

Castelon: The Wraithwood Trilogy: Book 3

Alyssa Roat

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Loyalties, friendships, and family ties are put to the test in Alyssa Roat's fantasy novel *Castelon*.

All hope seems to be lost when Brinnie and Marcus at long last reach Dirklon, one of the few estates standing after disaster struck in the fight against Mordred, who wants to take over the world. Brinnie is near death, suffering from magic overload that burns her up from inside.

A teenager from Arizona, Brinnie is a wizard and the heir of King Arthur who can wield Excalibur. Driven by her prophesied role in Mordred's destruction, Brinnie leaves Dirklon with Marcus before she has healed. Together, they set out to find the magic sword and put an end to Mordred and his evil government. But the road is long and the obstacles many, and there's a question as to whether Brinnie has the strength and cunning needed to save the world.

The final installment of *The Wraithwood Trilogy*, *Castelon* brings the adventure to a close with a bang. Its narrative is brisk: twist follows upon twist, rapid turns throw the narrative for a loop, alliances are entered into and broken, and people believed dead are revealed to be alive. Magic overload is compared to radiation sickness, and a magic portal is found inside a museum in St Louis, among the other fun nods to the ordinary world. But the plot is overworked, leading to rushed scenes: the search for Excalibur is turned into a side quest for Marcus and his childhood friend Ignatius, but is shared in retrospect; Brinnie stands trial in a rushed digression; and the prerequisites for Mordred's demise seem to change. Still, all is resolved by the end.

In the brisk fantasy novel *Castelon*, loyalty, friendship, and second chances may be able to defeat forces of evil in the world.

ERIKA HARLITZ KERN (March / April 2023)

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