



# The Lion of Venice

*Mark Frutkin*

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## **The Lion of Venice** Mark Frutkin

This magical new novel by Governor General and Trillium Prize nominee Mark Frutkin, set in 13th century Venice and Cathay, is a dazzling fresco of shimmering language, brimming with golden tableaux of arid deserts and cobblestone alleys, the wafting scent of cardomin and the mystical trill of a praying friar. It is the story of Marco Polo as he is about to set sail on an arduous and lengthy pilgrimage with his father, uncle and faithful guide across the sun-soaked silk route, the rich path of the carpet-makers and the black seas of the Indian Ocean.

Doggedly pursued by a vengeful assassin of the Venetian Doge, Marco is eager to arrive in the promised land of the mighty Kublai Khan and bask in the safety offered by his royal legions. But while enjoying the myths of the new land, Polo is haunted by the recurring appearance of a winged lion which lurks behind his dreams and roams the palace of his heart. Even upon his return to Venice, a naval battle and capture by their rival Genoa, even as he languishes in an enemy jail cell recounting his trials to an incredulous inmate, there is always the heartbeat of the lion.

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