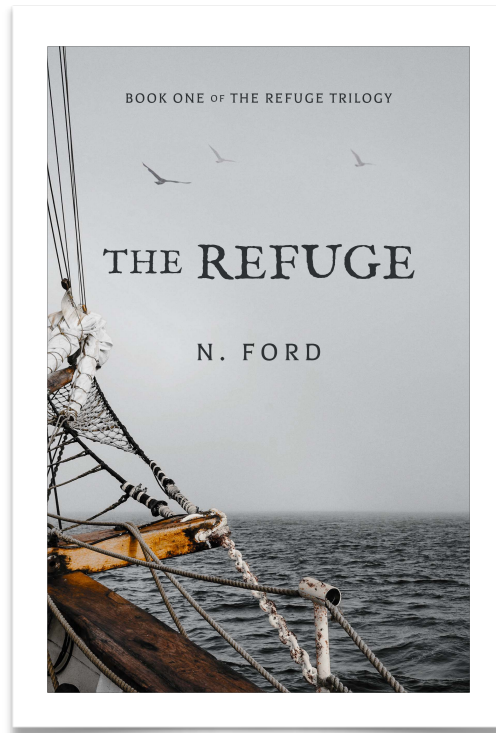




“Book Review: *The Refuge*”

Reviewed by Jaylynn Korrell



An exciting expedition and the hope for a better world

The Refuge is the first of a trilogy created by N. Ford. It brings a variety of people living in different territories to light, whose realities differ as drastically as their causes. If this first book is any indication of the stories to come, this world is not going to disappoint.

Here, you can witness the transformation of a royal-born young man, the expedition of two lifelong friends and a common love interest, and a war hero intent on keeping his



land safe from enemies. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Get ready to be immersed in an escapist story you won't want to leave.

Physis is a complicated world, in the best sense of the word. Each territory is filled with their own unique groups of people who feel immense loyalty to their land and each other. While some places, like the Diamond Isles, are filled with an elitist group of fair-skinned people, other places, like Zoar, are accommodating and open to people of different races, opting to take in the wounded found of the seas during the war. The people of Physis all feel they have a noble cause to fight for, though it differs from place to place.

Race plays a big part in *The Refuge* as it determines nearly everything about how you work in this world. Fair-skinned people are considered "pure" and benefit from all of the privilege that is available to them, especially in places like the Diamond Isles. That territory in particular is where the royalty of this world lives, specifically one of our main character's Matthew. At his mother's deathbed, after being given the task to find a wife of nobility in the coming weeks, he is given a note that changes his life forever.

It beckons him to explore the world outside of that which he has always known. And once the secrets he uncovers truly reveal themselves, there is no turning back.

On a different side of the world, lifelong friends Jonathan and Jude are taking an unusual approach to the war, and not everyone is on board with it. They decide to start an expedition on the seas known as the Refuge, where they help to heal wounded soldiers of the war. This is done alongside Jude's wife and Jonathan's best friend Collette. Together, the three of them navigate uncharted terrain on the sea and their own complicated relationship dynamics.

The Refuge's structure reminds me of the Game of Thrones series. While there is one big world everyone is a part of, many stories are being told simultaneously in different places. And because it's so well written, it's not hard to keep track of everyone.

The world of Physis is intricately detailed, well thought-out, and intense. Each character shines in their point of view chapters, and the story doesn't miss a beat. That, mixed with



Ford's effortless writing style, create a story that I couldn't come up with a single critique for.

Ford invents lovable characters who experience a wide spectrum of events and emotions. They keep you guessing and drop major plot-bombs on you when you'd least expect it. If you pick up this book, just know that you're going to need the next installment.