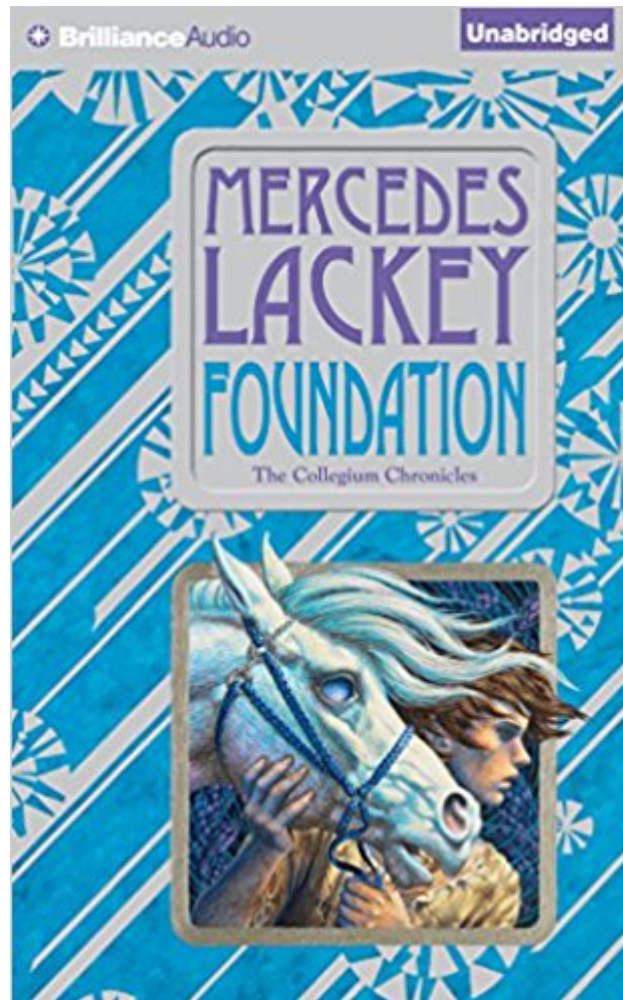




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# Foundation: The Collegium Chronicles (Valdemar Series)



## Synopsis

Mags had been working at the Pieters's mine, slaving in the dark, cold seams, looking for sparklies, for as long as he could remember. The children who worked the mine were orphans, kids who had been abandoned, who had lost their parents, or were generally unwanted. But Mags was different. Mags was a "Bad Blood" because his parents were bandits who had been killed in a raid by the Royal Guard. "Bad Blood" because he'd been found in a cradle in the bandits' camp. Blood so bad that no one had wanted to take him in except Cole Pieters. When he was big enough to see over the sides of the sluices he had gone to work at the mine. Mags knew nothing of the world beyond the mine, and was unaware of how unusual his paltry existence was. Then some strangers on huge white horses forced their way past the Pieters family and carried him away to Haven to become a Herald Trainee. Suddenly the whole world opened up for him. He was warm and well fed for the first time in his life, and he had Dallen, his Companion, who seemed more miraculous than an angel. But the world of the Collegium was not all heavenly. There was political upheaval in Valdemar's capital, for the court had been infiltrated by foreign diplomats, who seemed to be more interested in seeding discontent than in actual diplomacy, and Mags seemed to be the only one who'd noticed.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The new Valdemar novel takes place earlier in the kingdom's history than has any other, set when the Herald's collegium was established. At that time, the system of heraldic training was

changing from one-on-one apprenticeship to the collegial system used by Healers and Bards, because there were too many trainees for the old system. Some older Heralds weren't happy with that change, and as all three collegia rapidly grew, there was much rivalry for builders and teachers. Young Mags, an orphan who drudges for a greedy, cruel mine owner, is Chosen and eventually brought to Haven for training, where his goodheartedness and near-total ignorance make him very dependent on his companion. Thanks to court intrigues and an attempt by foreign infiltrators to trick Valdemar to its disadvantage, Lackey makes a real page-turner out of Mags and the collegia's development. Though similar in some ways to both *Brightly Burning* (2000) and *Take a Thief* (2001), this book's outstanding characters, especially Mags, will greatly please Valdemar fans. --Frieda Murray --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Praise for the Collegium Chronicles: "Returning to her beloved Valdemar universe, Lackey opens her new series at a pivotal time in the history of Valdemar, when the education of Heralds is changing and dangers from other lands are felt in the court and on the training field. Series fans will enjoy the variations on a familiar theme, while enough information is presented for first-timers to discover a world of high adventure and individual courage. Highly recommended." "Library Journal" "A real page-turner.... Outstanding characters, especially Mags, will greatly please Valdemar fans." "Booklist" "An enjoyable and pleasant read.... Mags is an appealing protagonist facing challenges (and successes) with which readers will empathize." "RT Book Reviews" "Top Pick! ... A wonderful amalgam of fantasy and character study." "Night Owl Reviews" --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I recently read Mercedes Lackey's five-volume series "The Collegium Chronicles." The books, in order, are: *Foundation*, *Intrigues*, *Changes*, *Redoubt*, *Bastion*. Here, why don't I jot down a few words about the entire series, and not just the first book (no plot spoilers). Lackey is perhaps best known for her long-running series about the fantasy kingdom Valdemar, and this set of five books are her most recent addition to the saga. The Valdemar books overall don't have to be read in any particular order; the series is made up of both sets of books (usually trilogies) and individual titles that are semi-independent of one another. However, it perhaps makes the most sense to read the stories in chronological order according to the history of the kingdom. The Collegium Chronicles, while the most recently written about Valdemar, take place fairly early in the history of the country. It's been quite some time since I visited Valdemar, and I was quite happy to go back again. I've enjoyed the previous stories I've read very much, and had been thinking of doing a complete reading of the

entire series in chronological order, so I had no problem in jumping in with these, since they detail an earlier portion of the country's time-line. And---in general, I found the books to be quite enjoyable. I liked the main character and found his adventures to be quite interesting. While reviews for the series were mixed, this was in large part due to the leisurely pace of the stories, with unfinished plot points left hanging at the end of each of the first four volumes. Since these were published at a rate of about one book per year, some readers were very frustrated about all these loose ends regarding the primary plot, which dealt with the mystery of where Mags came from, who he was, and why strangers were hunting him down. However, since I had the entire stack of books at hand, this wasn't an issue for me---as soon as I finished one I was able to jump right into the next. Now, Lackey does have quite a knack for getting into her characters' heads, and imagining in complete detail the running commentary that fills their minds as they go about their daily tasks. In one sense this is a plus---we really get to see how these characters think. Problem is---she writes it all down, whether it has anything to do with advancing the plot or not! And this does tend to pad out her books to a certain degree. I love the stories and fantasy realms Mercedes comes up with---I can only wish I had such an imagination. But I think she suffers from the same problem as a number of other very popular and prolific authors, in that her publisher doesn't seem to edit her any more, and as a result there's a LOT in her books that could be trimmed to make for a much tighter story. Oh, I don't mind getting a moderate amount of unnecessary detail---I enjoy losing myself in these fantasy worlds. But I do have to admit that when we're talking about the mechanics of quality, first-rate writing, her books would be better with a strong editor at the helm. For instance---in one of these books, there was a passage written about how the villains were able to hide their wagon from the eyes of the good guys. The description went on in detail for an entire page, but---we simply don't need to know this! It had nothing to do with the plot---just two or three sentences about this would have been quite sufficient. Now---while each book was of a reasonable length, averaging out to 330 pages or so, all together this story did NOT need five volumes to be told. The text could have been edited and tightened down to four volumes. Heck, the complete tale could probably even have been knocked down to three 400-page books. So, that is my primary reservation about the stories. But on the other hand, I enjoyed them despite problems in pacing, so I'll happily recommend these for those who enjoy Mercedes' work. There are still a lot of Valdemar books I haven't read yet, and I fully intend to continue on with the series.

I was pretty excited about a new series from Mercedes Lackey. And while I've loved the Valdemar books from the beginning, this entire series disappointed me. It's Mercedes Lackey, so it's not going

to be horrible! The ideas are good, and I like that the story is set at a time close to the founding of the Herald's Collegium, when Valdemar is undergoing enormous change. The characters are good, the conflicts are good. But the books are flat, redundant, and the kids are whiney (which is realistic), but - meh. The book (all five in the series) reads as if it is written for younger readers - even younger than Y.A. She's told coming-of-age stories in a more exciting, faster-paced way in the past. The five books could have been three.

With a main character who starts out as a slave and then is going through the Collegium, this is definately aimed at the younger readers BUT unlike a lot of Ms Lackey's long term readers I enjoyed this story. Too many out there seem to expect too much out of a book. It was a fun read, especially for someone home in bed sick. No it wasn't the greatest book of all time but I dont expect the total dry and tastlessness of a so called "greatest work of fiction" from her. I expect a good read that for a time takes me out of the room. While she may lose points in continuity with some, after so many books I find it on one hand amusing and on the other amazing she kept it as well as she did. As a writer myself I would rather build up a writer who has talent than tear them down for piddling mistakes. If you are like me and read more books than the public library carries, enjoy the paperback and lose yourself in another tale of good over evil.

Mercedes Lackey has captured my imagination and interest through so many generations of the Valdemar series. You cannot go wrong with this series. I own every single book in the series - and will keep it that way until there are no other books to purchase. I do wish that the Kindle version (and some of the "standard" versions) included Larry Dixon's art. Amazing Artists!!! The both of them! Mags is the main character in this book and to be honest - I dreaded it a little when I found out how far back in the Valdemar time line he appeared. I thought, how can you have a strong character with a strong story line despite not being mentioned (so far) in the future Valdemar books? Thankfully Mercedes Lackey proved me wrong in a huge way. You will find yourself rooting for Mags throughout the entire time. I was crazy to doubt the abilities of Mercedes Lackey for even a moment.

THE COLLEGIAN CHRONICLES, Mercedes Lackey  
Five books in this series: Foundation, Intrigues, Changes, Redoubt, and Bastion. Mags had slaved at the gem mines for as long as he could remember, completely unaware of how unusual his paltry existence was - until some strangers on huge white horses forced their way past the mine owner and carried him away to Haven to become a Herald Trainee. The remaining books tell us of Mags's life adjusting to the real

world, the friends he makes, and the decisions he makes; setting us up for CLOSER TO HOME of the Herald Spy.

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