



## The Quest for Nobility

*Debra L. Martin, David W. Small*

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The idyllic life of royal teenagers, Darius and Dyla Telkur, from the planet Otharia takes a horrifying turn when their parents are murdered. With their cousin appointed as Regent until Darius comes of age, it doesn't take the twins long to figure out that he's bent on stealing their throne one way or another. To escape their cousin's wrath and a false murder charge, they flee to the only safe place they know where no one will find them – the forbidden and quarantined planet Earth.

Safe on Earth for the moment, the only way for them to return home is to find an ancient 10K traveling crystal left behind by their Otharian ancestors who visited Earth 1500 years ago. Enlisting the help of a London university archeologist, they begin their search for the crystal from clues buried deep within the Arthurian lore of Merlin and Lady of the Lake. What they find instead is evidence of a secret trade pact between Otharia and Earth that was established centuries ago. Before Darius and Dyla can understand what it means, they're in jeopardy again; this time pursued by those on Earth who want the secret to remain hidden. Who is behind the trade pact and what is being traded are the questions the twins need to figure out while trying to stay one step ahead of the Earth assassins.

Everything is connected, but time is running out for the royal pair. They must find the traveling crystal and open a portal home soon before their cousin is crowned the next Duke of Telkur and their lives are forfeited.

## **The Quest for Nobility Details**

Date : Published (first published 2010)

ISBN :

Author : Debra L. Martin , David W. Small

Format : Kindle Edition 328 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Science Fiction

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## From Reader Review The Quest for Nobility for online ebook

### Allison says

I nearly gave up on this book on a couple of occasions. That said, I'm glad I did finish it.

I found it equal parts well written and equal parts groan worthy. The groan worthy parts really did detract from the overall enjoyment of this book.

Which bits did I like? Most of the dialogue was very good. The action sequences very well written.

It was the in-between bits that really held the whole story down. They often felt forced, contrived and stilted. It seemed like the writers were trying to stitch the actions scenes together with cookie cutter story devices. Which is fine, but they just didn't flow at all. And instead of giving me background or even insight into the characters, just made the whole thing limp along in those bits. I got more information about the characters from the dialogue than the 'story bits' in between.

The beginning of the chapters gave us excerpts from the Chronicles, which is okay. Except they sound more like bits written to keep the writer in mind of where they were going with the chapter....and to be honest, start to sound very samish and boring as you go through the book.

With some decent editing I would have enjoyed this book a LOT more.

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### David Wuensche says

Quest for Nobility is primarily the story of Darius and Dyla Telkur, the twin heirs of the Telkur Duchy. When their parents are murdered and framed for financial fraud, the two find themselves in the precarious position of having to repair the damage done to their family's reputation and wealth. All the while, the nefarious Baron Avikar and other elements from outside nations threaten to unravel what little progress the twins are able to make. Allies are casually murdered and trust must be developed with people who are relative strangers in order to bring the Duchy back to its former glory.

One element of this book that really makes me wish I could rate it higher is the relative difference in technology level that exists between Otharia and our own world. In Otharia, the primary mode of transportation is the portal. With the assistance of a crystal, a telekinetic can open a portal across various distances, depending on their skill and the quality of the crystal. As a means of transportation, this is superior to anything in our own world. As a result, though, Otharia has not developed many of the technological advances that have appeared as a result of our own transportation challenges. The only ships in Otharia are powered by wind. There are no cars, no steam, and certainly no airplanes. There isn't even any mention of a horse (though I assume they have some kind of pack-carrying animal for heavy loads). The technology is sufficient to develop firearms, so presumably there are some reasonably advanced machining techniques available on their world. This difference was one of my favorite aspects of the book.

One of two things that really hurts the book is the electronic formatting. There is no table of contents on the Nook version (can't confirm about the Kindle). The opening of the book runs through a rapid-fire series of short scenes that I would have liked to regularly reference as I read through the rest of the chapters, difficult

without a table of contents. Another problem that drove me crazy immediately after buying the book is that the book's cover, a fine-looking depiction of a classic coat of arms, can't be viewed on the Nook's full screen. You can look at it online and in the Nook's smaller, color touchscreen, but there's nothing like looking at a lovingly crafted cover between your fingers. With *Quest for Nobility*, I wasn't able to do that.

Another formatting curiosity is the introductions that appears at the beginning of each chapter. These introductions help provide the reader with a 'slice of the world', very handy when trying to familiarize new readers with the key political and Psi-based concepts of the book. However, these introductions appear in a relatively narrow column and are much thinner than the rest of the text. They aren't hard to read, but it's a bit like having a tiny, textural waterfall in the middle of your e-reader.

The author does a good job of communicating the events of the book. There are a few writing quirks. On occasion, a character will repeat, verbatim, a piece of narrative presented to the reader in a previous paragraph. A similar event happens with one of the introductions. While there are not a lot of grammatical errors, there are just enough that I was pulled out of the author's world at some very inconvenient times. This is unfortunate, and thankfully doesn't happen during the book's climactic ending.

Comment

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### Ron says

Initially, this appears to be a typical (mediocre) swords-and-sorcery fantasy. However, after a tossed off reference to electronic devices (to foreshadow), the reader is transported (along with the protagonists) to modern Earth, puzzling out a science fiction connection for Arthurian legend. Fun. And fairly well done.

Otharia is no finer or better drawn than dozens of others' fantasy worlds.

The pace is fast, though broken by the unwieldy and unnecessary narrative inserts between chapters. It's a stretch to pass Cat Spencer off as a serious scholar; the supposed notes from their journal kills any chance a reader will believe she's anything other than a fiction writer's image of a scholar. Coincidences abound which push credibility, but verisimilitude not truth is the goal, and Martin and Small succeed.

The climax is a satisfying closing to this tale, while leaving the greater story unresolved. Better done than most multi-volume series.

At 756 pages, this tome is a good read. At 500 it would have been dynamite.

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### Molly Harbridge says

#### Loved it!

This a fantastic combination of magic and intrigue! I was hooked from the start and will certainly be reading the series!

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## **Richard Jackson says**

The Quest for Nobility by Debra L. Martin and David W. Small is the first book in the Rule of Otharia series. Though the book is tagged as science fiction, it is not hard science fiction. You won't find overly technical explanations for the science behind things.

I have mixed feelings about the book. It is enjoyable and definitely well worth the money. The use of psychic or psionic powers throughout the book is one of the things I liked. The authors explain how the powers works and detail their use in a clear manner.

The background and both worlds (Earth and Otharia) are well thought out. The book is rich in detail that adds to the narrative. At the beginning of each chapter, there is a snippet of historical text and background material. Some might prefer to have this information come up during the course of events. I didn't mind it but I will admit that it did take a little getting used to. The only downside to this format is that it made navigating the book slightly harder. You could not use the controller to skip to the next chapter or go back to the previous one. Even if you could, you would end up skipping the introductory text because the chapter heading appears after the text. There is also no table of contents.

The characters are fleshed out and came alive for me but there were a few who seemed one dimensional. As for the storyline, I found it interesting. As the book progressed, I was drawn deeper into the story. I was able to overlook the minor problems I had with the writing style. Sometimes, the story didn't seem to flow and transition well from one scene to next. It might be because this is a collaboration which is understandable. Collaborating on a book is sometimes more difficult than writing it all by yourself. That said, I liked the book well enough to start reading the second book in the series. I plan on posting a review of The Crystal Cascade when I finish the book. From what I have read so far, the writing style and characterizations have greatly improved without losing any of the things I liked from the first book.

As I said before, the book is well worth the money.

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## **Greg says**

I found this a pretty darn good book, who's jacket cover description doesn't do it justice.

It's a great blend of fantasy (as in swords, Dukes, etc. No unicorns, elves or 'real magic'), psi, and some current Earth thrown in.

Where the description doesn't really do it justice is that the "current Earth" part is pretty much a small part of the story. Much more revolves around political intrigue, and a good old fashion beating the odds kind of story.

The psi element adds a nice twist and while it's important, it's not overwhelming. This story is about the characters and their challenges and how, working together and with the support of their friends and some unexpected allies, they overcame them.

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### **Sandra says**

The first in a series, book 1 is a fair mix of fantasy and science fiction with interesting characters written into an original sounding story where their society is somewhat advanced, yet they have no modern modes of transport and don't make use of natural resources when plenty will be available. What makes the story original is that they use telekinetics to transport goods and do normal things we take for granted by doing manually.

This does come in useful for them, and if we did it, it would make life a lot easier, but with the modernity of their life, they through the story have to look beyond it back to what happened in the past back to the stories about King Arthur as there are clues to where the crystal might be. Darius and Dyla have to go on a quest to find the travelling crystal, LOTR style gathering a small gathering of helpers to come with them in the hope they will find it. Otharia ends up being so far away, and without the crystal they might never get back. Earth is the only place they can stay where they won't be hunted for the meantime, but it will only be so long before someone comes.

There are several on Otharia who are dangerous and will stop at nothing to kill others for what they want and it is evident in this story before Darius and Dyla have to escape. The Quest for Nobility is the sort of book that is impossible to put down, and has explanations for almost every aspect of Otharia and its people that is both interesting and refreshing to read.

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### **Jaidis Shaw says**

The Quest for Nobility, written by Debra Martin and David Small, is the first book in The Rule of Otharia series. This action packed book takes us into a world where the Telkur twins, Darius and Dyla, are part of a dominant family. Then through unexpected events, their happy lives are thrown into a world of chaos as they discover their parents have been murdered and the family name dishonored. While still trying to cope with the loss, the twins enter into a competition in hopes of using the prize money to keep the family land free of debt. The competition is made up of a series of objectives where each team, made up of three members, must use their psychic abilities and training to reach the objective successfully. However, things don't go according to planned and the twins soon find themselves wanted for murder and have no choice but to flee to the planet Earth until they can figure out what their next course of action will be. Murder, betrayal, and corruption will be revealed while the twins learn who they can and can not trust. I really enjoyed reading The Quest for Nobility and am eager to read book two of the series, The Crystal Facade. The only thing that didn't sit well with me throughout this book was the time frame while Darius and Dyla were on Earth. I may have missed something, but it seemed as though they were only away for a few days, but once back on their planet, the time shifted and made it seem like they were gone longer. I'm interested in seeing if there is a time frame explained in book two that will wrap up that issue for me from book one. However, that being said, I still very much enjoyed reading The Quest for Nobility and am anxious to see how authors Debra Martin and David Small fine tune their skills in book two, The Crystal Facade.

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### **Merissa (Archaeolibrarian) says**

I wasn't sure what to expect of this book - tales of Arthur and Stonehenge mixed with an off-world planet full of characters with PSI-talents. What I got was a book that was thoroughly enjoyable with some classic twists

and turns in it, loaded with adventure and just a hint of romance.

This is the first of a series and I will definitely be getting the others as I want to know more.

Brilliant.

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### **Michelle Snyder says**

The plot starts immediately, and never stops, with enough action to keep me interested. Very relatable characters, well described and colorful. The exchanges between characters is believable, and even familiar. I am not distracted by the fantastic aspects, they flow smoothly, a most enjoyable part of the whole construct. Bad guys you love to hate, good guys with strong pathos, and enough suspense to stay involved. Martin's style of storytelling provokes the proverbial movie-in-the-brain, and is not tedious to read. I am almost done with this one, and will definitely read the next.

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### **Jackie Miller says**

Quest for Nobility is a fun read with a lot of interesting plot twists along the way. The origins of the tale of King Arthur get a makeover in this story.

The book starts on the planet of Otharia. This planet is divided into duchies and the Dukes on the Ruling Council keep things running smoothly, but one Duke has his sights set on being King. He will stop at nothing to gain the crown. Darius and Dyla Telkur are unknowingly thrust into the center of this plot. Framed for murder, they must flee to the planet Earth to find a way to clear their names.

I would describe Otharia as a version of Earth with elements of medieval times with some crude technology and PSI powers thrown in. In the second part of the story Dyla, Darius, and their friend travel to a modern day Earth. It was fun to see them thrust into a strange(to them) landscape. As the twins try to find a way back to their home planet, we get a new view of King Arthur, Excalibur and the Lady of the Lake.

An interplanetary Amazing Race with some very high stakes.

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### **Katy says**

The Kingdom of Otharia is no longer ruled by a king – instead there are duchies, each ruled by a duke and a Grand Counsel over which a Grand Duke, elected by his peers, rules. Long ago Otharia explored Earth, but when the exploration team is massacred, it is decided to quarantine the planet; however, not everyone obeys that. One of the dukes, reliant upon the mining of crystals for his duchy's wealth, maintains a private portal from deep within one of his mines to a crystal mine on Earth.

Fast forward many centuries and we find Otharia remaining much as it was – but scheming and plotting are in abundance, and who will end up paying the price for the power plays of the greedy? I don't wish to provide more details, as I don't want to spoil the story – it is very fast-paced and any more details I provide will give away something!

I should note that "The Quest for Nobility" is sort of a blend of fantasy and science fiction; while Otharia is a fairly advanced culture, their reliance on psi powers keeps them from exploiting natural resources (other than crystals) in the same way that people of Earth do – Otharia has no cars, airplanes or trains. Trading is done by sea, or items are moved through portals controlled by telekinetics. It is a fascinating idea and one I thought could be further explored; perhaps it will be in future books in the series.

A highly engrossing book, I read this in one long sitting. As mentioned, the story is fast-paced and there are a lot of threads of which to keep track. However, this is only the first book in the series, a fact which is evident in the world-building that occurs. I enjoyed it quite a lot and think any fans of fantasy and soft science fiction will as well. Check it out and look for further books in the series - #2 is already available.

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### **Grace Krispy says**

Darius and Dyla Telkur are royal twins from the duchy of Telkur. They are imbued with psychic gifts (as all royals are) and live a charmed life... until tragedy strikes. When their parents, the Duke and Duchess of Telkur, are implicated in a dastardly smuggling ring and presumed dead, the twins' uncle, Avikar, takes over the royal duties until the twins are of age. What the twins don't know is that Avikar has his sights set on the Dukedom, and will stop at nothing to get it. A mistimed attempt on the twins' lives results in yet another tragedy, and the blame falls to the twins. Their attempts to win back their duchy and clear their family's name takes them on an exciting adventure to places they never imagined. Time is running short; will they be able to prove their innocence and that of their parents in time to regain control of the royal title and their duchy?

Written by the collaborative team of Debra L. Martin and David W. Small, this fantasy tale is highly imaginative and quite engaging. The authors transitioned to new settings and events by beginning each chapter with a "quote" from the "Chronicles of Otharia." It is in this way the readers are introduced to the rules and customs of the Otharian people. Each quote is paired well with a chapter that demonstrates the quoted information. I found this to be a really effective way to prepare us for what was to happen in the chapter, and supply us with information without having to spell it out in the narrative. It helped tie together a story that was somewhat lacking a smooth flow in events and storyline. The writing, overall, seemed somewhat inconsistent to me, almost as if different parts were written by different authors.

Of the three main characters, Darius, Dyla and Eclair, I felt Eclair was actually the most developed and the most interesting. I got a better sense of his motivations, as well as his strengths and his flaws, than I did of any other character. All of the characters in the story proved interesting, but they were not all developed as well as I would have liked. The dialogue between characters proved a bit flat and stilted in many places, which made it some of the reading occasionally awkward.

The storyline itself is actually quite interesting. I especially liked the way Earth was tied into the Otharian adventure, and I was really interested in how those two planets were related in the past and, perhaps, would be again in the future. I was really able to get into the adventure, although I did wonder to myself several times where the adventure was actually going. It was engaging and moved along at a nice pace, but it almost seemed like several parts of the story were written separately and then stuck together. In addition, there were a few timeline jumps that caught me by surprise- sometimes the storyline picked up where it left off in a previous chapter, and sometimes it jumped time. It felt inconsistent. Although there was a common thread- the battle for the royal throne- sometimes I lost track of where we were headed and why. The ending does a

good job in setting up a sequel, and it is a sequel I'm interested in reading.

With a half star boost for the sheer creativity and cleverness in tying Earth together with Otharia (which I thought was the most interesting concept introduced in this story), and the fact that it was engaging and fun to read, I give this:

4 /5 stars @ MotherLode blog

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### **Robert Duperre says**

Rating: 3.5 out of 5

Sometimes, when reading a series, the first installment is all about the buildup, of setting the tone and the world in which the rest of the tale can take place. I know this, because when writing my own series, *The Rift*, I realized that the first book had almost nothing to do with the next three. Often times, the writing is poles apart from what you find later, as the author grows into his or her (or, in this case, both) style. I say this not meaning the story or the method is bad by any means. But it can be a little irritating.

Thus mentioned, I bring you *The Quest for Nobility*, book one of *The Rule of Otharia* series by the writing team of Debra L. Martin and David W. Small.

This is purported to be a science fiction novel. It is, in a way, seeing as much of the action takes place on the aforementioned planet of Otharia. The people on this planet, however, look and act very similarly to you or I (with a couple important differences), and their culture is fashioned after what one might find in sixteenth-century Europe, what with barons, dukes, duchies, a lack of many of the technologies we see everyday, and whatnot. In this way, the book steers far away from science fiction and enters the realm of fantasy. If not for portals opening up to modern-day Earth, one could forget they were on another planet at all.

Most people on this planet are gifted with the three major classifications of psychic abilities: empathy, telekinesis, and telepathy. The society's royals hone their gifts at institutions, while the layfolk are resigned to letting theirs stagnate. This is typical of caste societies – those in power are afforded every opportunity imaginable, while those on the lower end of the spectrum are not.

Despite their reliance on a ruling class, on Otharia it seems that there has not been a king in many, many years. Now, the ruling dukes have formed what they call The Grand Council, a parliament of sorts. It is this council that votes on all the major decisions that affect the different duchies. It is because of this voting system that there has not been a king in such a long time, which is something that Grand Duke Vodgor is intent on changing. He plots various nefarious schemes, forming an underground political entity, fixing competitions, and clandestinely killing off any rival dukes and duchesses who oppose him (with the help of his deliciously evil psychic assassin Nils), in hopes of somehow convincing the council to appoint him king.

It is during the time these plots are taking place that we meet the three main characters of the story – Dyla and Darius Telkur, twins set to rule after the murder of their parents, and Eclasius Jortac, son of a rival duke. These three, after some problems early on in their relationships, bind themselves together to win the Grand Competition, a yearly competition, in hopes that the money won will save the Telkur duchy.

Things go wrong, very wrong, when they win. A rival team is murdered and Vogdo's underground group is

set to blame the twins for their deaths. Because of this, they are forced to flee, and they decided to go to – you guessed it – Earth. Here they have a few misadventures, meet up with an expert on Stonehenge, and figure out that there seems to be a connection between Otharia and Earth that they hadn't expected.

All right, enough about the plot. It's time for some exposition on my part.

I honestly found this book maddening at times, even though it interested me throughout. The dialogue is choppy and robotic, the characters seem too perfect to root for, and there are some seemingly major holes in the timeline. Also, as some might note, it is written in third person omniscient, my disdain of which I have been quite open about. I feel like I must explain this, however. It's not like I oppose to the use of this point of view; on the contrary, I find it quite entertaining, when done right. There is a quaint beauty to it when done right. The problem is it's one of the hardest viewpoints to construct correctly in the first place. The writer needs to handle segues between different characters' thoughts with a certain delicacy that is difficult to both explain and execute. I've read some that are done well and loved them. If I'm going to be truthful here, these authors don't.

As for the timeline gaps: I say this because the order of events seems skewed. When Darius, Dyla, and Eclasius head off to Earth, they are there for four days, five max. However, back on Otharia, it seems as if weeks or even months have passed. This might just have been me missing something, but it still riled me.

I don't want to be all negative, and I won't be, because there were many good things about the book, as well. It's set up in a quirky and fun way, with a segment from various informative texts preceding each chapter as a way of explaining how the rules of this world work. I found these to be among the most interesting components of the book, as they disclose their information in a just-the-facts way. It is a departure from the style of the rest of the book, and it makes these sections stand out, which is a very good thing. The dissimilarities between the Otharians and Earthlings are intriguing, as well. They are painted as superior, in a way, and humans as paranoid deviants. However, we can plainly see through the way the people of Otharia are constantly (and easily) misled that there is something to be said for the paranoia we, as a people, possess. I don't know if this was an intended statement by the authors, but I very much appreciated it.

Also, the storyline itself is intriguing. I don't want to give too much away here, but there are links between the planet Otharia and Arthurian legend that make me say, "Yes, please, more." The end is fantastic, when all the threads that run through the tale are uncovered, and this makes the whole journey – even the irksome parts – worth it. There is potential for the stories down the line that could make this a special experience, and it is with this fact in mind that I say the following...

When thinking about what to rate this book, I originally intended to give it two-and-a-half stars. Then I sat and thought about it for a moment. Do I really want to do this? After all, I didn't stop reading until the book was done, and it did stay with me for long after I put it down. That, in itself, is a feat. So I decided to download the sample of book two, titled *The Crystal Façade*. I'm glad I did. The writing in the second book is ramped up more than a few notches. The story flows much easier. In other words, it looks to be very well constructed. Based on this fact, I decided to up the rating by a point. After all, as I said in the beginning, this is an introductory novel. Even Harry Potter was a bit below par in the first couple books, but by the end of the series, it was all made worthwhile.

I have a feeling this particular chain of books will be, as well.

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## TC says

Heirs to the Duchy of Telkur, twins Darius and Dyla, have not only lost their parents but have also seen their names dragged through the mud after their death. Having recently finished their education they are trying to save the Duchy from bankruptcy and deal with their cousin's attempts to seize power. However when they are framed for murder they flee Otharia, heading for previously quarantined Earth. Once there though they may not be able to find their way back.

This fantasy novel had a lot of good elements to it. The classic power struggles and plotting transcend genres. There was plenty of tension throughout which kept me reading. I wanted to find out what would become of the Duchess, whether the twins would win the competition, and finally whether they would make it back in time to save Telkur, if they made it back at all.

To me the fantasy element came from the setting, on another planet, and the powers the characters have, including telekinesis. That suited me perfectly, as none of it was too far flung which is when I can start to lose interest. I enjoyed the elements of legend that were entwined in the story when the twins fled to Earth with friend Eclair, and thought it was cleverly brought together. I also warmed to the younger characters, particularly Dyla who is a strong young woman, and liked seeing their growth throughout the book.

One of the things I particularly appreciated was the excerpts from the Chronicles of Otharia at the start of each chapter, giving details of the rule of the Kingdom and pieces of its history. I found it really helpful as a concise way to set up the background and explain some of the events taking place.

On the negative side I felt a bit overwhelmed early on with so many characters introduced so quickly. It took a bit of getting straight in my own mind, particularly as to who was plotting what with whom, but as the book went on it was no longer an issue. There were also a few typos and some of the grammar and turns of phrase employed didn't sound quite right to me. It only interrupted the flow slightly but was still a bit of a distraction. I also found sometimes the things the bad guys said or how they were described came off as cliched or amusing, which took away from the image of the sinister power-hungry plotters.

This is the first book in the Rule of Otharia series, and I liked it enough, and found myself with lingering questions I want answered, to probably go on and read the next book although I won't do so in a great rush.

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