



The One Kingdom: Book One Of The Swan's War Trilogy (Swans' War Series)

By Sean Russell

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The One Kingdom: Book One Of The Swan's War Trilogy (Swans' War Series) By Sean Russell

The cataclysm began more than a century earlier, when the King of Ayr died before naming an heir to the throne, and damned his realm to chaos. The cold-blooded conspiracies of the Renne and the Wills—each family desirous of the prize of rule—would sunder the one kingdom, and spawn generations of hatred and discord.

Now Toren Renne, leader of his great and troubled house, dreams of peace—a valiant desire that has spawned hostility among his kinsmen, and vicious internal plots against his life. In the opposing domain, Elise Wills's desire for freedom is to be crushed, as an unwanted marriage to an ambitious and sinister lord looms large. As always, these machinations of nobles are affecting the everyday lives of the common folk—and feeding a bonfire of animosity that has now trapped an unsuspecting young Valeman Tam and two fortune-hunting friends from the North in its high, killing flames.

But the closer Toren comes to achieving his great goal of uniting two enemy houses, the more treachery flowers. Nobles and mystics alike conspire to keep the realm divided, knowing that only in times of strife can their power grow.

And perhaps the source of an unending misery lies before an old king's passing, beyond the scope of history, somewhere lost in a fog of myth and magic roiling about an ancient enchanter named Wyr—who bequeathed to his children terrible gifts that would poison their lives...and their deaths. It is a cursed past and malevolent sorcery that truly hold the land, its people, and its would-be rulers bound. And before the already savaged kingdom can become one again, all Ayr will drown in a sea of blood.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In the land of Ayr two noble families, the Renn, and the Wills, fight for political advantage in this sprawling first volume in a new high fantasy series distinguished by intelligent characters and believable politics. The Renn, noblemen set out on a path of treachery, conceiving a plan to murder one of their own at the Westbrook Fair and, by so doing, frame the other family. The Wills plan an equally heinous act; they want to force a spunky young noblewoman to marry a handsome but subjugated prince, in order to produce an heir who'll be their puppet on the throne. Meanwhile, Tam, Fynnol and Baore, three young cousins of supposed peasant background, believing themselves far removed from the politics of the nobles, blithely set out from their sheltered homes in the Vale to make their fortunes. But when they encounter Alaan, a mysterious rogue with a charming demeanor, all their plans go awry. Supernatural forces cause paths and tributaries to mysteriously and unpredictably open, channeling the travelers into unforeseen lands and onto heretofore hidden islands, with hazardous results. Inevitably, all paths lead to the Westbrook Fair. Russell (*River Into Darkness*) so neatly interweaves the supernatural characters into the story that the magical elements seem an organic part of the history being made. This a perfectly plotted, beautifully written fantasy. Agent, Howard Morhaim. (Feb. 8) Forecast: With rights already sold to Germany and the U.K., for six figures each, as well as a strong blurbs from Stephen Donaldson, Robin Hobb and Janny Wurts, plus a three-city author tour, this novel looks to be on the fantasy fast track.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—Two sons and a daughter were born to King Wyr of Ayr. The Swans (as they were known) ended up either killing one another or disappearing to parts unknown. This first book in a new fantasy series starts more than a century after the war that was caused for lack of a successor to King Wyr's throne. Running beneath a strained peace is a deep hatred between the royal houses of Renn, and Wills. Running through the land is a strange river as twisted as the plots hatched by the characters. Toren Renn, pushes for peace through diplomacy. His cousins plan to kill him using arrows stolen from the Willses. Elise Wills resists marriage arrangements concocted by relatives bent on amassing a war-size army. In the boondocks, Tam and his buddies strike out for adventure down the river to sell battlefield artifacts. Eventually, Tam realizes that he is on a quest to find answers about his dead father. Encounters with the mazelike river and its spirits conjure up feelings familiar to anyone who has been caught in the woods at twilight. Stories within stories are either revealed or hinted at in a tantalizing fashion. While there is a resolution to Toren's and Elise's predicaments, there are many questions left unanswered. Even with its remarkable depth, the book is fairly easy to follow. Once caught up in Russell's newly created world, readers will undoubtedly be eager to return for more.

Sheila Shoup, Fairfax County Public Library, VA

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From Library Journal

As the succession to the kingdom of Ayr lies in dispute, two feuding families become embroiled in plots and schemes to acquire the throne. Against the backdrop of impending war, a storyteller, a blind minstrel, a

mysterious rogue, and a young woman bent on making her own choices find their destinies intertwined with the working out of ancient legends. Skillful storytelling and engaging characters recommend this series opener by the author of River into Darkness for most fantasy collections.
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Brandon Seymour:

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