Two, and Book Two was not a sequel to Book One. They are essentially the same book, just broken up into volumes. There is no way I would recommend anyone interested in these books to allow any space of time between them. But it would also be unfair to not note that by doing so, you will be reading the same story forever. There is a certain level of impatience that comes from reading the same story for a month and a half. Unfortunately, my experience with Book Three was marked by that impatience. It's hard for me to discern whether the book dragged or whether I was beginning to fatigue from the story. It is a story that at some points will drive you to read more right away or drive you crazy with boredom. The story covers multiple storylines happening simultaneously, some more loosely connected than others. Knights on a journey to assassinate the Khan of Khans, a Mongolian falling in love with a Chinese slave, the Khan battling alcoholism, cardinals trying to determine the next pope in Rome, a priest battling insanity, a messenger discovering herself, a gladiatorial battle for the entertainment of

another Khan, the slaves' plight for freedom, and the Western knights positioning amongst themselves. That's a lot going on. I was left disappointed. I can usually handle open-ended/disappointing endings (though I will say some of the storylines' endings were particularly aggravating). I found myself depressed and it took a little while to discover why.

I just finished the Mongoliad trilogy with this book, and I'm glad I made it through. The first book took a bit to get rolling, and the second book journeyed off into some strange places from which I feared it never would return, but this book focuses mainly on my favorite storylines - Cnan and the Shield Brethren travelling across the continent, and Gansukh and Lian's story with the Khan of Khans. It also succeeded in piquing my interest in the events in the arena, as well as somewhat more in the cardinals. Overall, the story of the cardinals never sucked me in much and I felt that the entire section about the binder girl, Ferenc, and Father Rodriguez was a complete distraction. It never connected to the other parts of the book, and I was disappointed by that. I expected somehow for Ocyroe and Cnan to end up in a story together, both being the lost and lonely gals that they are. There isn't much of an aftermath of this book. It's not clear what happens to the individual characters, or indeed, the entire world, after the events of this book. The most satisfying ending for me was that the people in Hunern, and the Shield-Brethren there, do satisfy that part of the story. Again, it's hard to write about this without spoiling the story. I think I was going to have a hard time choosing between the Mongols, who I ended up liking, and the Shield Brethren, by the end. It would be a spoiler to discuss what happens here, but I will say - there is the inevitable conflict that the three books led up to. The Shield-Brethren do complete their journey. I liked that there was much further character development. However, some things were left unresolved. Percival's quest for example.

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