

Sand to Glass

Remy Apepp

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A haunting literary fantasy novel about what four royal siblings will do to survive, *Sand to Glass* is an ominous introduction to Remy Apepp's new fantasy series.

The Great Being, bored and alone before the creation of the world, fell asleep. Within the Great Being's dream, "the World amassed like a great tree, sprouting off countless branches." The desert kingdom of Ordyuk resides in one of those branches.

After surviving the Great Calamity—a disaster brought about by monstrous half-humans known as the Accursed—some decades earlier, Ordyuk has settled into a tentative prosperity and peace. But Diyomendon, the crown prince, loathes his title and the future responsibilities that come with it. By contrast, Princess Naliki, the only daughter, relishes the freedom her position offers: she is being raised to marry a prominent member of the government or military.

The second prince, Luxanthus, is a skilled warrior, considered one of the Blessed: humans granted special gifts from the Daimmu, the deities of Ordyuk. Rezekyrios, meanwhile, struggles to find his place in his family as the youngest brother; his position has no specific responsibilities, and he feels he has no particular talents. When the Accursed resurface, Ordyuk begins preparing, plunging the royal family into chaos.

Though the world building is thorough, it avoids exposition. The scene is set within the first few chapters; after that, close character studies take over. The four siblings are complements and foils to one another: Diyomendon is filled with hatred, while Naliki is compassionate; aimless Rezekyrios is envious of Luxanthus's singular focus and determination. Declarative sentences dwell little on their feelings or motivations, allowing their thoughts and actions to stand as simple facts within desperate circumstances; in this way, the narrative eschews judgement.

A tight examination of the line between monster and human, *Sand to Glass* is a fantasy novel without easy answers.

DANIELLE BALLANTYNE (November / December 2021)

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