



## The Jester

*Michael J. Sullivan , Tim Gerard Reynolds (Narrator)*

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## WHO WILL HAVE THE LAST LAUGH?

Stop me if you've heard this one. A thief, a candlemaker, an ex-mercenary, and a pig farmer walk into a trap...and what happens to them is no joke. When Riyria is hired to retrieve a jester's treasure, Royce and Hadrian must match wits with a dwarf who proves to be anything but a fool. Difficult choices will need to be made, and in the end those who laugh last do so because they are the only ones to survive.

This is a standalone short story of 7,200 words, originally published in the *Unfettered* anthology. No prior knowledge of The Riyria Revelations or The Riyria Chronicles is required to enjoy it to its fullest, making this a perfect introduction for new readers or a chance for Riyria veterans to spend a little more time with old friends. The Jester is a story of adventure, bonds of friendship, and a recognition that the choices we make dictates the future we find.

## The Jester Details

Date : Published January 17th 2014 by Audible Studios

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Author : Michael J. Sullivan , Tim Gerard Reynolds (Narrator)

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# From Reader Review The Jester for online ebook

## Claudia says

I read this one a couple of years ago, in *Unfettered* anthology. But today I was in the mood of reading again an adventure of the Riyria duet, so I read it again. And I enjoyed it even more, now being more familiar with Hadrian and Royce. These two guys can make a rainy day quite sunny ;)

It can be read as standalone anytime.

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## Bookwraiths says

Originally reviewed at Bookwraiths Reviews

“The Jester” is a Riyria story that throws readers directly into — a well. Literally! You begin this tale following along with Hadrian as he, Royce, a candlemaker, and a pig farmer plunge down an open well and crash into the underground pool below.

As Hadrian and Royce frantically attempt to save themselves and their companions from the dark waters, it becomes apparent that they are on a mission to uncover a jester’s treasure hidden somewhere in this dwarven mine, that they are having a pretty tough go of it, and that they threw themselves down the well to escape something horrible that is after them.

At this point, things look really bleak for Riyria. So much so that long time fans will be gripping their seats wondering how their favorite fantasy duo will be able to escape this seemingly insurmountable situation and complete their contract. And the truth is they DON’T!

No, that isn’t a spoiler, it is a warning. This is a short story that pulls the rug out from under our heroes, showing them struggling to survive. Sure, Hadrian and Royce still crack a few sarcastic jabs at one another, mock the others view on life, but here getting out alive is the name of the game, not witty repertoire — though there is a bit of that, as I mentioned. And even the conclusion is more morality play than standard fantasy ending, though Mr. Sullivan still manages to pull all the tangled story threads together to deliver the nice, tight climax that he is known for.

Does all that gushing mean this is the best fantasy short story I’ve ever read? No, it doesn’t. What it does mean is that “The Jester” is an entertaining way to visiting our old friends Hadrian and Royce while we wait for *The Death of Dulgath* (*The Riyria Chronicles* #3) to hit bookshelves!

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## Michael says

As the author of this book, I'm obviously not going to rank or review it. But I did want to take this opportunity to say a bit about the book. Originally, I wrote this for Shawn Speakman's *Unfettered* anthology.

If you aren't familiar with that book, it was a collection of short stories by some of the masters of fantasy: Brandon Sanderson, Patrick Rothfuss, Terry Brooks, R.A. Salvatore, Jacqueline Carey, and many more. It was an honor to be included. None of the contributors were paid for their work...we donated the stories and sales of the anthology went to repaying a huge medical debt which Shawn had amassed during his battle with cancer. If you haven't read Unfettered, I highly recommend you check it out.

As to my story, I wanted to write about Royce and Hadrian, the two main protagonists from my Riyria stories. I also wanted it to be something that could be enjoyed by both veterans of my work, and those who have never read anything by me. I'll be honest, short stories are always difficult for me, as my writing style lends itself to novel-length works. So for this story, I did something unusual. I essentially wrote this short as if it were the end of longer work. The climax, if you will, of a longer story. In it, I reference prior events for context which allowed me to take what COULD have been a novel and made it into a short story.

This story is priced at the lowest price allowed on sites such as Amazon & Barnes and Noble (\$0.99), but it is also available for free on Audible.com, and I'll be more than happy to email an ebook version if you write me at michael(dot)sullivan(dot)dc(at)gmail.com. This story isn't about "the money." It's something to help out a friend, and introduce people to my work. The hope, of course, is you'll like it enough to try some of my other works.

Thanks for listening to me ramble on, and I hope you'll try and like the story.

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### **Scott Hitchcock says**

Fun Royce and Hadrian mini-episode on audio with the great Tim Gerard Reynolds.

3.5\*

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### **Mike (the Paladin) says**

Nice little short story that ties into the Riyria series giving us another look at "our heroes" in the midst of their employment as "Thieves for Hire". A few wise cracks with a philosophical lesson as an ending.

Actually could be used in a D&D game...  
but don't let that put you off if you're not a gamer.

Fun, enjoy.

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### **Lyn says**

The Jester is a fun adventure sketch. It presents almost like a chapter that is taken out of a larger work, although it does stand-alone fairly well.

I have never read any of the Riyria stories, so maybe I would appreciate what is going on a little more if I had. The characters Royce and Hadrian seem interesting and the story is well written. Sullivan certainly has a hand for fantasy adventure and this is crafted in a fast moving, excited pace. His inspiration from Fritz Leiber is apparent.

Think I may check out some more of his work.

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## **Abram says**

My review: 4/5

I came through the Riyria novels while surfing and They sounded (or looked) really fun. So I ordered them and While I am waiting The author of those books accepted my friend request and offered me this short story and also another one. As I was saying I haven't read the novels yet and these short stories reveal nothing about the novels.

Okay, This story is really really good. It is 33 pages long and It is really really fast. It felt like It only took 5 minutes to read it. I liked the way he wrote the story , right from the middle. Just try this one out . I would recommend it. thank you and see you later in my next review.

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## **Rob says**

This short story should be enjoyable to anyone whose already Riyria fan, and a decent intro to the main characters of the series without any concern towards spoilers for anyone who hasn't read any/all of the books yet.

The author's note indicates it takes place after The Rose and the Thorn, and I believe the story itself comments it's been 6 years since Riyria has been formed, making it about about 4 years after that book in fact.

It's very short and there are additional details I would have liked, but I think Mr. Sullivan does a good job of alluding to a more action packed adventure without going into detail.

I think this story really shows off his growth as a writer from the early Riyria stories as he's able to do a lot more with so few words.

**Audio book:** I sound like a broken record, but I believe Tim Reynolds reading of the Riyria books makes audio book the best way to experience them. Plus you can pick up it up for free on audible (at least at time of this review) so no reason not to check it out.

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## Robin (Bridge Four) says

### 4.5 Short Story Stars

This was free from audible and it was such a fun quick short story of just one of the predicaments Hadrian and Royce got themselves into during the Riyria Tales.

Trapped in a room with their client and a pig farmer they must chose between 3 options to get out and only one will work while the other will lead to certain death. What to do, what to do?

Great if you want to get a glimpse at one of my favorite bromances in literature or if you just can't get enough of the Riyria couple and their shenanigans

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## Jody says

What happens when a candle maker, a pig farmer, and two thieves go into a mountain cave looking for treasure? Well, from past experiences reading books with mountain caves involved, it usually doesn't end well.

*The Jester* drops you right into the midst of Royce and Hadrian's latest job, and it's not going so great for the dynamic duo.

***"This job was feeling much too similar to the Crown Tower, the first job he and Royce had done together. It had nearly killed them both."***

This was a fun and really short read. I wanted to leave no stone unturned when it comes to my two favorite thieves for hire, so I decided to catch up on some Riyria shorties.

If your a Riyria fan, or just want to get to know Royce and Hadrian a little before starting one of their main series, this one is definitely entertaining.

4 stars \*\*\*\*\*

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## David Sven says

This short story on Audible (54 minutes), starts off with Royce and Hadrian running for their lives in an underground labyrinth on a mission gone wrong. To get out they will have to solve the Jester's puzzle or die.

Recommended for fans of Riyria. The story is a bit meh – but it's more of Royce and Hadrian and their

banter - which is good. It's more of Tim Gerard Reynolds' audio narration – very good. And it was free on Audible – most excellent.

3 stars

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### **Jennifer (Jen/The Tolkien Gal/??????) says**

The Jester is available for free on Audible. It's a nice little addition to anyone who loves the Riyria series and just needs more Royce and Hadrian in their lives. As usual, Sullivan is great at wrapping things up at the end.

~~Riyria is the best thing to happen to fantasy since the Earthsea Cycle and no one can convince me otherwise~~

Credit: <https://za.pinterest.com/source/mrsru...>

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### **Jason Parent says**

This is a free audiobook right now, so I picked it up. Despite being an in-between for two of the author's other works, the beginning announces that it is a complete story. I'm not so sure of that as it lacks a beginning. We "begin" with four characters, falling into an abyss. Something is chasing them, though we are only vaguely informed what it is. The characters are a knight/swordsman-type, a thief, a wealthy candlemaker and a pig farmer, all searching together for some legendary treasure. They are all stereotypes: the thief being the somewhat sinister, self-interested and self-preserving anti-hero; the swordsman the classic hero; the wealthy woman an uppity snob; and the pigfarmer a sniveling coward.

Despite that, we get some interesting action and conflict right off the bat. I enjoyed the story and its fast pace until about halfway through when it screeches to a halt. Then, the characters talk about all the things that happened out of the readers purview. Annoying.

But then the action starts again, and the ending is tongue-in-cheek clever.

All in all, it was a fun time, and I would consider reading more of these characters. 3.5 stars

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### **Nimrod Daniel says**

Royce and Hadrian are hired to do a job, but they're not doing it alone but with their employers - a pig farmer and a candle-maker. The job appears much more deadly than anticipated. Who has the wits shall survive.

A very enjoyable and witty short story, MJS knows how to deliver.

4.25/5

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## G33z3r says

I read this Riyria short story in the Unfettered anthology. It's pretty amusing. It concerns the two soldiers of fortune, Royce (a thief) and Hadrian (a bigger warrior), previously featured in the author's novels, in a traditional fantasy world similar to medieval Europe. Set between Riyria Chronicles and Revelations (according to the preface by the author), it has Royce and Hadrian as hired experts on a treasure hunting dungeon crawl gone terribly wrong. Despite being characters from a long running series, I think the story has no problem standing on its own.

The duo known as Riyria have hired on to some clients looking for a famous old underground tomb, a sort of Tomb Raider adventure or D&D game. The story is told at the very end of the adventure, and mines humor from the recriminations among the treasure hunters, all of which simply hint at the many disasters they've endured getting to this point. It's pretty clever structure for a short story that probably would have been both unbelievable and boring if the suggested events had actually been detailed.

Also, thanks to the free audiobook version, I now know how to pronounce Riyria.

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