

Chronicles of Xerica: The Forgotten Past

Mukhtar Farid

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This supernatural story features an intriguing mix of Old World mysticism and New World fantasy.

Chronicles of Xerica is a fable about an ancient kingdom that packs a symbolic, semi-political punch. With the potential to appeal to a young adult fiction market, this unusual work appears to be in the early stages of development. Scantly clad in words and decidedly unfinished, the book has been packaged for sale without the necessary editing and formatting.

Hector Winfred is a hero driven to discover his past and overcome amnesia to save the kingdom of Xerica. This story is his journey, which leads to the ultimate self-sacrifice—suicide. Author Mukhtar Farid writes, “So with a heavy heart our hero prepared himself for the quest of his lifetime,” and later states, “Hector understood that he had to die to free this kingdom from disaster and turmoil.”

Divided into four chapters with fluctuating, oversized fonts and simple language, the pages are suited to a young reader, if not for the somber resolution. With illustrations and artistic enrichment, this manuscript could even be slanted toward an adult fantasy audience seeking esoteric entertainment and colorful design. As is, the cover consists of bland blocks of brown and gray, and the back blurb is too brief—both are in need of improvement.

Essentially, this is a concept not ready for distribution. A subtle influence of comic book characters is evident, as well as the blatant contribution of classical mythology—perhaps a good crossover. With care, this idea could be presented in a better light to appeal to the right group of fantasy connoisseurs.

As it stands, the novella is an example of hasty production. Sentences are riddled with grammatical and punctuation errors and awkward phrasing. In addition, the dialogue runs into the narrative, making it difficult to comprehend, and the breakneck pace leaves out needed information in crucial scenes. The story is altogether told too quickly, which will leave readers feeling cheated: “As per their plan everything seemed to have worked well,” Farid writes. “They reached the King’s prison cell.”

Farid holds a bachelor’s degree in information technology from Washburn University and has published three stories. His interests in three-dimensional animation and gaming seem to play an integral part in his creative writing. The addition of a talented illustrator would enhance the final product, giving it sophistication and marketability.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (June 20, 2013)

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