



Akkad et Xai: L'ange et la rebelle

Danielle Jaworowski

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This novel, written in French, offers wisdom on growing up and forming a spiritual life.

Danielle Jaworowski's allegorical novel portrays the deep symbiotic bond between a celestial star living as a human and her guardian angel. *Akkad et Xai: L'ange et la rebelle* (*Akkad and Xai: The Angel and the Rebel*) tracks their mutual spiritual growth as they face daunting earthly challenges.

The narrative begins in October 1952, when Xai, an ancient star more empathetic with animals than people, comes reluctantly to earth as a human. She is closely guarded by Akkad, a younger and less-experienced spirit, who serves as her guardian angel. As a young child, Xai continues to prefer animals to humans, and pretends to be, among other animals, an eagle. After age six, she begins making friends with children her age, but their lives soon end tragically in accidents that Xai narrowly escapes. Sofia, their Grand Creator, instructs Akkad to keep a daily log of Xai's progress as she lives as a human. The journal entries that comprise the book include Akkad's observations and discussions with Xai and other celestial entities.

Born in the province of Québec, Jaworowski writes in French. Scenes in her book set in or near mountains, lakes, beaches, and forests reflect her Canadian heritage, as do the characters who participate in seasonal sports. For instance, when young Xai goes to a swimming pool, Akkad, sensing danger, stays close by as Xai repeatedly dives into the water. She avoids serious injury because Akkad protects her head each time it hits the pool bottom. "Un de mes nombreux miracles! (One of my many miracles!)" he notes wryly.

As a young adult, Xai takes foolish risks with drugs and alcohol, and aligns herself with troublesome men. When she becomes sexually active, Akkad cannot resist being drawn into her sensual experiences, clouding his objectivity. She resents his overprotectiveness, which causes periods of alienation between the two and resultant time gaps between Akkad's journal entries. The narrative pace slows as Xai grows older and gains wisdom. Philosophical exposition, such as Xai's theory about music and a paranormal event involving a Native American couple, lacks the lively immediacy of earlier chapters.

Jaworowski's engaging writing style provides a reassuring base for the story's esoteric theme. She successfully brings her celestial beings to life through dialogue and action, while the human characters play secondary roles. Lyrically described scenes add to the book's appeal. A concluding glossary gives historical and mythological information about the name origins of both human and heavenly characters.

Akkad et Xai: L'ange et la rebelle is limited to those who read French but offers a refreshingly original story about the coming together of spiritual and material lives.

MARGARET CULLISON (February 19, 2015)

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