



# The Eighth Court

*Mike Shevdon*

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The Eighth Court has been established, but petty rivalries and old disputes threaten its stability. The mongrels that make up the court are not helping, and Blackbird enlists the help of the warders to keep the peace.

Has Blackbird bitten off more than she can chew, and can the uneasy peace between the courts continue under such tension and rivalry?

## **The Eighth Court Details**

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Author : Mike Shevdon

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# From Reader Review The Eighth Court for online ebook

## Michelle Dodd says

Omg grrr I can not believe the author ended the series like that. I have loved every minute of this series it's brilliant I loved all the characters even the not so pleasant ones ? But Seriously grrr the ending what happened to niall did he stay dead what happened to the courts, and black bird ??? I can't believe it ended like that ? I really hope another book comes out ? this series will definitely stay with me for a while I just wish there was more at the ending it wasn't a satisfying ending for me

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## N.E. White says

Review originally posted on SFFWorld.com.

This is the fourth book of The Courts of the Feyre urban fantasy series by Mike Shevdon. With a series this long, it is very hard for me to exclude any spoilers. So, you've been warned!

For a quick recap, please read my review of the first (Sixty One Nails), second (The Road to Bedlam), and third (Strangeness and Charm) books to get a sense of how this series has shifted over time. I'll do a quick summary below (hint: spoilers abound), but there's so much going on you might get a little lost. My apologies in advance.

The Feyre have long lived among humans. With a strained treaty between them and humans, with one of the Feyre Courts wanting to eliminate humans altogether, and with the fact that Feyre and humans have started interbreeding, there are plenty of problems for our hero, Niall Peterson, to attend to after he realizes he's one of the dreaded waithkin, the type of aforementioned Feyre that want to end humanity.

Niall Peterson came late to his Feyre powers after suffering a heart attack on the London underground. He's recently divorced, feeling estranged from his only daughter, and a bit out of shape. He's saved by Blackbird, a several hundred year old half-fey, but only temporarily. For the entire first book in this series, Niall is running for his life and he's lucky enough to have Blackbird along to help him (and fall in love with).

In the second book, **The Road to Bedlam**, the overall conflict between the untainted waithkin and the fey-mongrels (half Feyre, half human) is brought to the fore, introducing a new twist. Feyre lines have gone stagnant and since the High Court (made up of seven lords from the Seven Courts) cannot figure out what to do about it, it seems that the fey have been quietly have a sort of sexual revolution. There are half-breeds everywhere. And a secret government branch has started to use and abuse them – including Niall's daughter.

In **Strangeness and Charm**, the story shifts to tell Alex's (Niall's daughter) story. She has been traumatized by the events that occurred to her during her government incarceration, and being a teenager, she's having a lot to cope with. She just wants to fit in somewhere and she finds a group of half-fey peers that are willing to take her in (because they couldn't manage to kill her). But, unfortunately, that proves disastrous because their leader is trying to destroy the world. However, Niall manages to save us all (again), while he learns more about who he really is and the stage is set for the waithkin to make their move.

Which they do in **The Eighth Court**. The untainted, pure Feyre, are divided into Seven Courts, but with the

emergence of the new half-breeds, another one is proposed so as to deal with the special problems that the half-fey/half-humans pose to the Feyre and to humanity. Blackbird, its de facto leader, is negotiating hard with the other court lords to sort out their differences and actually physically create an Eighth Court to handle all the half-breed's business.

As a court Warder, sworn to protect all the court lords, with no bias and regardless of court affiliation, Niall is, of course, in the midst of all this sea-change in the Feyre culture. Not to mention Blackbird is his wife and mother to his newborn son. If that wasn't enough, his daughter falls in love with a colleague. Among all this, the waithkin maneuver events so they can move in and finally do what they have been gunning to do since, well, since forever – take over.

**The Eighth Court** starts out with a mysterious interchange of information. Someone is betraying the High Court (where all the courts gather to settle differences and plot against each other) and offering Niall's hide. And from there on out, nothing is as it seems. Niall is pulled between his family and his duty throughout the story, making it hard for the story to gain any momentum. We then get yanked from Niall's trials to Alex's growing affections for a man she barely knows, and who may be a 1000 years older than her. But, hey, she's an adult...more or less. And the prophecy first hinted at in *Sixty One Nails* comes into play, sealing all their fates, while Blackbird makes one of the biggest mistakes in her life as a lady.

Now, I was really looking forward to this last (I thought it was the last) installment to the series. I had put off reading it so that I could savor the story and the ultimate sword fight that I just knew – just knew! – must happen between Niall and Raffmir (Niall's waithkin cousin). I even forgave the waffling, disjointed story that is the bulk of *The Eighth Court*, anticipating that the final fight would be worthy of all the unnecessary setup.

Meh.

It wasn't.

I was pretty disappointed in the end, more of a fizzle than a bang.

After reading, I thought my feelings about this book were too harsh and unwarranted. I thought, maybe it was just me. The story just didn't resonate with me. But then, while writing this review and re-reading my notes on the previous books, I realized how much fun the other books are. Niall is a great character and his magical ability set him apart from most of the other Feyre and half-fey. Not only that, he really struggled to reconcile his humanity with his fey nature. His story up till this book had been vibrant and interesting. But in **The Eighth Court**?

Meh.

The first three-quarters of the book seemed very disjointed. We jumped from several POVs in rapid succession, making it hard to figure out what's going on, Niall managed to get a human killed (right under his nose!), and the dreaded waithkin weren't all that dreadful.

And to top it off, there were an inordinate amount of typographic errors.

Yup. I said it.

I don't normally mention typos. They're like errant nose hairs. Best not to mention them in polite company.

And I normally do not need to mention them. Any book worthy of my time to write a review for generally do not contain a noticeable amount of typos. Oh, all books have 'em. Like zits, it is impossible for a few typos not to squeeze through. But when I find myself highlighting line after line because they contain a typo and not because they are worthy of remembrance, well, let's just say, I noticed. So, shame on Angry Robot for not putting this through the proofreader one last time.

(NOTE: I did not receive a review copy. I bought my copy at its full price on Barnes and Noble – before Angry Robot's big sale!)

So, should you read **The Eighth Court**?

If you are new to Mike Shevdon's work, I would say no. Mr. Shevdon is an excellent writer. I'm a fan and I will continue to read whatever he puts out, but this book doesn't reflect his talent. Start with **Sixty One Nails**.

If you've read all the others in this series, **The Eighth Court** does (for the most part) wrap up all the story threads, and, for some, that may satisfy.

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### **Gareth Otton says**

I'm not sure when it happened, it might have been at some point in the train wreck of the last book or it might have been because of the serious lack of depth in any of the characters in this book, but at some time I simply stopped caring about the characters in this series.

Sixty-One Nails was one of the best urban fantasy's I have read in a long time. It introduced a new world that felt relatively fresh, it had strong characters that were all interesting and well rounded and it gave me great hope for the rest of the series as above all else it seemed to be steering clear of so many of the same tired stereotypes of the genre.

Sadly over the course of the next three books these positives began to sour. The stereotypes started to appear, the characters began to mold themselves into roles that were not true to their characters and the events that should have helped shape and define them. Basically this is case of a series that started really strong but the author simply couldn't follow through with his promises.

So why even finish the book then? To tell the truth I hadn't planned to after one of the characters that has appeared in all three previous books was killed and it seemed to have no impact on any of the title characters. There was no pretense at emotion for her loss and everyone acted very cold and uncaring about it all making the characters I grew to love in the first book nothing more than emotionless puppets who's only role was to act out the rest of the play. At this point I was ready to give the series up for dead... until I found out that this was the last book.

That was different, I would much rather read this series through to a finish than leave it so close to the end so I kept reading... I shouldn't have bothered.

I believe that this series must have been something of a problem child for this author as I got the sense that as this novel began to wrap up it was just a case of someone throwing up their hands and saying "I can't be bothered any more!" before then just finishing it as quickly as possible.

The events that have been building for the entire series come to a climax in under a hundred pages. The final battle seems to come from absolutely nowhere with no build up to it that was meaningful enough to answer any questions and give the reader clues as to what might happen. Then when it finally did happen it was about fifty pages of meaningless one on one battles between a variety of characters, each of which left one person dead and one person standing in order to kill the right people off for the series to end.

So with all that did the series at least successfully answer all the questions it has raised? Not even close.

Throughout the series there has been a prophecy surrounding Niall saying something like (I can't remember the exact words), The sun shall rise and they all will fall. I have no clue as to what this might have been save for something to do with something Raffmir did right at the end. What he did was not explained in any way and the only relevance it seemed to have to the story was to give an idea that there was at least some kind of mention to the word 'sun' from that prophecy, but it was a poor effort at best.

As to the other long running plot elements, they weren't successfully or satisfyingly ended either. The end of the six courts seemed really rushed and again came out of nowhere. The seventh court all seemed to go down far too easily and it is a bit ambiguous as to what happened there. There was no mention of how Alex's relationship with her mother and the mortal world might be resolved. Alex's own mental issues were dealt with by throwing her into the world's most improbable romance in the last third of the book (am I the only person a bit disgusted by a fourteen/fifteen year old girl entering a relationship with a man we know to be centuries old?). I have no idea why Kareesh was even included in this series as there seemed to be a lot of importance assigned to her visions and nothing came of them or her actions by the end of the novel.

Basically what I am saying is that as far as endings go this one felt so bad that it has soured my opinion of the earlier books as well, wondering why on earth I ever wasted my time reading them.

But my final and biggest gripe I have saved to the very end, Niall.

Niall is the central character to this series. He is the first person character and at one time the main viewpoint character. Whilst Blackbird is a strong and interesting character (in the first novel at least), Alex has her moments and there are other strong supporting characters, Niall was always the central character. But in this book that no longer seemed to be true.

With each book the author inserted more and more third person view points into his writing and though sometimes I think mixing first person and third person can be done successfully, it really wasn't in this series. In this book we spend more time with Alex, Blackbird, and a myriad of other characters rather than Niall and in the last book of a series that he has starred in I was always wondering when we would get to him.

But we never really did get to his story. There has always been a sense, especially with the countless prophecies around him, that he was going to be something really big and important. But that never happened, he just fought the final battle, won it and then dealt with some kind of strange last magical attack that has left his ending completely and utterly pointless. Is he dead? What did he do in the last moments? What actually happened at the end of the book? Does he even remember who he is? I just don't know any of it which makes me wonder, yet again, why I bothered reading this story in the first place.

Overall I was relatively disappointed in this book when I thought it was the fourth in a long running series but after knowing it is the final book and finishing it disappointment doesn't cover it.

It's such a shame, this series had so much potential that simply wasn't realised.

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## **Melanie says**

you can read my review here

<http://qwillery.blogspot.co.uk/2013/0...>

The Eighth Court is the fourth and final book in an all round excellent series. This book follows closely after Strangeness and Charm with Blackbird fighting to establish her court, the eighth court of half blood fey. The acceptance of their right to exist and to form a court has caused dissension amongst the other courts with some in favour and others against. Blackbird struggles to establish her court against her critics while raising her and Niall's young baby.

For Niall, this final book leads him on the chase across London for answers to the mystery of the theft of the nails and hammer from the Quit Rents ceremony. This ceremony and its importance was the focus from book 1 of this series, Sixty-One Nails. As he searches for answers he is plagued by memories from centuries ago....the memories from the protectors of humanity against the seventh court. These memories are like a mini history lesson where Shevdon cleverly merges fact and fiction in the history of the English monarchy.

The Eighth Court is very much a journey of discovery - Niall's journey to save the Quit Rents ceremony, Blackbird's journey to establish her court, Alex's journey to adulthood. There are so many wonderful things to say about this book but I hesitate to tell anything that would hinder your journey of discovery - the journey to discover whether Blackbird succeeds in establishing her court, whether Alex learns to control her powers, who has stolen the 61 nails and why, and finally what do Niall's memories really mean?

A number of the characters from the other books in the series make an appearance in this final book which make it feel like a bit of a homecoming. Shevdon is a master of mixing real historical events with fantasy and I always feel a bit smarter having finished one of these books. He got the balance right in this book with the pace, characterization and mystery. I was gripped from page one. I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of reading this book and sad that it is the final one. It is truly bittersweet. While it is the final book with no more tales of Blackbird and Niall, I feel that Shevdon crafted the story so well that it fit perfectly over the four books. There aren't enough great things I can say other than leave you with this - this is a must read, a great book and one of my favourites this year.

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## **Zoe says**

Love it, Really hoping there will be more in this series.

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## **Raymond Just says**

I really wanted to like this installment of Shevdon's series, as the first two books were quite good. But, unfortunately, The Courts of the Feyre have taken a sharp turn into the rather dull and predictable. With most urban fantasy, the author injects modern everyday life with an infusion of the magical and the mystical, as Shevdon did with the early installments of this (now) four book series. The Eighth Court, however, reverses

this formula, taking the mystical and magical and making it mundane. Through the first two acts and three hundred pages, we are treated to the domestic problems of the half-breed Feyre, from moving house to taking care of baby, to an adolescent crush (that leads to a disturbingly age-inappropriate affair). Only in the last act does Shevdon begin to bring the story back around to something more interesting, but it is too little and too late. For even when the adventure truly begins, the magic and characters feel mundane - the "gifted" seem amazingly ungifted as they are slaughtered by the wraithkin, and the different court's powers are too repetitive and described in too little detail to really drive a scene home. The intrigue and compulsion to read on is simply missing.

The last chapter does create an interesting twist/cliff-hanger that tempts me to read the next installment. But I'm pretty sure I'll pass and move on to another author. I'm very sorry not to be leaving a glowing review, as I love the genre and I always love reading a fresh voice. But I'm afraid it's probably time to put this particular series to pasture.

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## **Rachel says**

The Eighth Court is the fourth and final installment in Mike Shevdon's Courts of the Feyre series and it does not disappoint.

Evenly paced with well timed action juxtaposed with interpersonal drama and political intrigue, Shevdon ties-up the loose ends and completes the Hero's Journey not just for Niall but also for Blackbird and Alex who have always been on parallel paths with Niall but with their own distinct challenges and goals.

Elegantly constructed and artfully executed, I would love to see this series find the wider audience it deserves. Mike Shevdon's Courts of the Feyre is urban fantasy as high art and a very satisfying journey for the reader.

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## **Bookwurm says**

::Sigh:: I was looking forward to this book so much with the release date on all my calendars. Writing a review for this without spoilers is difficult.

I devoured this book. The story is well written with good pacing and plenty of hints about what is to come entice the reader. We see characters we haven't seen in a while. Threads from all three previous books are brought together to form a conclusion. The bulk of the story is everything I could want or ask for from Mr. Shevdon. This series is one of my favorites and Sixty One Nails is a book I often give for Christmas.

That said, I felt let down at the end of the book. I could be satisfied with the ending if I had some clue as to the direction of the future of this world. I felt everything ended in too much chaos without enough epilogue. I understand there is supposed to be a feeling of starting fresh without the old ways, but a hint of where the characters I have grown to love so much will be going would have helped me to lay them to rest. Instead I feel cut off as if a friend had died in a car accident instead of from an illness. Neil's fate is wrapped up well; it is poetic. What I am writing about is the fate of Blackbird, Alex, and the rest of Feyre. I suppose I did not get closure from this book and I find that frustrating and disappointing because I believe Mr. Shevdon has



the talent and ability to have written one or two more scenes that would have satisfied.

Other than this complaint I have no problems with this book or this series. I still love it, but I think it will simply have to be more bitter-sweet than sweet.

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### **Jenn says**

This was just an okay ending. Blackbird was a little better, Niall was still just as stupid and clueless as ever, liked Alex still. Seems open-ended tho, more books coming?

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### **Matt says**

Not the best in the series. Kind of messy, and meandering, but the storylines that needed to be closed were and there was a sense of completion at the end that the series needed. Glad to have read Shevdon and will definitely check out his future efforts.

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### **Timothy Ward says**

**REVIEW SUMMARY:** A suitable ending to a well-loved series about the secret deal between human and feyre and an average Joe who risks everything to save his home and loved ones.

**MY RATING:** 4 Stars

**BRIEF SYNOPSIS:** Powerful feyre are upset about the conclusion of Strangeness and Charm, and seek to kill everyone involved in support of a court made up of human-feyre crossbreeds. If they succeed, Earth will become a land consumed by darkness and the monsters who wield the void for evil.

#### MY REVIEW:

**PROS:** Fascinating magic; powerful and scheming villains; engaging and surprising mystery; epic conflict; dramatic and sympathetic conclusion to character arcs.

**CONS:** A little slow to build interest; the final battle is frightening and surprising, but not the best ending of the series.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The Eighth Court takes a little time to build speed, but once it does the thrill ride to the finish is the puzzle solving, magical war that fans of this London Fantasy have come to love. You will get off this memorable ride more endeared to the heroes than ever before, and sad to see them go.

(This review contains spoilers if you have not read the first three books. This series is highly recommended. Start with Book 1, Sixty-One Nails. It made me a fan of Urban Fantasy.)

The Eighth Court starts out with a murder and takes the reader on the case to stop unknown bad guys from disrupting the setting up of the Eighth Court. The body count rises as the villains' plot is much worse than stopping the formation of the crossbreed court. Niall's fear of losing his loved ones in the battle to keep Earth free from the power of the void will push him into his highest risk yet.

This high stakes conclusion to the series makes *The Eighth Court* well worth picking up. The book starts off strongly with a murder, though some of the details used to set up the mystery dragged the first quarter of the story down a bit. Once Niall's old nemesis pulls a nasty trick, however, the pacing flies right through to the end. There is a midpoint battle that used the author's trademark skill, blending magic and action to unravel the mystery enough to set the odds well in the favor of the bad guys. The story builds tension in life-or-death stakes for Niall and friends of the Eighth Court, and climaxes with a strong and surprising emotional resonance.

Readers will leave the series feeling satisfied because there is an emotional connection to each of the characters, who are depicted fighting at the height of their vulnerability. Niall's daughter, Alex, may have been hard to like at times in previous books, but really grew up into a loveable adult by the end. Throughout this book, Niall struggles to harness the dark power within his void ability. The wraithkin enemies share the same power and force him to use his if he will have any chance of defeating them. The fear behind what will happen when he allows his power to be used at full force creates top-notch tension, and the surprise ending is as strong a gut check as any revelation in the series. There may be some who think the ending of the previous book was more visually amazing, but the climax at the end of *The Eighth Court* was more about hitting the main characters where they're weakest and making the reader hold his breath to find out if any survive.

Mike Shevdon's *The Courts of the Feyre* series will be fondly remembered as the books that made me a fan of Urban Fantasy. They are still my favorite Urban Fantasy to-date because of how high he hits on character, mystery and displaying magic within everyday, yet historic London. His imagination for the possibility of shape-shifting feyre behind the next corner and their plot to unleash darkness on the city has opened up a new type of love for his blend of genre fiction. (See also: My interview with Mike on AudioTim 36, a non-spoiler discussion of his writing and thoughts on creating an Urban Fantasy series set in the U.K.)

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## **Vincent Foley says**

I am frankly surprised at the number of glowing reviews for this book. While I think Mr. Shevdon's writing has improved, this story was more than a bit jumpy. However, and I'm trying not to give any spoilers here, I found the ending to be truly bad. While it does end the series, it doesn't do so in anything I would call a pleasant or satisfactory fashion.

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## **Paul says**

If you're still reading any series by the time it has reached book four, there has to be multiple reasons why. The thing that really makes this book for me are the characters. They are so well observed and it felt like I was catching up with the old friends. Niall Petersen has come along from the directionless slacker that we first met. He has found his place amongst the Warders and has adjusted to life with Blackbird. He has found some measure of stability, as well as a purpose and a family.

In comparison, Blackbird still manages to retain an air of mystery. She continues to play things very close to her chest. I feel, in some respects, that I never really discovered everything about her character. I rather like that though, she remains just a little enigmatic. You get the feeling that she still has her secrets and that's never going to change. Blackbird's the sort of person that you could know for years but she'll still manage to surprise you on a daily basis.

If I have to pick a favourite character then I think it would have to be Niall's daughter Alex. Her role in events has increased with each book and she has grown up over the course of the series. From a young girl, to a bolshie teen and then a young woman, Alex has transformed before the reader's eyes. Her initial uncertainty when facing the fantastical world she is exposed to, through to her acceptance of her new life, is one of the best parts of the narrative. Her journey has been subtly done but fascinating nonetheless to watch.

There is a very definite sense of events pulling to a close. The politics and various grand plans that have delighted in previous books remain, but are finally reaching their climax. I do love the way that Shevdon manages to effortlessly reincorporate themes from book one back into the plot without even seeming to break a sweat. The Lords and Ladies of Feyre society have always been natural born meddlers, it's like they can't help themselves. They are forever trying to shape events and amend the natural order of things. Hidden resentments that have been around for years finally come to light and it's suddenly a fight for all or nothing.

No spoilers, of course, but I am pleased to say the final chapters of The Eighth Court delivered exactly the sort of resolution to the series that I was hoping for. The perfect mix of magic and folklore, with a fantastic plot and loads of great characters has made this a story that I'll remember for a long time.

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### **Alan says**

Loved the story, and the characters. But it ended with a cliff hanger, and that just pisses me off! The books before this didn't end that way, so that's why its getting a 3 star. Easy 4 star if they hadn't let it end the way it did.

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### **Becky says**

It's time for another Courts of the Feyre review!

Beware, if you've not read the earlier books there are spoilers ahead!

When we left off with Strangeness and Charm, the courts reluctantly decided to consider the eighth court as a new addition. The decision isn't unanimous and while the seventh court hasn't had an official presence in ages, everyone knows they'll be the biggest objectors. The eighth court would offer a place to all the human feyre hybrids - those like Niall and his own daughter, Alex - and those recently freed from Porton Down, who have lately caused... trouble. But trouble with the mongrels - as some of the feyre refer to them - is the least of Niall and Blackbird's worries. The wraithkin are up to something and with the High Court split on their decision regarding the hybrids, both Niall and his wife know there's bound to be some big issues to be dealt with.

I've sung Mike Shevdon's praises often enough that you are all aware by now of my fan girl status! The Courts of the Feyre series is a win in every way in my humble opinion - the world, the characters, the stories, the setting, the history...

Sadly, all good things must come to an end and it seems this is it for the Courts of the Feyre series. \*sniff\* I would have loved more closure knowing this is the final installment, but it's been a wild and crazy entertaining ride!

Mike Shevdon catapulted to the top of my favorites list with his debut, *SIXTY-ONE NAILS*. As such, while I'm not sure what he might have planned next, I can guarantee that whatever it is (and hopefully he does have something planned), it'll make it to my must have list as soon as it's announced.

If you're a fan of the series, check Shevdon's website for his piece bidding farewell to the Courts of the Feyre as well as his extras page for his Acknowledgments and End Notes (which didn't make it to the book apparently).

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