



Exile of the Sky God

P. Anastasia

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An odyssey towards atonement is the backbone of P. Anastasia's fresh, lively take on Egyptian mythology, Exile of the Sky God.

Horus may be a few hundred years old, ruler of the skies, and gifted with formidable powers, but in the pantheon of Egyptian gods, he's still an untested neophyte. When his arrogant and entitled behavior offends Ra, the most powerful god of them all, he is essentially placed on probation, his powers curbed. His new task: prove himself worthy of his status. His subsequent odyssey towards atonement is the backbone of P. Anastasia's fresh, lively take on Egyptian mythology, *Exile of the Sky God*.

As Horus commences his quest for acceptance, he comes into constant contact with the human realm (he derives much of his powers from humans' faith in him), leading to episodes in which he learns about joy and suffering. Horus may have an inflated opinion of himself, but he's also innocent enough to be stunned when he witnesses humans inflicting violence on each other and sensitive enough to feel love when he encounters a high priestess who has pledged her service to Ra. Soon he's on the verge of breaking the commandment that forbids interference with human affairs, and the situation worsens when the devious god Set catches wind of his indiscretions. Eyeing the domain of Horus's father Osiris, Set conspires to frame Horus and discredit him even further, leaving Horus stripped of his immortality. In the end, the fallen sky god can only rely on his courage (and a few well-placed friends from above) to save the day.

At its heart, *Exile of the Sky God* has a simple, powerful message: only by understanding the struggles of others can we find our own humanity and self-worth. Horus may not be a perfect being, yet Anastasia makes him sympathetic, blemishes and all. His "weakness" for mortals paradoxically becomes his greatest strength as he rises to a greater calling as protector of the human world, defying his fellow gods in the process.

The novel maintains a propulsive pace, even as it makes time for Egyptian lore (plenty of other famous gods make cameos) and sketches an entertaining portrait of ancient Egypt. The story doesn't shy away from darkness—some of Horus's actions lead to tragic consequences—but its focus stays on the redemption of its protagonist. Horus's mix of braggadocio, vulnerability, and hope will appeal to young readers who will see plenty of themselves in him as he journeys toward maturity and responsibility.

Chock full of mythical touches and thoughtful in its themes, *Exile of the Sky God* makes for a welcome diversion for those looking for a fantasy story outside the standard formulas of knights and wizards.

HO LIN (December 10, 2018)

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