



# BOOK REVIEW

Book Title	<b>Paternus: Wrath of Gods</b>
Author	<b>Dyrk Ashton</b>
Date	<b>June 2018</b>
Stars	

I've rarely encountered a book of such epic scale as **Paternus: Wrath of Gods**. I've been trying to think of others which reach the same soaring heights of imagination. I can only think of one; Tad Williams' Otherland series. In that ground-breaking tetralogy, we encounter what the Internet + AI + Virtual Reality could become, it's possessed of vision which operates on a micro and macro level and makes it real, provocative and emotional.

Dyrk Ashton is doing much the same. I can't wait to read his final part of the sequel to see where this world (this universe!) will take me. My reason for labelling this work as epic fantasy is because it draws upon every mythological reference you can imagine and weaves them together into a fast-paced narrative. Even more so than Book 1 (and who'd have thought that was possible?). I described that as a roller-coaster ride. Book 2 is the rocket-fuelled version.

Another reason for my comparison to Otherland is because of the emotional impact it had on me. I had tears in my eyes as I read the final pages. I'd guessed it was coming, there were hints, but they couldn't prevent the sadness I felt when the incident I'm talking about happened. I've tried to work out how you can get so emotional in a story that doesn't ease up on its pace. So often action can dominate; sure, you might have great characters to follow but you read as quickly as you can. It's rare to have a story where that pace still allows you to engage with those characters emotionally.

I think it's partly due to the author's decision to tell his story in the present tense, it provides urgency for one thing but it also makes you feel as though the characters are talking to you directly. I don't think you'd get the same emotional connection if this was written any other way.

And what bugs me, Dyrk Ashton does this by telling the story from multiple points of view. How is that even possible? It breaks all the rules – but it works!

Like the first book, Wrath of Gods relies heavily on gargantuan levels of research. It's another feature which makes me enjoy these stories as much as I do. Dyrk Ashton provides us with a masterclass in how to balance informed exposition with a story on steroids.

The skill needed to do this is highly specialised, just like the weaving metaphor I used earlier. Each thread needs to appear and disappear so as to provide a pattern and that's what happens with the myths incorporated in these books. There's a passing mention



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somewhere, it's repeated a little later, it becomes significant as it impacts upon particular characters and so the pattern appears.

And as it happens you're not only filled with wonder at the skill but also at the cultural and historic connections that are being highlighted. The inclusion of the Knights' Templar in this story is one such example. To avoid spoilers, I won't go into detail but their link to one of the main characters suddenly became so obvious and natural that I found myself thinking – I wonder if there really were some connections in history along these lines? I'm aware the British royal family have Templar connections that go way back through the centuries, there's empirical evidence to that effect and Ashton references it in just one sentence. It's enough to make you pause for a second and... just wonder I suppose.

How often do stories make you do that? Not many.

I haven't discussed characters so far and that is because there's so much to say about them I've preferred to contextualise them in terms of the narrative, emotional provocation and the research. What I love about them is the way you can hear their voices so clearly. With such a diverse and extensive cast list, it's a real feat to be able to say that. Again, to illustrate: Edgar sounds so intensely English. Not bad for an American writer!! Perhaps it's Dyrk's acting background that enables him to generate each character's voice. Perhaps he's schizophrenic. The result is I have the audio version of the story going on in my head.

Do you get the idea I love these stories?

Can't wait for the next one!