



Clarion Review ★★★★★

FANTASY

The Arrow: Children of Brigid, Volume 1

Maureen O'Leary

Geminid Press (Dec 31, 2014)

Softcover \$11.95 (274pp)

978-0-9907371-4-8

Beautifully combining mythology, romance, and action, this story is fun to read even as it addresses some of the harder aspects of becoming an adult.

The Arrow, by Maureen O'Leary, tells the story of one aspect of the Triple Goddess Brigid, who has been incarnated in the human form of Fynn Kildare. Fynn struggles to live the life she wants under intense pressure to follow a path she feels was chosen for her. The story is entertaining, thought provoking, and surprisingly relatable. Though Fynn is a goddess, her struggle to live independently despite a great responsibility to her family in many ways parallels the struggles many young adults often face in learning to be an individual and still part of a family.

Fynn is caught between her human and divine identities. She is one third of the Goddess Brigid, but she is also a human doctor and researcher. As a child she lives in Brigid's Keep, innocent and happy, working as a healer. When she becomes infected with a demon virus, she loses much of her innocence, and for the first time experiences distrust, anger, and jealousy. As a young adult she has tried to make a life for herself as a mortal doctor, away from the Keep and the family she resents. However, a demon war is coming, and Fynn is the Arrow, destined to protect not just her family but all of human kind. She must come to terms with who she is and embrace her divinity if there is any hope for the world.

The book beautifully combines mythology, romance, and action to create a story that is fun to read even as it addresses some of the harder aspects of becoming an adult. Fynn is happy working as a researcher in the mundane world, and even happier to leave that life behind to follow an old flame, Komo, son of Dionysus, as he tours the country as a rock star. No matter how hard she tries to ignore the responsibilities she has as the Arrow, she cannot escape her destiny and ultimately must embrace everything she tried to shun to save her family and the human race.

O'Leary writes with grace and insight. She is able to convey large and potentially complex ideas in just a few words. For instance, Fynn's sister Lia and their father are discussing the demons they are fighting: "I didn't know evil could hide from gods." Her frustration sounded dangerous. 'My sweet daughter,' he said. 'If evil couldn't hide from gods, we'd still be in the Garden of Eden.'

The Arrow is likely to appeal to anyone who enjoys mythology or urban fantasy but will hold particular interest to young adults. It is the first in a planned Children of Brigid Trilogy and will leave all those who reach the last page anxious to pick up the next installment.

CATHERINE THURESON (January 9, 2015)

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