



The Viscount and the Witch

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Eleven years before they were framed for the murder of a king, before even assuming the title of Riyria, Royce Melborn and Hadrian Blackwater were practically strangers. Unlikely associates, this cynical thief and idealist swordsman, were just learning how to work together as a team.

In this standalone short story of The Riyria Chronicles, Royce is determined to teach his naive partner a lesson about good deeds. Join Royce and Hadrian in this short story (5,400 words).

This is now a chapter in Riyria Chronicles # 2: The Rose and the Thorn, so for those looking to read the entire series in order, reading this short story on its own isn't necessary.

The Viscount and the Witch Details

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Author : Michael J. Sullivan

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Michael says

No rating, as this is my "own book" but I did want to say a bit about it.

This is a standalone prequel to my Riyria Revelations Series. It is being released for free and you can get a copy **by clicking here**

No previous knowledge of the Riyria Revelations is necessary. It is a short story (just 5,400 words) so is a quick introduction to a larger epic tale.

Eleven years before they were framed for the murder of a king, before even assuming the title of Riyria, Royce Melborn and Hadrian Blackwater were practically strangers. Unlikely associates, this cynical thief and idealist swordsman, were just learning how to work together as a team. In this standalone first installment of The Riyria Chronicles, Royce is determined to teach his naive partner a lesson about good deeds. Join Royce and Hadrian in this short story (5,400 words) about one of their earliest adventures..

Veronica Morfi says

When I picked this one up from Amazon for free, I thought I should give it a try, cause I got curious about the series and omg I loved it!

Even in the few pages of it I fell in love with the two main characters Royce Melborn and Hadrian Blackwater. I love that we mostly see the story through Hadrian's eyes, its like he's Dr. Watson to a medieval Sherlock. Now don't get me wrong they don't solve mysteries or anything, but the character of Hadrian is simple, caring, trusting and lovable while Royce is more mysterious and dangerous and always has the answer, just like Sherlock!

Anyways this is so short and perfect (and free) so if you are searching for the new epic fantasy to read go ahead and give this a try it won't dissapoint. Now I can't wait to get my hands on the first book and read more about the awesome duo.

Veronica Morfi says

This is my second time around reading this short. And now that I've had my first journey with Hadrian and Royce in The Crown Tower, I can tell that I really enjoyed this one. It's a classic tale of those two getting in trouble. I love how different they are yet how well they fit together. And the new addition to their group was great, I am sure will see more of Albert in the future. I can't wait to get my hands on the second Riyria Chronicles book.

Ron says

Sullivan at his best. Has vitality of *The Crown Conspiracy* without the silliness of later books. The relationship between the protagonists is part of the fun, and it's displayed here in its quintessence.

I'm embarrassed to claim a "book" read for a short story of less than thirty pages. Still, it's a fun read and the price was right. (Free)

May actually motivate me to read more of the series, which was the whole idea, right?

Claudia says

[their later associate (hide spoiler)]

Bcvs says

A nice and brief introduction to the characters.

There is a pleasant feeling to the setting and it encourages to keep on reading to find out what happens next.

Bookwraiths says

Originally reviewed at [Bookwraiths Reviews](#)

The Viscount and The Witch is a short story, which introduces readers to Hadrian and Royce: the heroes of the *Riyria Revelations*. It takes place several years before their adventures in Mr. Sullivan's other *Riyria* books, and while it is a standalone story, I believe you will find it much more enjoyable if you have read the novels before sampling this.

The tale itself revolves around Royce and Hadrian traveling and encountering obstacles along their path including a "witch." These "bumps" allow the author to highlight the differences in Hadrian's more optimistic, naive character and Royce's brooding, pessimistic outlook on life and people. It also gives Mr. Sullivan the chance to introduce a landless, pathetic noble named Viscount Albert, whom our heroes befriend and save from himself. (Albert, of course, goes on to play a role in the *Riyria Revelations*.) Through all this, a reader begins to see the making of Hadrian and Royce's partnership, which is the central point upon which the *Riyria Revelations* balances.

I only have two complaints about *The Viscount and The Witch*. One, the story is very light on plot. There isn't much that actually happens other than Royce proving to Hadrian that he is too trusting of others. Two, it is too short. Once you actually become engaged in the tale, it is over .

All in all, this story is a light and entertaining read. I believe it is best sampled after already having an emotional attachment to Royce and Hadrian; however that is not required to understand what is going on. So pick up *The Viscount and The Witch* and give it a try.

Antonis says

4.5 / 5

Up until reading this story I had not had the chance to read anything from Michael Sullivan though I had heard and read quite a lot on many book-review blogs about the indie author (up to that point) that was actually better than many published ones. So colour me intrigued and for a long time I've had my eyes on his fantasy series so when I read that there was a free short story that served as a good introduction to his writing and series, I downloaded this and read it at the first chance I got.

This is a very short story, short enough that got that half-point subtracted from my rating only because at the end I wanted more (sure I know that there are 6 more books or 3 double-ones from Orbit right now). I think that this could be a hit or miss for many mostly due to 2 reasons, both of which were hit for me. One is the plot, its resolution and the reasoning behind it might estrange some readers as rather unlikely or odd. But I found it a very interesting story, with both the expected and unexpected twists. At the end, most questions got their proper answers, apart ofcourse from a couple that I can only suppose are probably explained in the main story arc in the novel series.

The other is what is qctually happening in the story, the action or rather the lack of it. If the reader comes into this story expecting non-stop in your face typical fantasy-fare action, he will be sorely disappointed. The reason is simple: Sullivan apparently doesn't want to show-off his action-writing skills in this one. (Please keep in mind that I have not read the Riyria series so I don't know how much action there is supposed to be in his novels.) What is clear however is that he wants us to learn and enjoy the interaction of his two main characters, two characters that are evidently different from each other in a very realistic way but somehow manage to work harmonically and fill the gaps left by each other's shortcomings. So, we end up with a lot of dialogue, exploring several ethically ambivalent situations from two points of view. I personally found both points of view very realistic and if this is any indication how things are perceived and reacted to by the two main characters then I will definitely read the novels as well.

So in summary, if you have read any of Sullivan's books and liked it then you will probably read this no matter what I or anybody else says. If you have not read anything by Sullivan then this is a really good introductory point since it's free, short and, according to me, very good as well!

Jim says

Available for free in lots of formats here:

<http://www.michaelsullivan-author.com...>

This is a prelude story to the Riyria Chronicles. It's short, 5400 words, but fun & we get to meet Royce & Hadrian early on in their partnership, not to mention finding out how they met & why one of the minor characters of the series works with them. Definitely worth reading if you like the series or if you want to see what the series is about.

Before the short story is a longish word from the author about the Riyria Chronicles. It's interesting.

After the story is the first chapter of Theft of Swords. I haven't read it. I'm waiting for Percepliquis, the 6th & final book of the chronicles, at which time I plan to re-read the entire series.

Nayeomi says

this was sent by author for an honest review

I am very impressed by the way Riyria Chronicles has swept the Fantasy world of late. It has very high ratings and I cannot wait to rate it myself!

Quite delighted that I was enough to be sent an ebook copy by Mr. Sullivan himself for the two short novels set in the same world. This is the first one:

The Viscount and the Witch

First sentence: "A woman wielding a broom charged at them, looking as much like a witch as anyone Hadrian had ever seen."

- Oh yeah, I can tell that I am going to devour this short novel very quickly.

This book follows the adventure of an assassin and an ex soldier, on their way to a 'mission', when a bedraggled looking woman with hair in dirty knots ask for their help on the road. Hadrian offered to help the lady immediately but Royce was very reluctant and kept on warning Hadrian of the dangers of trusting such random helpless strangers.

True to the woman's word, a man has been squatting in a barn she claimed is hers, and from there the story unfolds about how the stranger came about to be in the barn and who the lady really is.

Royce, one of the protagonists is the brooding one, cynical of the two. He is the quite the 'brains' between the two, always two or three steps ahead of the game, or probably any heist they concoct. He is also an assassin, probably one of the most ruthless ones in a guild, but he's 'retired' and now works in partnership with Hadrian, a guileless soldier, gentler and more open to the concept of goodness of the world. Hadrian, on the other hand, although a bit naïve, is the brute force. As an ex soldier, he has seen many unnecessary deaths that he has this strong god complex in him, wanting to fix anything and everything if he can help it. He is also determined to change his friend Royce into a more unsuspecting thief, as they go about their usual occupation of 'procurement' which a term I love that thieves use when asked about what it is that they do. They quite balance each other nicely and I love the chemistry between Royce and Hadrian. Their order of business reminds me strongly of the Gentlemen Bastards and i am very interested how the author go about the story in the actual series.

This story has quite gripped me at the first page. You know that feeling when you read the first few pages, and you think to yourself, "oh yeah, this is gonna be good." That vibe came to me strongly and now I am curious as to the many crazy adventures that Royce and Hadrian aka Riyria have in the actual series! Fantasy reads are quite tricky as they tend to sound English (quite formal and very different from the usual writing) but this book is quite an easy read! I did not feel like walking in the fantasy world like walking in cobblestones, sometimes pausing to catch my footing and making sure I don't stumble a bit around. This fantasy read felt like I am walking in the concrete, smooth gait all the way through.

I am definitely bumping the series up in my TBR list.

And thank you Mr. Sullivan for giving me the opportunity to read and enjoy your short novel, welcoming me to the world of Riyria Chronicles.

Paul Nelson says

Interesting short story set in the early days of the relationship between Royce and Hadrian describing meeting for the first time Viscount Albert. Royce and Hadrian have known each other for a year and Hadrian shows his naivety in dealing with seemingly honest folk with plenty of dry humour from Royce.

Andrea says

Loved it! I love these characters. I'm so glad Michael shared the story of how Royce and Hadrian met Albert. It was full of humor and I really enjoy their witty banter. Please keep writing more short stories about them!

Nimrod Daniel says

Haha, that was a very entertaining introduction the the series.

While Hadrian is a righteous ex-soldier, Royce is a cynical thief with a devious mind, and these two guys make a great team. Hadrian-Royce relationship made laugh a few times while reading.No doubt that Michael Sullivan knows how to write a good short story, which is quite a rare gift.

(only the first half is the story, the other half includes 2 first chapters in other books).

4.5-4.75/5

Melissa Hayden says

Hadrian always a soft heart stops to see what the ragged dressed woman, tripping through the brush, is calling to him and Royce, his partner of just about a year, for help. There is an unknown man in her barn and she fears for her life. Hadrian wants to go take care of the problem, Royce is ready to move on but lets Hadrian learn a lesson on people.

I'm not going to say to much as it's such a short read and if I do I just might give it all way. I want you to go read this quick read for yourself and enjoy it.

First and foremost, YOU DO NOT HAVE TO READ THE SERIES TO READ THIS. Actually, you could read this to get a taste of Hadrian and Royce.

I loved getting to see these two characters again, Hadrian and Royce. I love them, Hadrian and his big soft heart and Royce with his syndicalism of the two. But the two together are fun. There are jokes, the familiarity of the two carrying on together, and a great story as well. I love the way Royce is and the mystery with him. Even knowing Royce after five books of the series I still love the mystery here. And do want to know more!

The nice thing about this short story is mention of some of the future characters in the series. You are introduced to some names and who they are, which will give you a little background for when you read the series. And yes, I think once you read this short story you will want the series. Michael has created amazing characters and a great world here that all should read. I do hope you go check this out.

Also included with this short story is the first chapter of Theft of Swords, to be released in November, then the next two books each month after.

Michael Kotsarinis says

OK, I have to admit I half-knew I would love it. As I suspected it is exactly the genre I love to read and this story confirmed that the writing is clear and concise, the way I prefer it, that is. I love the way the author doesn't linger in every minor detail but gives enough and precise information so that one can easily picture the world he is describing. Another strong point is that he manages to make the characters feel real and humane. I suggest anyone with an interest in fantasy gives this story a shot. It 'll take just a short time and you 'll see for yourselves if it's worth reading the series. I definitely will get it when it is published.
