

Hidden among Yourselves

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A circle of friends shares collective wisdom based on past-life experiences in this exciting young adult fantasy.

The ability to recall and integrate the knowledge of reincarnated selves is particularly strong in Tal, a present-day high school student who needs all the help he can get fending off unwanted attention from demons, faeries, and ancient gods attracted by his powers. While themes of reincarnation and ancient wisdom would suggest a New Age spiritual journey, the third book in the Spell Weaver series is, like the previous two books, a thrilling, action-packed fantasy adventure story. *Hidden among Yourselves* is heavy on physical battles and tricky tests of wit and cunning.

Tal confronts enemies in both the Celtic Otherworld and the realm of the ancient Greek gods. Though tasked with challenges equal to those of the heroes of any ancient epic tale, Tal and his friends speak and act like typical teenagers. They pool their knowledge and magical powers to physically overcome their foes in a complicated series of battles that cross worlds the same way they might come together to complete a group project using complementary skills. Even their spells and magical items have a certain adolescent flair to them. When he needs to disappear, Tal spells himself “not invisible exactly, but unnoticeable.” Faced by attack from Hades’s staff of death, he announces to his companions that “the name of the game is keep away.” His humorous tone and teen-friendly imagery give the text appeal and accessibility to a wide range of readers.

The fast-paced story is propelled from battle scene to battle scene through carefully crafted chapter endings and subtly foreshadowed plot twists. Tricky plot points are believably addressed by psychic abilities like telepathic communication, which allows Tal to converse with his team in the midst of battle, and magical items like armor that allows its wearers to speak and understand ancient Greek.

Characters, scenes, and other elements from the traditional mythologies and legends that fuel Tal’s adventure are depicted in clear detail, making the settings as vibrant and intriguing as the young protagonists. Great care is taken to flesh out the personalities and motives of the faeries and gods. The inclusion of lesser Greek deities like Asclepius and Melinoe add surprise elements to the Olympian alliances.

Teens who have enjoyed Rick Riordan’s Percy Jackson series will find this an equally engaging series written for an older YA audience. This book reads well as a stand-alone title, but, given the rich history of the characters’ relationships, it is probably best to start at the beginning of the series and read all the way through.

CAROLYN BAILEY (February 23, 2015)

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