Clarion Review

Fantasy

Modern Disciples: Volume 1
Ian Anderson
Outskirts Press
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Three Stars (out of Five)

In *Modern Disciples (Volume I)*, Ian Anderson conceives a brilliant concept: invite the reader to drop into the hallowed halls of the pantheon of gods—Odin, Zeus, Brahma, Horus, Quetzalcoatl, Amaterasu. But all is not well in the realm of the otherworld. There is nothing but trouble, in fact, namely that their sworn enemies—the Titans, a race of giants—have populated the earth with spawn in order to spread chaos and eventually avenge imprisonment by the gods. The gods decide to produce children with the mortals and orchestrate the banding together of mortals—disciples—to combat the efforts of the Titans' spawn that are poised to wreak havoc on earth.

Back on earth the stage is set for Ryan Hunter, a lover of mythology and aspiring bounty hunter. One day Ryan encounters a mysterious woman who takes him on a life-changing hunt. He finds himself "tapped," that is, awakened by his divine mother, Artemis, the goddess of the moon, the hunt, and fertility. On the hunt Ryan is joined by other disciples who eventually team up on a mission to the Everglades to destroy the monstrous Nemean alligator possessing Titan energy. Bestowed with supernatural abilities, including his magical bow and a sidekick scorpion, Ryan and his team (each member embued with their respective divine patrons' special powers) are led into dangerous clashes with the Titans and their evil spawn.

Next, the disciples encounter strange mortals in a small town called Citrus Grove, not unlike fictional Stepford where there are no children and the women are completely submissive to their husbands. Ryan and his mates discover that these seemingly idyllic people are actually controlled by menacing dark forces plotting to destroy anything that stands in their way. The team succeeds in uncovering intrigue after intrigue, with the suspense building and building until the team confronts terrifying creatures, including satyrs, maenads, vampires, werewolves, and a powerful creature with which Ryan may have met his match.

A colorful panoply of mythological characters makes *Modern Disciples* an edifying and entertaining read. Well-researched mythological lore, humor, adept character development, and well-thought out plotting keeps the pages turning. What's more, this moving tale avoids the simplistic trope associated with adventures of comic book superheroes. Instead, mere mortals will experience the rare pleasure of shooting an arrow from a magical bow and having their "ichor" tapped by a god. Perhaps, as the story suggests, the gods are real after all and mythology turns out to be true. Readers will doubtless find themselves anxiously waiting to continue their mythological journey when volume two comes out in print.

The author is a scholar of mythology and has a degree in creative writing and journalism from Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio.

Gary Klinga