



Blood Moon Prophecy: Legend of the Nyx

Dilani Kahawala

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Dilani Kahawala's fantasy novel *Blood Moon Prophecy* hinges on nautical and magical adventures and the power of found family.

Tilly lives in New York City with distant relatives who took her in after she was orphaned. Their neglect makes her life unpleasant enough, but then she is summoned by the police because her name is found at a murder scene. The murdered man had looked after Tilly when her mother died, and when Tilly snatches some evidence from the scene, her life is turned upside down.

New friends, posing as servants in Tilly's relatives' house, soon abscond with her. They take her through a portal to another world, Metra. Tilly learns that her family is Obsidian, part of an ancient line of emperors who ruled the maritime world with magic and cruelty. Tilly is conscripted into the navy, and the fleet that she serves with seeks to help her fulfill her destiny of unearthing old secrets and forbidden magic. But the next blood moon looms, setting a deadline by when the fleet must reach a destination that's shrouded in mystery and legend. Tilly possesses the only map to show the way. A villainous, lizard-shaped being, Crom, interferes with the fleet's plans, initiating a race to the prophesied location.

The book's world building is extensive and vibrant, especially when it comes to seaside life. Many people within it, including Tilly, split their lives between Earth and Metra; they eat delicacies ranging from Indian curries to hamburgers and clam chowder. Magic exists in Metra, allowing almost everyone to cast sprites, or a variety of elemental spells, to help with chores and fuel combat. However, some of these elements are underdeveloped: it is unclear whether those who dwell in the mundane world are aware of the magical one and whether there are tensions between the worlds. The figure of the Alchemist is also important to the plot, but aspects of their identity are not fleshed out.

However, each of Tilly's new friends possesses a distinctive personality and skill set. Of her suite mates on the ship, soft-spoken Mei is a translator with a lurid past, enthusiastic Nav is brave and kind, and stuck-up James turns out to have a heart—and his own secrets. Tilly's struggles with her heritage reveal new aspects of her personality as well: she learns to harness her anger at the tragedies of her past in order to learn new magical skills and avoid falling into the traps that would show that she is no different from her arrogant ancestors.

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JEANA JORGENSEN (September 8, 2022)

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