

Clarion Review

FANTASY

Feast of Dreams

Christian A. Brown

Forsythia Press

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Five Stars (out of Five)

With gorgeous settings and memorable characters, this fast-paced fantasy is a book that can't be put down.

Feast of Dreams, by Christian A. Brown, is a fantasy novel with beautifully described settings and an interesting group of characters.

The land of Geadhain is on the brink of conflict as two forces vie for power in a war-ravaged landscape. Queen Lila of Eod wrestles with the disappearance and possible death of her husband, Magnus, as her obsession with vengeance pushes her to the edge of sanity. Meanwhile, in Menos, Queen Gloriatrix seizes the opportunity to gain power by amassing an army to destroy the kingdom of Eod. Elsewhere, in the lush and overgrown landscape of Alabion, a group searches for the powerful Sisters Three. As these characters' stories unfold, it becomes apparent that their fates will intertwine and ultimately affect the future of Geadhain.

One of the novel's strengths is its vividly described settings. Brown spends time laying out the geography of Geadhain on a macro level, including a map, and eloquently explains what is seen by each character. Many of the lines from the book create a landscape that can be easily pictured: "As he stood and looked through the relatively flattened region of the wood they wandered, he spotted more rises and broken lines among the stunted trees, wildflowers, and shrubs...A large village this had been."

The events of the story unfold immediately from the plot's initial conflict, and the pace is quick throughout. Tension between characters builds steadily, making the book difficult to put

down. Although part of a larger series, this second installment in the chronicle can stand alone, as it has its own overarching story line and fully introduces the characters from the previous novel.

Brown includes numerous references to stories from Greek tradition and popular culture. For instance, a monster known as the Jabberwok seems to reference the Jabberwock made famous in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*. The Sisters Three, a trio of powerful witches that are believed to control destiny itself, mirror the Fates of Greek mythology, who knew and controlled the destiny of all mankind. Choosing to liken these creatures to ones that already exist in literature makes them more dynamic, as less time needs to be spent developing them because their basic traits are almost universally known.

This fantasy novel contains traditional elements and strong, memorable characters. It will be enjoyable to fans of the genre or to those who like plot-driven storytelling.

Gregory A. Lowe