



Speculative Faction Book Review

Book Title	Nectar for the God
Author	Patrick Samphire
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Stars	

Nectar for the God is the second in the Mennik Thorn novels. It is even better than the first!

I loved Shadow of a Dead God for its tone, the way Patrick Samphire captured the voice of our hero, the hapless mage, Mennik Thorn. It's an ironic, sardonic tone that portrays Mennik's despair as he struggles to make a living. He's a wonderful character, caught in between the criminal world and the ruthlessly strict authorities as he tries to help others.

Why is this book even better? With the world building for the city of Agatos firmly established, likewise the recurring characters, Samphire has been freed to explore Mennick in greater detail. He's enriched a loveable character, given him depth and helped us engage with him further. The same is true for characters like Benny, Sereh, his frightening mother, the Countess and the daunting figure of Captain Meroi Gale of the Ash Guard. Each one has opportunities to develop in this story and cause greater pain and trouble for the poor guy.

Agatos becomes an intriguing place to sustain a series of novels too. There are the political intrigues and the ever-present pressures of corruption. The place is an urban jungle of violence. Magic is everywhere, formed from the decomposition of its ancient gods. Its greatest potential is what lies beneath the city though and this is where the second book focuses its story. The city is built on top of previous civilisations and the deities which held sway long ago. We discover they may not all be as dead as we'd hope.

This latest threat is complicated by the pressures placed on Mennik as he tries to satisfy everyone's demands. The poor guy is just too nice! This is another reason why I love this story even more! It's not just a story of a significant threat beneath the city. Mennik faces dangers from so many directions and it means there is never a dull moment. The story speeds along, twisting and turning, in the best traditions of any high-speed chase.

It is not a story to leave alone for very long for this reason. But I have to emphasize, the pace doesn't diminish the characters or its world building. It is a real skill to maintain such a balance and sustain it throughout the story but Samphire manages it exceptionally well.

This is an engaging and exciting book with a central character you cheer on for his resilience. I love that, though there are moments of darkness, they don't dominate. Yes, there are horrible people but they are balanced by good folk too. It's refreshing that violence doesn't overshadow the story, there are no epic battles either. This is as much a detective story as anything, one where magic offers some unpredictable surprises. I recommend it highly!