



Clarion Review ★★★★☆

FANTASY

## Girl of Myth and Legend

**Giselle Simlett**

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*Leonie's adventures are just beginning, and The Chosen Saga is shaping up to be a unique entry.*

*Girl of Myth and Legend*, by Giselle Simlett, is the first book in The Chosen Saga. When Leonie Woodville discovers she's from a powerful race of magical beings, she is thrust into a harrowing war between the Imperium and the rebels, while ancient dark forces move about behind the scenes. Soul-bound to a guardian that despises the Imperium, Leonie races to understand her power and her place in the strange new world of Duwyn.

Leonie is a seemingly normal girl living with her father in a small town in England. She thrives in the typical routine of attending school and exploring the woods with her dog, until one day she experiences a sudden flash of heat and light and passes out. Upon waking, she discovers her father is from another reality and escaped from it to protect her. As an Oracle, he sees the future and learns Leonie is the first Pulsar born in more than two hundred years, a being with the ability to sway the balance of power.

As a newly awoken Chosen, she is quickly taken via portal to the magical realm of Duwyn. There, she is bound to an immortal kytaen named Korren, who has lived through several Chosen keepers and has nurtured a hatred of them. Before she can even truly understand or use her powers, the rebels target Leonie and drag her into the war against the Imperium. Duwyn may be magical, but it is also dark and full of terrors. Seemingly everyone is either against Leonie or wants to use her for their own agenda.

While *Girl of Myth and Legend* does contain from some cliché fantasy tropes, there is much originality and uniqueness to the story. The mythology of Duwyn is fascinating, with strange creatures, mystical rules, and an established magic caste system. The characters, for the most part, are fairly well developed with strong goals and motivations. This makes it easy to get swept up in Leonie's adventure. The slow reveal of some important facts help keep suspense up, making for a page-turning read.

There is not enough time to connect with Leonie's story before she is swept away to Duwyn. More time spent in the "normal" world, before her powers manifest, would help cement her character development. This is especially true with the reveal of what happened to her friend Abigail. Flashbacks to this traumatic event earlier in the story, showing how it haunts Leonie, would really elevate the impact. Instead, it is simply told to Korren by Leonie's father, lessening the emotional blow. This would help round out Leonie as a character as her primary trait for the first third of the book is sarcasm.

The book definitely has a YA feel, but the story itself is accessible and could interest anyone who enjoys fantasy. The mythology and world building is slowly revealed as Leonie herself discovers it. The cliffhanger ending, almost literally so, is effective at ending on a high note. Leonie's adventures are just beginning, and The Chosen Saga is shaping up to be a unique entry.

JOHN M. MURRAY (November 12, 2015)

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