



The Final Days of Kobold Kody's Frontier Exposition and Tonic Show

Eli Horowitz

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In Eli Horowitz's rich, thoughtful fantasy novel *The Final Days of Kobold Kody's Frontier Exposition and Tonic Show*, talented misfits navigate a magical world.

Melding elements of the Wild West with a land in which dragons, goblins, elves, and orcs roam, the story charts the fortunes of a ragtag crew of carnival performers, all of whom are on the run from dark pasts or tragic futures. The story's linchpin is Andra, a fortune teller cursed to be despised by those whose fates she foretells. When she prophesies her death and the end of the circus, it sets off a chain of events that ensnares her, her huckster boss Kobold, and her fellow performers, including a "dragontamer," a contortionist, a halfling, a gentle giant, a human pincushion, and a hot-tempered fire starter.

Differing striking performers narrate each chapter. As they struggle to eke out a living, an engrossing overview of the tyrannical kingdom in which they live is revealed. Here, those in power hoard magic for themselves. While the story is elegiac in tone, people's interactions within it are both prickly and witty, and each locale the carnival visits is vibrant. Dark incidents, including genocide, appear alongside lyrical passages, including an origin story for a sun god that might be the key to Andra's salvation and a moving visit to a mystical elven forest that gives one carnival member a path toward a happier future. And during the book's intense final confrontation, when Andra faces the imperial sorcerer who first cursed her, all of the story's threads come together in a satisfying fashion.

Philosophical and humane, *The Final Days of Kobold Kody's Frontier Exposition and Tonic Show* is a magical fable about changing one's destiny for the better.

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