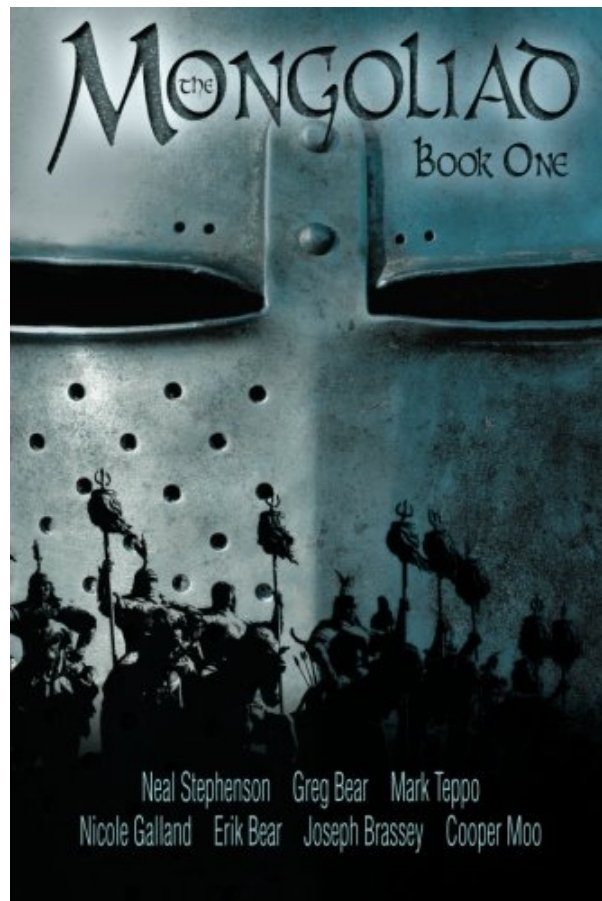
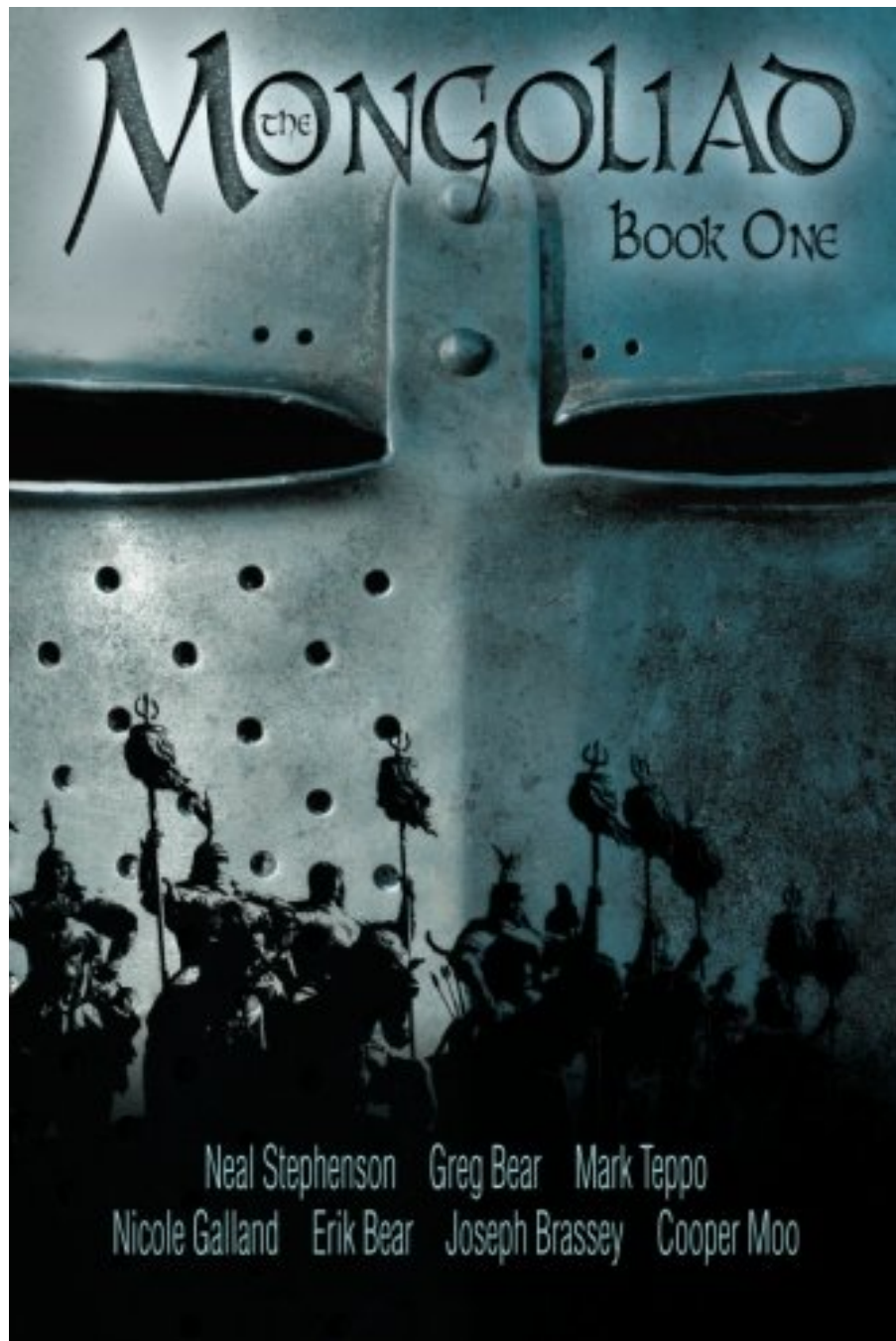


THE MONGOLIAD (THE MONGOLIAD CYCLE) BY NEAL STEPHENSON, ERIK BEAR, GREG BEAR, JOSEPH BRASSEY, NICOLE GALLAND, COOPER MOO, MARK TEPPPO



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The first novel to be released in The Foreworld Saga, *The Mongoliad: Book One*, is an epic-within-an-epic, taking place in 13th century. In it, a small band of warriors and mystics raise their swords to save Europe from a bloodthirsty Mongol invasion. Inspired by their leader (an elder of an order of warrior monks), they embark on a perilous journey and uncover the history of hidden knowledge and conflict among powerful secret societies that had been shaping world events for millennia.

But the saga reaches the modern world via a circuitous route. In the late 19th century, Sir Richard F. Burton, an expert on exotic languages and historical swordsmanship, is approached by a mysterious group of English martial arts aficionados about translating a collection of long-lost manuscripts. Burton dies before his work is finished, and his efforts were thought lost until recently rediscovered by a team of amateur archaeologists in the ruins of a mansion in Trieste, Italy. From this collection of arcana, the incredible tale of *The Mongoliad* was recreated.

Full of high adventure, unforgettable characters, and unflinching battle scenes, *The Mongoliad* ignites a dangerous quest where willpower and blades are tested and the scope of world-building is redefined.

A note on this edition: *The Mongoliad* began as a social media experiment, combining serial story-telling with a unique level of interaction between authors and audience during the creative process. Since its original iteration, *The Mongoliad* has been restructured, edited, and rewritten under the supervision of its authors to create a more cohesive reading experience and will be published as a trilogy of novels. This edition is the definitive edition and is the authors' preferred text.

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- 442 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

256 of 290 people found the following review helpful.

"The Tiger Would Pity the Fawn, The Wolf Would Weap Over It's Lamb Before the Mongol Would Cringe Over The Corpse of a Child"

By Ronin

While there are seven authors, the voice of Neal Stephenson is unmistakable at times. His narrative is often more along the lines of Cryptonomicon than Snow Crash, which depending on your taste may or may not be to your liking (I definitely preferred the latter to the former). I say this because there is considerable "situational dialog", for lack of a better description, where characters have discussions and the reader is slowly brought up to speed. While I found his presence obvious, there are times when it vanishes so I believe this was a good collaborative effort.

The story begins in 1241. Ogedei has succeed Genghis as Khan of the Mongol Empire and his hordes are ravaging Eastern Europe while the new Khan is seduced into court life and overindulgence. The Mongol horde is loose and ravaging Eastern Europe as the population descends into terror. A band of heroes decide a military victory is impossible and there is only one solution; so they set out on an impossible quest.

One character I found interesting was Istvan, who they refer to as a "Madjar", which I assumed to be a nomadic Magyar since he is a highly skilled horse archer. One reviewer was put off by the suggestion of the Mongols being depicted as too brutal. I disagree. Having read all the English-written historical source material on this subject I personally think not a single fiction author has come close to depicting it.

The Golden Horde which devastated north and west led by Jochi & Batu left very little living in their wake. It was a war of extermination and in 1241, the beginning of The Mongoliad, Batu was about to overtake Vienna. The devastation he left behind tells of mountains of human skulls and remains, a vast desolate wasteland; the results of Nazi style cleansing-efficiency. Consider during Genghis' time his empire contained 110 million people with a global population of 400 million and it is estimated 40 million died as a result of his aggression. Compare that to the 60 million who died in WWII out of a global population of 2.3 billion. I applaud the authors for capturing some of the Mongol brutality.

The Mongoliad is set in exotic locations and no commonality of language, much like a viking adventure, which adds to the authenticity. The book is fairly well researched and the diverse team of authors all lend a quality to this complex tale. The first 50 pages take a while to get going, but once the stage is set the reward is a very unique and original adventure that ultimately spans the centuries as the trilogy progresses. I enjoyed the book immensely and look forward to the next installment, due out September 25. I highly recommend!

247 of 285 people found the following review helpful.

Seven authors on a quest for exposition

By W. V. Buckley

Generally I try to avoid books that list a multitude of writers since they often come across as having been edited by committee and you have several voices trying to make their portions of the work stand out rather than a single voice that tries to make the entire book stand out. At least The Mongoliad manages to avoid those particular sins, though it manages to find others that are almost as egregious.

Take, for example, the idea of exposition. It's not one of the seven deadly sins, so it's OK to use it on

occasion. It's one thing for an author (or authors, in this case) to drop you in the middle of the action on the opening pages; but to plop you in the middle of the action without even the tiniest hint of whenever and wherever the heck you are only serves to confuse and frustrate readers who aren't scholars of Medieval history and/or never heard of the on-line version of Mongoliad before reading about it in some of the reviews.

Likewise, it was difficult to figure out where the action takes place since there were no modern place names used in the book. I was beginning to think the story took place in some fantasy alternate universe until I figured out that Rus meant Russia. I can't entirely blame the authors for this. Even if it had been published with maps (as apparently the "deluxe" version will be) reading maps on a Kindle is nearly impossible.

There are some interesting passages in *The Mongoliad*, but they ended up being sandwiched between sections that lean toward the tedious. For example, in one portion of the book there is a description of one-on-one combat between two contestants in the Khan's Circus of Swords. I appreciate the level of realism with which this is depicted, but the battle continues over three friggin' chapters! Since the chapters alternate between those set in the Khan's empire and the travels of the dozen knights and others who are undertaking a quest, so every one of those three chapters has another chapter separating it from its continuation. That brings up another problem with how the book is structured: there's no way to tell whether the alternating chapters are occurring at the same time or if time has elapsed between the chapters.

Frankly, I was beginning to wonder if the book would make better sense if I read all the even-number chapters and then all the odd-numbered chapters ... or maybe even just read chapters at random. There are portions of a good book in *The Mongoliad*, but they are not well-served by the rigid, back-and-forth structure of the novel.

69 of 83 people found the following review helpful.

Disappointing. Expected more

By stonyhill

There is nothing particularly wrong with this book, I guess, but the world is not compelling, the characters are not complex, the fights are not unique, and the relationships are stereotypical. I finished this one, barely, but I doubt I will pick up the sequel, and I've never had that feeling after a book from Stephenson or Bear.

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“This off-beat alternate history of Eurasia could be your new obsession.” –i09.com

“This story is pure adventure, with much swordplay and swashbuckling.” –Kirkus Reviews

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About the Author

Neal Stephenson is primarily a fiction author and has received several awards for his works in speculative

fiction. His more popular books include *Snow Crash*, *The Diamond Age*, *Cryptonomicon*, *The Baroque Cycle*, and *Anathem*.

Erik Bear lives and writes in Seattle, Washington. He has written for a bestselling video game and is currently working on several comic book series.

Greg Bear is the author of more than thirty books, spanning the thriller, science fiction, and fantasy genres, including *Blood Music*, *Eon*, *The Forge of God*, *Darwin's Radio*, *City at the End of Time*, and *Hull Zero Three*. His books have won numerous international prizes, have been translated into more than twenty-two languages, and have sold millions of copies worldwide.

Joseph Brassey lives in the Pacific Northwest with his wife and two cats. He teaches medieval fighting techniques to members of the armed forces. *The Mongoliad* is his first published fiction.

Nicole Galland (writing as E.D. DeBirmingham) is the author of *I, Iago*, as well as *The Fool's Tale*, *Revenge of the Rose*, and *Crossed: A Tale of the Fourth Crusade*. An award-winning screenwriter, she is married to actor Billy Meleady and, unlike all her handsome and talented co-writers, spends no time at all hitting people with sticks in Seattle.

Mark Teppo is the author of the *Codex of Souls* urban fantasy series as well as the hypertext dream narrative *The Potemkin Mosaic*.

Cooper Moo spent five minutes in Mongolia in 1986 before he had to get back on the train—he never expected to be channeling Mongolian warriors. In 2007 Cooper fought a Chinese long-sword instructor on a Hong Kong rooftop—he never thought the experience would help him write battle scenes. In addition to being a member of *The Mongoliad* writing team, Cooper has written articles for various magazines. His autobiographical piece "Growing Up Black and White," published in the *Seattle Weekly*, was awarded Social Issues Reporting article of the year by the Society of Professional Journalists. He lives in Issaquah, Washington, with his wife, three children, and numerous bladed weapons.

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