

Fate Accompli: The Water Nymph Gospels, Book 1

Keith R. Fentonmiller

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Fate Accompli is an ambitious mythological novel that explores the role of fate in the lives of both gods and mortals.

Keith R. Fentonmiller's historical fantasy novel *Fate Accompli* is a humorous romp spanning time, fate, and relationships.

Sixteenth-century Florentine hatmaker Stasi and his son Andolosia labor under a curse: their ancestor stole the magical hat of Hermes, dooming their family line to stay in the hat-making business until Hermes can return to reclaim his hat and forgive them. Stasi and Andolosia suffer through misadventures, running afoul of the Medici family while trying to correct their ancestor's wrongdoing. And the woman Andolosia woos, Carlotta, is descended from the family of Daphne, a nymph Apollo tried to rape who was turned into a laurel tree. Apollo manifests in mortal men to pursue Carlotta, leading to Andolosia and Carlotta fleeing together to Sicily to resolve both of their family curses.

These more grounded chapters alternate with those that cover the perspectives of characters from Greek mythology, including Moira, one of the Fates, and Maia, the mother of Hermes. Moira weaves for Cronus and for Zeus; in doing so, she shapes the fates of mortals and gods alike. And Maia endures the unpleasant sexual advances of Zeus; after giving birth to Hermes, she disappears from the narrative. Hermes and Apollo feud, causing the downfall of the Olympian gods when their reservoir of human faith, a food-like substance for them, is depleted.

Alive with details about historical dress, food, and customs, the novel concerns itself most with the inner lives of ancient Greek gods, making them out to be much like the humans in the narrative: lusty, greedy, and flatulent. The prose is witty, if too reliant on sexual innuendos. Instances of crossdressing, sexual bondage, and coercion occur without comment. And while the setting is tinged with fantasy elements, the events of the story sometimes defy belief or are anachronistic, as when Stasi is run over by a Medici carriage, loses both legs, but survives long enough to be bound and healed; ingenious Andolosia fashions him mechanical legs, so that he can still walk.

The roles of fate and prophecy are paramount to the plot, as both Andolosia and Carlotta's lives are governed by the Greek gods who met their ancestors. Still, the book's denouement evades the prophecy that Andolosia and Carlotta traveled to Delphi to obtain. The modern incarnations of Hermes and Apollo seem more interested in earthly pursuits than in delivering the gods of Olympus from the river of Oblivion where they dwell, and it is unclear whether Andolosia's lineage continues to bear the curse of Hermes by the book's end.

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JEANA JORGENSEN (July 20, 2021)

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