Clarion Review

General

The Sorcerer's Song and the Cat's Meow
A. A. Roberts
Lulu
978-1-84728-725-0
Five Stars (out of Five)

The Sorcerer's Song and The Cat's Meow is an author's triumph and a reader's delight. Filled with creative energy intelligence and imagination A.A. Roberts' novel grabs the reader's attention with its brightly coloured intriguingly designed cover and holds it throughout with its cheeky humour vivid imagery one-of-a-kind characters and a fascinating string of stories that form the chapters and structure of the book.

The Sorcerer of the narrative is Aikeem Abdul Jamal Yossafa and his companion is Pendella Purrfect one of the feline Council of Thirteen. He is immortal able to cast spells and charms and converse with his cat. She walks through walls calls up her protective beast and dispatches rats with the flick of a well-honed claw. Together they travel through time and space defeat a sand demon at the lost city of Qar in the Sahara hold a horde of giant insects rats and sloths at bay outside of Avalon and defeat the armies of Darkness with Darkness—in this case an evil wizard who messed with their lives earlier. Along the way they engage in love affairs with representatives from their own species: Aikeem with Celise whom his attempts to save send her soul soaring to only the One God and the Celestial Administration knows where. Pendella's great love is Thomas Wondermore who becomes a rogue cat called Legacy who later redeems himself as a warrior in the battle for Avalon.

As the book progresses stories pile upon stories all cleverly and often surprisingly interwoven between reality and fantasy. There are murder mysteries romances corporate intrigues tales of "the greatest non-governmental arms deal in history." There are references to NATO Kosovo Albanians and Serbs; intimations of Alice in Wonderland Bugs Bunny and Merlin; and journeys through Dreamscape Dark Seer's realm Darkling Space Neverwhere and Everalways. There's even a trip to Sid's Desolation Bar and Grill where "they serve a very nice rat burger" and "a lone ferret in a beret strummed on a beat up old guitar." There are characters

galore too: Pleep the custodian who rides in Aikeem's magic backpack that holds everything from cats to full-course meals to guns swords and rocket launchers; 250000 dwarves with only one deck of cards to while away the millennia they've been doing "dwarfs do what dwarfs do best. They mine." Rats and sloths and Chitins and evil wizards also do what they do best in Roberts' kaleidoscopic fantasy—they take on the personas of those we love to hate while we rally around cats like Pendella Grizzle-Whiskers and Sharpclaw O'Bannon and dwarfs like Jackenstein Cragstein and Diddle Buddlebut.

In the end of course Aikeem rescues Celise and defeats the armies of Darkness and Dark Seer to the music of Emerson Lake and Palmer. Pendella continues on as her purrfect self. What a wonderful free-falling storytelling ride to get to the end of a fantasy that's about as close to purrfect as you can get.