



Wake up..

Kip Manley

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City of Roses is a serialized epic very firmly set in Portland, Oregon—an urban fantasy mixing magical realism with gonzo noirish prose, where duels are fought in Pioneer Square and union meetings are besieged by ghost bicycles. —It's the story of Jo Maguire, a highly strung, underemployed telemarketer, and what happens when she meets Ysabel, a princess of unspecified pedigree. Jo rather unexpectedly becomes Ysabel's guardian and caretaker, and now must make her way through the strange subculture of Ysabel's decidedly odd family and friends (which involves rather more swordplay than she's used to)—while Ysabel must now deal with a diet of frozen pizza and a job that requires her to call strangers on the phone and ask them how satisfied they are with their banks.

Vol. 1, "Wake up...", collects the first 11 chapbooks of City of Roses. —Think of it as a DVD box set collecting the first half of the first season of your favorite television program. It ends on a hell of a cliffhanger, yes: but there's more, much more to come. Roughly 150,000 words, or about a 400-page or so paperback. So far.

Wake up.. Details

Date : Published May 2011 by CreateSpace

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Author : Kip Manley

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From Reader Review Wake up.. for online ebook

Fangs for the Fantasy says

Jo has good friends, she has her tiny apartment and she has her awful job cold calling people. It's not a great life but she manages – until a night out partying leads to a duel with a fae knight

Which she wins.

She is now responsible for Ysabel. The Bride. Fairy princess and the centre of so much intrigue – and it's Jo's job to keep her safe. And fed. And entertained.

This book has an excellent concept – Portland split between 4 very different fae factions, the political manoeuvring between them, the ritual and the scheming and the propriety all maintained. And under that the underlying game of it all, with none of them actually able to cause real damage to each other – until the rules of the game change.

Then there's the princess, forced by circumstances to live with Jo in her tiny apartment and join her on her dead end job. A faerie princess forced into such low standards – forced to work in a call centre – how can that not be a recipe for hijinks and shenanigans (and interesting class commentary)?

The concept is great. The idea for the story is great. The characters have potential.

The execution is appalling.

Firstly, while I can see why the author wants to write this story, it simply doesn't make sense. I don't understand why the Chariot entered a duel with Jo, I don't understand how that was remotely to do with honour (hey, let's hit a civilian with a sword for HONOUR!), I don't understand the whole ridiculous "losing" of it.

I don't understand why Jo played along. I don't understand why Jo seemed to take the whole existence of the fae as something so minor and easy to get used to. I don't understand why, if she had chosen to play their games, she didn't take the Out that was offered her since it would have cost her nothing.

I don't understand why she allowed the princess to move in with her. I don't understand why, as a woman of such limited means, she accepted the idea of monetarily supporting the princess.

I don't understand why Jo has so few questions. She never asks about the fae, the courts, why they are there, how long, what they mean even what a Gallogas is (which is apparently her).

It doesn't make sense.

The writing is really excessive. The description is really over the top, long winded, unnecessary, grossly elaborate and just bloated beyond all proportion. And it's repetitive as hell, I knew what everyone was wearing at all times in ridiculous and unnecessary detail that would be repeated when referring to that

character over and over again. Every setting and scene had every inch described luridly (and unnecessarily) to a level that left me tempted to skim the book to try and sift some nuggets of story out of this endless dross

Then there's the characters. Most of the characters have a title or label and a name. They can be referred to by either and are also often referred to by a vague description. So, Orlando can be referred to as Orlando, or as The Mooncalfe, or as the man with the Japanese sword, or as the man in a skirt. Any of them. Interchangeably. At random. And that isn't just Orlando – there's Roland (The Chariot, the man in green). There's Gaveston (the Stirrup, guy with art tube, his clothing which was described which I can't even remember).

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glitrbug says

City of Roses is an original form of urban fantasy. The main character, Jo, comes to the aid of a gal being harassed in a diner. The damsel in distress turns out to be a Fae princess which makes Jo her new champion. Jo is now responsible for her so she takes her home to her crummy apartment and gets her a job at a call center. A Fae princess working a phone! Imagine that. There are sword fights, Fae punk house parties, some new and different magic and interesting social structure that you find out about as Jo does. It's fascinatingly addictive. Read it and thank me later.

SA says

There are seriously no words I can use to describe this. It's like Twin Peaks had a baby with Once Upon a Time. I don't know what it would like reading this if you're not from Portland--enjoyable, certainly--but for me it put a film on my city, making me see things that weren't there or look at mundane objects with a new sight.

It suffers from obscure and flowery language, and the intense devotion to *in media res* with a snooty eye towards exposition. And it is really very long, sections where nothing really moves the plot along or develops the characters. But everything is forgivable given the quality of the work. and that it is a work of self-published love.

I am eagerly waiting for the second volume.

Zach says

I don't know how far in to an ongoing serial it's fair to get before writing a review, but I've been finding City of Roses to be genuinely as engrossing as people keep alleging prestige TV shows are, while having a lot more respect for its audience.

Sure it's about a faerie court that overlaps with the hipster and gutterpunk community in Portland, which is wicked cool, but that's minor detail. What you really need to know going in is that Kip Manley violates

traditional writing advice whenever it would ruin his flow, which is also wicked cool. Action scenes often occur over one or two run-on sentences and, with his prose, it's like the text equivalent of watching an intricate trail of dominoes set in motion and falling with inhuman precision.

The cast of characters might seem a little intimidating when they keep getting introduced, but ultimately it's no worse than any Game of Thrones Time Sword epic fantasy. Probably better than those since every named character feels distinct even if they're only around for a couple paragraphs every other chapter. Even the band names are memorable.

It doesn't over-explain its fantasy world, but you get everything you'd need to know about the characters inhabiting it through details and inferences. And the fact that it can accomplish such subtleties doesn't prevent it from having characters chase down a giant boar on the highway or escape from a church surrounded by the ghosts of dead cyclists.

I have a New Englander's natural indifference to anything about the west coast and even I'm frickin' enamoured with this story. It's free to read online, but you can support it by buying chapbooks or print collections if you want.

You'll want.

Also, personally, I LOVE when main characters are just allowed to be bad at things and much of Jo's story so far centers on her not being any good in a sword fight.

Similitude says

I finished this a long time ago! Why didn't I update it? Very enjoyable bit of urban fantasy kit with such sharp notes as fairies versus commercialism, the human sexual spectrum, and soul versus job. I should maybe reread it again before the year is over.

Emily says

This took me forever to get around to writing a review of this because feelings are complicated or something? Basically the thing you need to know here is that this is volume 1 of a serialized story set in Portland (the other one, the west coast one), with urban fey weirdos and punk rockers and fabulous parties and excess and street people and bacchanalia. It's confusing in places because the main character, Jo, has no idea what's going on most of the time and she's working off instincts and trying to survive in this totally bizarre magical version of a city she thought she had a pretty good handle on, so you have to kind of hang on and stick with her through the confusion because hey, you probably aren't fey either, why do you think you get to know their secrets anyway? Jo and Ysabel are pretty fantastic though so what happens is that you get to know them, and you have a burning need to figure out the mysteries because you care about these two women and what's going to happen to them, which means that you want to follow them around the city and watch them mess things up and try again and get in trouble and almost die a bunch of times. And when you finish this first section you can go online and read up to where the story currently is. I kept thinking I wouldn't, and I'd just wait, right? Ha, no, I had to keep going and now I pester the author on a regular basis to

get the next bit up. Also there's some bits that are sexy as hell so like, be prepared for that, if you're prone to blushing.

I fell in love with this story and the characters without really noticing, and you should too.
