Intrigues: Book Two of the Collegium Chronicles (A Valdemar Novel) by Mercedes Lackey

A Little Disappointed...

Spellbinding storyteller (Rave Reviews) Mercedes Lackey continues her epic Valdemar series.

Magpie is a thirteen-year-old orphan chosen by one of the magical Companion horses of Valdemar and taken to the capital city, Haven, to be trained as a Herald. Like all Heralds, Magpie learns that he has a hidden Gift—the Gift of telepathy.

But life at the court is not without obstacles. When Mags is recognized by foreign secret operatives whose purpose is unknown, Mags himself comes under suspicion. Who are Magpie's parents—who is he, really? Can Mags solve the riddle of his parentage and his connection with the mysterious spies—and prove his loyalty—before the king and court banish him as a traitor?

My Personal Review:
Don't get me wrong: Intrigues is not bad; it's just not a complete story. Reading through the novel is (unfortunately) a lot like watching Star Wars: the Phantom Menace. It's mildly entertaining, but most of its build-up for the actual, interesting Darth Vader story everyone wants to see.

Honestly, this book feels like Ms. Lackey had a deadline, and decided to throw together her backstory notes regarding Character Development along with some stuff she remembered from Harry Potter. At one point, I was fairly certain Mags IS Harry...well, emo medieval Harry, complete with wannabe quidditch. Except, Magss Nimbus.. err.. Companion can talk, and
J.K. Rowling always had a really strong, solid plot (with a real beginning, middle, and end) in her books with a LOT less preaching. Intrigues, on the other hand, is almost entirely about telling the reader what the characters are all about (at one point, in fact, the characters shout at one another what their characters are like before other characters step in to explain that yes indeed that is true but so-and-so has added depth/aspects of their personality and that added depth is blah blah blah). Some of you may think I'm exaggerating, but sadly I'm not. That last sentence actually takes up an entire chapter.

IF an interesting story occurs (and there are some pretty heavy-handed hints that there are Happenings afoot in Valdemar, particularly toward the end of the book), it should unfold in the third book. So, I'd wait for the third book and read the two at once. Or, skip the second book altogether. You won't be missing much.

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