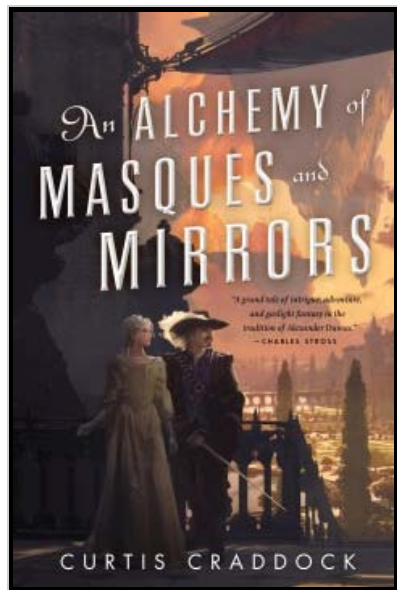




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An Alchemy of Masques and Mirrors

by Curtis Craddock

Price: \$25.99(Hardcover)

Published: August 29, 2017

☆☆☆☆☆

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: A delightful and engrossing fantasy debut featuring an intelligent heroine and her guardian, a royal musketeer. In a world of soaring continents and bottomless skies, where a burgeoning new science lifts skyships into the cloud-strewn heights, and ancient blood-borne sorceries cling to a fading glory, Princess Isabelle des Zephyrs is about to be married to a man she has barely heard of, the second son of a dying king in an empire collapsing into civil war. Born without the sorcery that is her birthright but with a perspicacious intellect, Isabelle believes her marriage will stave off disastrous conflict and bring her opportunity and influence. But the last two women betrothed to this prince were murdered, and a sorcerer-assassin is bent on making Isabelle the third. Aided and defended by her loyal musketeer, Jean-Claude, Isabelle plunges into a great maze of prophecy, intrigue, and betrayal, where everyone wears masks of glamour and lies. Step by dangerous step, she unravels the lies of her enemies and discovers a truth more perilous than any deception.

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About The Author

Curtis Craddock

Curtis Craddock lives in Sterling, CO where he teaches English to inmates in a state penitentiary. *An Alchemy of Masques and Mirrors* is his first book.

Release Info

List Price: \$25.99 (Hardcover)

Published: August 29, 2017

Publisher: Tor Books

Pages: 384

ISBN 10: 0765389592

ISBN 13: 9780765389596

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What We Say

In this engaging debut, Curtis Craddock creates an Alexander Dumas-worthy tale of swashbuckling and courtly intrigue in a fantasy world of his own devising. You'll find magic and sorcery, devious plots and religious fanaticism -- all the usual bits -- but most of all you'll find two winning characters: Isabelle, a princess with a deformed hand and apparently no magic, despised by most everyone around her and Jean-Claude, the king's own musketeer who has devoted his life to keeping her safe. It grows a bit talky at the grand finale but before that Craddock keeps his many plates spinning with aplomb. Witty banter and quick thinking count for much more here than fancy swordplay. And while some shine at creating heroes and

others succeed at villains, Craddock has a zest for both, not to mention the ability to leave you (mostly) unsure as to which is which. An encouraging fantasy debut. -- Michael Giltz

What Others Say

“A gripping tale of a woman who refuses to be defined by her physical and magical limitations, thwarting both assassins and all who see her as a pawn. A great read!” — Brandon Sanderson “Curtis Craddock’s debut is a grand tale of intrigue, adventure, and gaslight fantasy in the tradition of Alexander Dumas.” —Charles Stross “A setting fabulous and strange, heroes to cheer for, villains to detest, a twisty, tricky plot — I love this novel!” —Lawrence Watt Evans “In a world shattered by sorcery, a princess without magic battles for peace, aided only by her wits and a drunken sot of a musketeer. A thrilling adventure full of palace intrigue, mysterious ancient mechanisms, and aerial sailing ships!” —David D. Levine, author of *Arabella of Mars* “Debut author Craddock’s vivid, fluid prose makes for the best kind of world building....His writing remains buoyant, sweeping the reader along with the ease of an airship. Isabelle’s dedication to peace and Jean-Claude’s dedication to Isabelle comprise the novel’s emotional core, even as they flip-flop allies and adapt to a barrage of shocking twists. Both Victorian and fantasy fans will eagerly immerse themselves in this first chapter of a striking new steampunk series, which offers the adventure of Verne and Dumas coupled with magic.” — Booklist, starred review “The skulduggery is pleasurable complex, the emotional stakes feel convincing, and the reasonably happy ending feels earned. And while Jean-Claude’s doggedness in protecting Isabelle is admirable, Isabelle is decidedly and enjoyably not a damsel in need of rescue. A very promising start, both for a series and a new author.” —Kirkus Reviews, starred review

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