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**Clarion Review**

**The Dreamer's Awakening: Eloik: Nightmare Fighter (Volume 1)**
Martin Bois
Sebastian Levek
Mylene Villeneuve, illustrator
Fountain Publisher
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Eloik, whose father died when he was five and whose mother is in a coma, has psychological problems. “He was just a teenager who had spent the better part of his existence afraid of his own shadow,” the authors write. He is treated at the Coylton Institute by Dr. Hill, until one day he discovers that his problems are due to his ability to perceive the realities of the Dreamworld, where our earthly dreams connect to other dimensions. He’s not crazy, and it’s not his imagination.

Eloik meets a ghost, who gives him a very valuable book on sorcery. He is then injured by a mugger who steals the book. While his body lies in a coma at the hospital, Eloik’s dream body is lost in the northern parts of the Dreamworld, a dangerous realm of good and evil filled with strange powers and creatures. Janik and Dylan are sent in to rescue him, but before they find him, he faces his own fears in the form of the wicked Queen, Kuwursha, whose temptations and threats he resists. Victory is satisfying and encouraging, but he is soon recruited to help save the Dreamworld from the impending triumph of evil. To see if they succeed, readers will have to wait for the second book in the series.

By the end of The Dreamer's Awakening, readers will have a fair understanding of the Dreamworld, but the introduction to this unfamiliar realm is somewhat confusing, with its vague, though intriguingly dramatic scenes of strange creatures like Queen Kuwursha. Though the book is oriented toward a young audience, the writing in this translation from the French is lively and interesting. The plot moves along at a good pace, and the characterization is effective. For example, the descriptions of Conroy will help readers empathize with Eloik's reluctance to forgive the bully's meanness. Bois and Levek write, "Conroy, the klutzy oaf who pushed him in line, pulled up a chair to sit down next to his two sidekicks: Malcolm Hamilton and Dale Kilberry. Even though they were less imposing than their idol, they made up for it with an extra dose of nastiness."

Levek, who has a background in television and movies, is the creator of Eloik. This is the first novel for both him and Bois. The fantasy world they create is similar enough to reality to be believable, and reasonable in the that way reality is reasonable. The Dreamworld 's plausible connections to our world, and explanations for dreams, the paranormal, sorcery, and certain historical events allows readers to suspend disbelief as few imaginary worlds can do. Though less sophisticated than The Lord of the Rings, The Dreamer's Awakening is one book that fantasy lovers won't want to miss.

*David George*