



Speculative Faction Book Review

Book Title	The Thief Who Spat in Luck's Good Eye
Author	Michael McClung
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Stars	

Rather like Homer's Iliad and Odysseus, Michael Clung steps away from the formula which made his first book such a success and blazes an entirely different trail with a very different story in *The Thief Who Spat in Luck's Good Eye*.

In this story Amra and Holgren are confronted with angry demi-gods. Their fortunes are watched from afar by two of the remaining gods in this world's pantheon who deliberately set them up to deal with the problem. Just like the heroes of the Greek classics, they must suffer as they display the true qualities of what it means to be a hero, including the willingness to die.

It's a brave thing to do in a series, depart from an established setting and introduce a new concept (such as the interferences of the gods), but it works! We are transported by magical gates to a desolate and dangerous place, a mythical city in the middle of a landscape which delivers death in myriad ways. There's none of the mystery solving from the first book, at least not in the conventional sense. There are fewer characters too though, apart from our two heroes, they are all evil, ruthless and cruel.

There's a point in the story where Amra sits atop a high building to review the options that face her and Holgren. The sequence of likely events includes their deaths at every turn, and horrible ones at that. Not least because death, as we know it, isn't really death at all. It's just another layer of misery where you're controlled by a crazed demi-god.

For me, it's why I enjoyed the book and read it in double-quick time. I said in my first review of Mike McClung's work how much I enjoyed going back to the story each time. It was the same here, each time I finished a chapter it was tempting to keep reading because there was so much at stake. It is such an imaginative story in the way threats pile up and appear without warning.

I love how it's written too. The wry humour is a joy, it had me smiling so frequently. It's easy to read, the language flows. It tells the story without getting bogged down with exposition and character development – yet they still exist, their delivery is very subtle.

I'm looking forward to reading more of the series because of all these reasons!