



Age of War

Michael J. Sullivan

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Rich in magic and adventure, Michael J. Sullivan's soaring fantasy novels are masterworks of heroism, love, and sacrifice. Now, in Age of War, the epic battle between humankind and the cruel godlike beings who once ruled them finally ignites in all its fury.

The alliance of humans and renegade Fhrey is fragile—and about to be tested as never before. Persephone keeps the human clans from turning on one another through her iron will and a compassionate heart. The arrogant Fhrey are barely held in check by their leader, Nyphron, who seeks to advance his own nefarious agenda through a loveless marriage that will result in the betrayal of the person Persephone loves most: Raithe, the God Killer.

As the Fhrey overlords marshal their army and sorcerers to crush the rebellion, old loyalties will be challenged while fresh conspiracies will threaten to undo all that Persephone has accomplished. In the darkest hour, when hope is all but lost, new heroes will rise . . . but at what terrible cost?

Age of War Details

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Author : Michael J. Sullivan

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From Reader Review Age of War for online ebook

Chris says

I was given a beta-version ecopy of this book in exchange for honest, thorough feedback. Note that this is not the final version of the novel and might change significantly before it is published.

But like I said with the beta reads of the first two books in this series, it shouldn't change that much. This baby is awesome as it is and will only need small tweaks and edits to put it in the same ballpark as the other books.

Legends of the First Empire fans will not be disappointed. If you loved *Age of Myth & Age of Swords*, you will slap this one right up there on your favorites shelf beside them.

Be prepared to be amazed and dragged through an emotional experience. Yes, I'm vague, but I promised not to spoil and you really have to read it to feel it, anyway.

Robin (Bridge Four) says

This review was originally posted on Books of My Heart

The tears are still in my eyes when I think of this book. Dang you Michael J. Sullivan, dang you. **Age of War** encompasses all the emotions one would feel during a war. Not everyone makes it through battles and some sacrifices are as beautiful as they are heartbreaking.

This is a wonderful continuation to the story. It shows how incredibly invested I am in the characters, that even though I finished this weeks ago, every time I think about it I'm taken back to the emotional moments, good and bad. and feel all the feels all over again.

First, I think the important thing to remember is it is not the end of the *Legends of the First Empire series*. There are some very big moments and it is an end to one of the major ARCs for the first battles of the war between the Fey and humans. But it is not the end of the line for many of the characters that made it to the end.

Suri is by far one of my favorite characters of the series and she has come a long way from the mystic child she was in *Age of Myth*. After the sacrifices made in *Age of Swords*, she is a little bit harder and she has lost some of the innocence she used to carry with her. But as a character in this series, she is still my favorite. Her journey is a harder one as she will be the one that needs to carry on after friends have been lost to her.

Suri was surrounded by people, yet not a part of them. She was the daisy among the daffodils, the fly in the goat's milk, the butterfly in the army.

There are a few romantic couplings and none of them have a conventional or easy time of it. Roan and Gifford is my favorite pairing. They are both broken in some way. Roan is broken on the inside, after years of being a slave and Gifford is broken on the outside, but the most patient and kind man in the story. I love the friendship and more that is between them even if Roan isn't sure how to express it at times. I really liked

how Gifford played into the prophecy from when he was born. It was very well executed.

Persephone and Raithe. Well if like me, you have already read the Riyara series, you know who Persephone is supposed to end up with. I was really hoping for a twist to the story that showed how the legends got it wrong. These two put me through the ringer and while I won't say how it worked out, I will say I'm still emotional weeks later while writing this.

Accept that you're going to get hurt, that you're going to die; embrace it, and you'll find the freedom to live. This was one of the many ridiculous things his father had told him that sounded less stupid every day.

Tesh...I love that kid and it seems he has found another to love as well. Tesh was the biggest surprise for me in this book. Again I know his legend from the Riyara series but to see how the legends got started was amazing. I also enjoyed the little crush happening between him and a certain scribe.

"What's it mean? What Sebek called Tesh?"

"Techylor?" Malcolm said. "It means swift of hand, or just swifthead, I suppose."

"Great. The kid's going to be impossible to live with now," Raithe grumbled.

Malcolm nodded. "Probably, but you ought to consider yourself fortunate. Next to Nyphron, you've got the best Shield in Alon Rhist."

Raithe frowned. "Apparently, I'm second best to Nyphron in a number of things."

As for Malcolm, Nephron and the others, well their stories are all interesting and complex too. I will say I haven't decided if any of them are good or bad but the twist surrounding Nyphron was huge to me and I'm still trying to get my mind around the implications of it. I also am still uncertain about that mischievous Malcom. It was interesting delve into his origins and get some of his story but even after that, I still have no idea if he is on team good or team bad or a team I don't even know about.

There are at least three more books coming and I'm eager to learn what more the ravages of a war between the humans and the Fey will bring.

Claudia says

Perfection. Simply amazing. It's the best in this series and I enjoyed it to the max. I can say wholeheartedly that for me is on par with Heir of Novron, only with an added incentive: it doesn't end the series; we still have three more forthcoming and they can't be here soon enough.

If in the previous parts I had a problem with the characters, it vanished now completely. Their development is complete and they fit into the story perfectly. It's so marvelous to see, for example, how Suri is transformed. Gifford has an ace down his sleeve – which I truly hope to see it come in to the open in the next instalments. Tesh plays another big card at the end as well as Malcolm (view spoiler)

And it was such an emotional rollercoaster in the end; you might want to have a box of tissues close at hand, you'll need it.

So, I laughed and I cried and I savoured every word; still, it ended way too soon... I can't wait for the next.

And if you'd like to recall the main events from the previous volumes, check below links on MJS' site. They

are recaps written by Robin:

Age of Myth Recap

Age of Swords Recap

Helen 2.0 says

I have read all kinds of fantasy - urban, epic, YA, romance, you name it - and lots of it. This series has risen through the ranks of my favorites insanely fast. Age of Myth immediately ranked within my top ten. Age of Swords bumped the series up into my top five. Now... well. My top three are starting to fear for their place.

I've never seen a fantasy ensemble cast rendered as beautifully as in this series. Even though each character is given only a small space per book, they all have complex motives and emotions. Characters usually develop with each other and with the progression of the war, which makes the story flow well. At any point during the series, it's easy to understand and connect with each of them.

Take, for example, Persephone and Raithe. While they began the series in Age of Myth as major characters with lots of narrating time, their chapters have dwindled as other characters take on bigger roles. However, Persephone & Raithe's story has lost none of its emotional power. Their relationship is more complicated than ever at the start of AoW, with Raithe determined to spend time with his keenig while Persephone fights her personal feelings to gain political clout. In just a handful of scenes across the book, MJS has created a poignant story surrounding these two ~~idiots~~ characters.

Along the same lines, the fantasy world continues to expand in AoW, with more mysteries springing up with every question answered. While reading I was always wondering about the true nature of the Art, certain characters' questionable motives (looking at you, Malcolm & Nyphron), and what the hell is behind that damn door in Elfland. At no point could I sit back and claim that I knew where the author would take us next.

In this respect Age of War stood out from the preceding two books; I really truly was not expecting the shift in direction the story seemed to take in later chapters. **The author has shown that he's not afraid to lead his characters, and his plot, down a darker path.**

I have to mention how wonderfully clear it is that MJS planned, wrote, and edited this series in its entirety before beginning to publish book one. As the huge ensemble cast moves closer together and their paths intertwine, every step feels perfectly placed to inch the story closer to its ultimate goal. Reading the series feels like listening to a story whose teller has told it so often that he knows every syllable by heart. It's a fantastic experience.

Here's what is truly impressive: everything I've mentioned above, the author fits into installments less than 500 pages in size. **Despite all the complexity of the series, it can still be classified as "light fantasy."** That's amazing, given that many fantasy authors take 1,000 pages per novel to build the kind of world that MJS has built. (Absolutely not side-eyeing Branderson when I say this.)

Okay, obviously I love this series and can't say enough good things about it, but I'll leave off here. My dear friends, just go read it when it releases! You won't be sorry.

TS Chan says

Age of War hit the shelves today!

I received an advanced reading copy from the author in exchange for an honest review. Thank you, Michael J Sullivan, for this opportunity.

4.5 stars.

Age of War marks a fine conclusion to the first act of the series, revealing the true story behind the legends spoken of in Riyria Revelations which was not all fairy tales, rainbows and butterflies.

Before I start, let us take a moment to admire the stunning cover for Age of War by the one and only, Marc Simonetti. In my opinion, this is the best cover he has produced for any of Sullivan's books to date, and it is most fitting that the book dedication is made in his honour

This book is dedicated to the artist Marc Simonetti. People are told not to judge a book by its cover, but so long as Marc is creating them, judge away.

With the two preceding books setting the foundation of the events leading to the war between the Fhreys and the Rhunes, the Age of War can be viewed as the penultimate climax of the series where the first war ever between the Fhreys and the Rhunes finally broke out. Just from the title alone and natural extension of the story, one can reasonably expect some serious action and battle scenes to occur. And I was not disappointed. Moreover, I can also say that Sullivan has managed to hone his action and battle-writing skills as well.

Regardless, the narrative did not go all-out at a breakneck pace as true to Sullivan's approach to storytelling character development always takes precedence. While the preceding volumes, especially Age of Swords, tend to favour the women (which are some of the best female characters in fantasy), we have pretty much equal opportunity for all main characters to shine in this latest instalment. It includes one notable introduction from the previous book, a young man whose name alone caused a whole lot of flailing (on my part at least) because of its implications. Sullivan also has a penchant for unlikely heroes, which makes his stories so compelling. Think of Myron and Emilia from Riyria, and in this series, Gifford and Roan.

To a man with so little, hope is a barrel of ale. It alleviates pain for a time, becomes a crutch. But it also ruins what little good a person might otherwise squeeze out of life.

My favourite part of the whole story so far is the getting the real juice behind the legendary tale of Nyphron and Persephone. In this respect, I always believe that it is fascinating to read the Legend series after Riyria even though one does not truly spoil the other. Now, though the revelations are the main draw for me, I wouldn't be half as engaged in the story if I do not care about the characters. Sullivan's biggest strength as far as I am concerned has always been his characterisation, which I will extend to some with dubious personalities and even that whiny brat, Mawyndule.

The worst thing that can happen while reading is to feel nothing. Stories are ultimately about the people in it and if one does not feel anything, whether it is love or hate, towards the characters then their stories are not likely to stay with you. For all that Sullivan is known for his light-hearted fantasy, he can be downright cruel sometimes. The war exacted an immense cost on our beloved characters and no one who survived can be

said to be the same again. At the end of this book, it is this transformation which sticks in my mind; surely a sign of a tale well-told.

There is only one romantic arc within the story which hurt the pacing a bit and did not entirely strike a chord with me, even though I appreciated that it is most relatable under the circumstance and some of the scenes are quite cute. I believe, however, that many other readers will likely differ from my opinion.

In short, another great addition to the series. I am so looking forward to knowing where the story is going next and how Sullivan is going to expand the narrative to bring us to the existence of the fabled city in the Riyria series.

This review can also be found at Booknest

Audrey says

4.25 stars

I was picked to be one of the “gamma” readers for this book, meaning I searched it for typos after the beta readers were done. I was so thrilled to get to do this. I read it with my proofreader’s brain rather than my reader’s brain. Sometimes I had to go back and start a part over because I accidentally got lost in the story instead of carefully looking at all the letters.

I also swore on pain of death to not give away any spoilers, so this review will remain vague. (Mr. Sullivan knows Royce Melborn, and I don’t want him to show up and slit my throat in the middle of the night.)

I think this is my favorite of the series so far. Like another reviewer mentioned, the first half is like slowly riding to the top of a roller coaster. You don’t even realize that’s what’s happening until all this action starts happening. Besides battle scenes, there are surprises and mysteries and heartbreak and plenty of character development. The second half is so suspenseful and gripping. I think there are some big things in store for the series. The previous book had a quest that left a lot of characters behind, but here they all get fairly equal “screen” time.

Sullivan has a pretty simple writing style. It serves to give you a good story that’s pure fun to read; escapism at its best. I plan to buy a final copy when it’s ready.

Kaitlin says

Note: I listened to this on audio so spellings may not be correct!

Continuing the theme of really fun books in this series, I have to say I am not surprised that once again Sullivan has written a book I really liked. This is the third in the series, so I would recommend reading my first two reviews to find out more about the world and magic, but the shortened version is that this is the same setting as Hadrian and Royce's Riyria, but thousands of years earlier when the world is just beginning and the people of it are slowly starting to make history.

This story follows many of my favourite characters again: Raithe, Brin, Persephone, Sari and more, but it also brings in some newer ones like Tesh. I really liked Tesh's more prominent focus in this book, and as this

book is the start of the real war between two great peoples, I think that the focus made sense too as he is a warrior.

Honestly, there's not too much I can say about this one at this point in the series, besides that it's great and you should read it, but I am really enjoying seeing how the magic of the world is being unlocked through new discoveries about the Art.

I also really like that although this whole book is pretty much focused on a War and getting ready for a War, Sullivan still managed to keep me interested and make me really want to see where things would go. There's also some pretty big twists to the fighting of the War which made it a lot of fun!

Overall, great once again, 4*s from me :)

Terence says

The Fane and the Fhrey loyal to him intend to wipe out Nyphron, his followers, and all of humanity. Nyphron is preparing to use humanity to overthrow the Fane and take over the Fhrey. In order to do that Nyphron needs the keenig Persephone and he proposes marriage to her in order to gain control over humanity through her. Persephone, despite her feelings, seriously considers the proposal to protect her people from the wrath of the Fane. The Age of War is upon them all and sacrifices must be made in order to survive.

Age of War is so so good. This was one of those books that kept me reading late at night and early in the morning. Sleep simply wasn't necessary while I was reading Age of War. I never imagined I could enjoy a prequel book so much and it's making me want to reread Percepliquis because I just know I'm missing all kinds of tie-ins.

If the deaths in Age of Swords were too heavy a weight for anyone to bear then be warned that Age of War may leave people crying. The weight of events picks up significantly as Nyphron reclaims Alon Rhist. He allows those inside the choice to simply do nothing rather than attempting to capture or kill The Galantians. His fellow Instarya agree and war preparations on both sides begin. Persephone is forced to deal with the various Rhunes, their needs, and distrust for one another.

The world building, tie-ins from Riyria Revelations, and the characters really made the book stellar. The world is growing steadily and Michael J. Sullivan does an excellent job bringing his various writings about this world together. The characters are amazing, but in Age of War one stood out to me most. That character is Tesh. The starved Dureyan survivor has taken his chieftain's advice and is learning all he can about the Fhrey in order to exact revenge. Tesh trains seemingly endlessly and his progress is showing. He's become one of the best archers and has gained the name Techylor from the great Sebek for his prowess with a sword.

Age of War is a great story and a necessary book for anyone who enjoys Michael J. Sullivan's writing in the Riyria world.

5 out of 5 stars

I received this ARC from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Esmerelda Weatherwax says

Oh.

My.

Heart.

Michael says

If you follow me here on Goodreads, you know that I don't rate my books. I do, however, use the review feature to update people on the process of books. So here goes.

Update 08/23/18 - We made the list! What list you ask? Why the Goodread's Best Fantasy of 2018 (so far list), of course. Here's all the books that are included:

Update 08/20/18 - People are pretty excited for *Age of Legend*, and I'm already getting emails wanting to know (a) when it will be available for pre-ordering and (b) how can they sign up for early notification. Well, the answer to the first question can be found here, and here is a sign-up form for the second.

Update 08/05/18 - One month plus release and things continue to go well, we've sold more than 44,000 books (20% ebooks | 22% hardcovers | 58% audiobooks). It looks like a lot of you are listening to the books. So much, in fact, that *Age of War* hit the New York Times Bestseller list for the month of July for audiobooks. How are you consuming the book?

Update 07/11/18 - One week plus since release and things are going well. The book topped out at a sales rank of 373 - on Amazon - which I'm very pleased with, and the reviews have been very positive 97% of people on Goodreads "liked it" and it's running at a solid 4.5 overall ranking. Oh, and it's now available for **direct purchase for people who want signed copies.**

Update 07/02/18 - *Age of War* releases tomorrow!! And *Age of Myth* is on sale right now from Audible (just \$5.95) so good timing on that. All three books are hitting the Epic Fantasy Bestseller's list so thank you for your continued support.

Update 05/21/18 - *Age of War* was picked as one of Goodread's Hottest Books of the Summer!

Here are all five selections:

Update 05/01/18 - Another ARC Giveaway has been posted. Here is the link. These are my last two copies for the ARC, and I'm not sure if Del Rey is running another Giveaway before release date, so this may be the last one. Good luck on the drawing! Oh, and it ends at the end of the month so winners will get the book about a month before release.

Update 03/29/18 - There is a few days left in a Goodreads Giveaway for ARC (Advanced Reading Copies) of Age of War. It's open only to residents of the US, but there is a parallel Giveaway open to people of all countries for members of my Private Goodread's Group, The Dark Room. If you would like to join here is a link.

Update: 02/09/18 - There's some good news and bad news. The printer's proofs for *Age of War* will be arriving on 2/13/18 just a few more days! That's the good news. The bad news is the book will be delayed a couple of months. The new release date is July 03. Don't blame Del Rey, it's 100% my fault. You see, when Robin and I did my final read through on the copy edits, there were some issues that we felt should be addressed. As such, we were late hitting our copy edit review deadline, and Del Rey had to copyedit the new stuff. All this meant slippage in the release. I could have ignored the issues and hit my release dates, but I opted for quality over speed. I hope you'll be understanding. In the grand scheme of things 75 days is nothing when stacked up against other writers like Rothfuss, Martin, and Lynch. But then again, I guess I shouldn't be putting myself in that same company. Still, I hope you'll be patient with us and understanding of the choices we made.

Update: 01/08/18 - Home stretch! Robin and I did our final pass through the copyedits of the book. I deemed it "good to go" - Robin pointed out a few minor tweaks - and they really are minor so I'm implementing them today and I'm guessing it'll be to Del Rey in the morning - then it's off to the presses!

Update: 10/02/17 - And....DONE! Just finished implementing all the beta feedback. They did a terrific job! Going to give it one last read through then send it off to Del Rey's production team for copy editing, layout, and the other production task. I'm thrilled with how it came out.

Update: 09/28/17 - Received the compilation of all the beta feedback from Robin today, and I've started to make changes. Great feedback, and while there is a lot of good stuff for me to "tweak" the book won't be changing dramatically from what went to the beta team. At this point, everything is moving on schedule.

Update: 09/08/17 - Received the "marketing copy for the book" from my editor, may still need some further tweaking and refinement but it's much improved from the fairly lame version I released. If you want to see what they came up with, the description has already been updated here on Goodreads.

Update: 07/07/17 - Got the editorial feedback from my editors at Del Rey. One of them, claims it's her favorite book of the series to date and neither of them had any significant changes called out. I only briefly scanned the file, but I think the book is in good shape and won't need much more from me. Robin is going to do another re-read (I already incorporated her content changes), and then it will be on to beta reading!

Update: 04/03/17 - Had a meeting with Del Rey last week in New York and we've set the official release date for this book to be April 2018. Which means I need to have my submitted for acceptance book to my editor in June 2017 - that should be doable. I'm going to finish up writing *The Disappearance of Winter's Daughter: Riyria Chronicle #4* first (it has a release date of December 1). Robin has already provided me with feedback issues she wants addressed and they are minor and easy to incorporate. So I see no problem meeting this deadline.

Update: 01/11/17 - Things are moving along nicely on the third book of the series. Marc Simonetti is

working on the cover, Robin is compiling a list of changes for me to implement as part of the alpha reading process, and a beta read should be starting in March. If you want to sign up to be part of the beta, here is a link to do so.

Melanie says

- 1.) Age of Myth ★★★★★
 - 2.) Age of Swords ★★★
-

Etel says

It took me a day to finish this highly anticipated new installment in a series that became one of my favourites from the first book. Although a fantasy addict, I am also a connoisseur with high demands and standards; world-building, characters, plot-twists, and a plethora of other essential parts making up an excellent book. And, Michael J. Sullivan keeps providing all of it, not shying away from exhibiting one of the most crucial traits of a wonderful writer - playing their readers' emotions like a virtuoso.

I would like to avoid any accidental - or not - revelations and spoilers about the book as it's been only a couple of days since it seen the light of day. What I would like is to mention some of the emotions while devouring page after page.

Utter disbelief - because, let us be quite honest, I did NOT see some of what was coming. I mean, really. Trepidation - what would the next page bring, the next chapter, and gods forbid, was I nearing the end of the book? Would it leave me... shattered and with questions? Well, of course it did.

Snotty nose and red-rimmed eyes - allergies. NOT crying. NO. The last book to make me weep was John Gwynne's 'Wrath'. And I am definitely not a Johnny-come-lately to the world of epic fantasy to believe with the purity and naivité of ignorance that everything ends well. Ergo, my shriveled, black, antagonistic heart is usually incapable of such incongruous things as crying. Alas, Michael J. Sullivan's sustenance is the nectar derived from the tears of his readers.

Incredulity - at the author's skill and lack of fear at having a fluid cast of primary characters. Some, who started out in the limelight of the first book, now found themselves in supporting roles; their stories somehow woven into the background of the story's tapestry, yet the rich, vibrant colours of their arcs still essential in the overall composition of the book.

There was a myriad of other emotions. Some short-lived - like a smile at a witty banter, or a recognition of particularly lyrical description - while others lasted longer, adding to the general exhaustion and hangover after finishing a **GOOD** book.

That's it, really. I also still might be a tad dazed and such. Probably.

It was - brilliant.

Bradley says

Legends of the First Empire, and specifically this book, is a solid epic fantasy fare. The focus is on characters, mostly, with the original two races in headlocks against each other. Pretty standard fare, really. Long-lived elfish versus the ignorant humes, add new technology of war after knocking the scales off the eyes and mix well.

This particular novel combines friendly immortals with the struggling humes and a full ramp-up of the war including stronger magics, stonger weapons, and runic arrows.

In other words, its the big payoff for the previous two novels and the fully established ancient history of the realm. Including the big reveals that bridge both series, of course. And a bridge to more action to come, of course.

So how did I like it?

Honestly, it was a solid read with about the same amount of pathos from the others, with bigger consequences, more death, and a fairly strong wrap-up in the same style. I thought it was fine. Not spectacular unless you've never seen epic fantasy before. Not brilliant or groundbreaking or hugely original. (Or much originality at all.) But it is solid and it holds together and it has a pretty good core. I can't complain about what it does at all, only what I wish it would do. And that is my problem, not the book's problem. It's a satisfying and above-average book.

So what's my problem? I just feel like something big is missing. The last battle here was pretty cool, maybe even awesome, but the rest seemed to plod along without much flavor. I wish it was a bit spicier. :)

I'm sure others will gush, however. This is what it means to have fanboys and fangirls. :)

Scott Hitchcock says

Book 1: 5*

Book 2: 3.5*

Book 3: 4.5*

This one started out really slowly to the point where I thought it was going to be a book 2 repeat. MJS is great at character development but sometimes he gets too fixated on the microscopic details of the characters and forgets there's a story to tell. This being book 3 and given how much character building we saw the first two book coupled with this book's name I was waiting for an explosion not a tea party.

The second half of the book we finally got it and not at the expense of more thorough character building. There were also a lot of long game elements that showed their reveals or possible outcomes into the Riyria generation.

All of the characters are left in a state of somewhere between flux and devastation. I can't wait to see where we go next.

Andreas says

Well this certainly was (mostly) depressing and heartbreaking. And incredibly entertaining. For me this was

easily the best book in this series, so far. I'm sort of glad that the next book is months away. In the meantime I'll try to prepare for the, most likely, unavoidable and upcoming heartbreak.

You can be very cruel sometimes, Michael. I love it.
