



As the Sparrow Flies: Sojourners' Saga Book I

Chad Corrie

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In Chad Corrie's dystopian novel *As the Sparrow Flies*, people fight extinction in the face of a religious war.

Elliott is a squire who aspires to knighthood. He hopes to join an army that believes Pyre is the main deity. He thinks that he's part of the elect who will survive; he watches as nonbelievers are massacred. Meanwhile, motherless Sarah is part of a congregation of Sojourners who witness cruelty and abandoned villages during their survival trek toward the Veiled City, which they hope will provide them respite from the apocalypse. Their belief in a sovereign is akin to Christian faith; they depend upon elders for guidance. As people encounter marauders and face food scarcity, they realize that they face common enemies and aren't as different from one another as they think.

In this doomsday setting, medieval standards and crusading habits are reflected alongside hints of more ancient times. Here, crows pick over the dead. Blood rains fall and flesh-eating locusts swarm. When there seems to be little hope, rituals tie the wanderers together. Amid such hardships, only a few relationships are truly restorative, including the warm one between Sarah and her father, who reminds her of their beliefs.

The worldbuilding alternates between points of view, depicting how people handle savagery and live with pervasive divisiveness that breeds distrust. Religion and its stringency dominates; it's sometimes drawn as a near-merciless force, despite messages about Pyre's willingness to extend mercy toward converts. As fantasy elements dovetail with details that evoke biblical antiquity and a penchant for goddesses, idolatry, and statuary, a timeless, dark allegory blooms.

As the Sparrow Flies is a challenging fantasy novel about risk, fear, and the convictions that drive harm and hope amid a ruined civilization.

KAREN RIGBY (May / June 2024)

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