ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

GENERAL

Curse of the Flamingo
Martha E. Gouws
CreateSpace
978-0-620-47832-8
Four Stars (out of Five)

“You have a destiny, young Egorh. Let’s leave it at that. For now you have to attend to the business of growing up. When the time comes, all will be revealed to you.” Steukhon, high priest of the Magic World, tells twelve-year-old Egorh this shortly after the boy escapes during a fiery and deadly pursuit by slave traders, an event which takes the life of his earth father.

Egorh already suspected there was something different about himself; he was eight when he became friends with Mirk and Kirk, two forest Dryads that were invisible to all but him. He is actually the son of Darkarh, powerful god of an ancient magical kingdom, reborn in human form to ultimately save the inhabitants of both the mortal and immortal worlds from the evil sorceress, Zinnia, and her cohorts.

The book’s title refers to the beautiful pink birds that reside on distinctive lakes in both worlds and serve as a spiritual portal between the two worlds. Another layer of the curse involves captives who are the means to an end for Zinnia, who has made a pact with the three banished Haffgoss (half-gods) for power.

The story unfolds from Egorh’s birth to his eighteenth year, when he’s secretly wed to his blue-eyed sweetheart, Kayrin, who is unaware of Egorh’s birthright.

Numerous colorful characters populate the pages of this very imaginative book: Jerome, the caretaker gnome of The Edifice of Secret Knowledge; the Sorrow-queen, a whining creature who collects the sadness of others in her glass box; Daniel, an orphan who becomes Egorh’s trusted boyhood companion; Zinnia’s tiny “bangle” genies; and Arkarrah, merciless slave hunter whose mission is to find Egorh at any cost.

Various otherworld obstacles?such as the Upside-Down-Ear People, mysterious mountain fortresses, and the seeking stone of fear?complicate Egorh’s journey to his destiny.

This is the author’s first book; she is currently doing research for a sequel. Gouws resides in Africa.

While a majority of the novel is human drama set against a medieval-era backdrop, dry

humor occasionally pops up, such as when Egorh and his three helpmates are being pursued by a venomous wave of spiders. When an eagle swoops in and swallows a spider, Daniel is petrified, then finds his voice and chides: “One! Only one! You have to eat more than *one* to be of any help!”

Readers who enjoy fantasy will find “Curse” a satisfactory read. The text is rich and abundant, an intellectual treat for the eyes, with lines such as this: “Her wings beat in harmony as she skimmed the lake.” Plenty of supernatural action keeps the reader guessing. The few minor punctuation errors in evidence are not likely to distract readers from their travels with Egorh on his daring adventures, nor keep them from wondering, “What will happen next?”

Robin Farrell Edmunds