



Ascension

Sable Grace

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The gates of hell have opened, and one woman will stand in the crossfire as the Dark Breed—vampyre, demons, shape shifters—and mankind fight their last battle for survival.

Kyana is half Vampyre, half Lychen ... and the last of her kind. Determined, dangerous, and damned, she has no love for the mortals who have imprisoned and misused her. But when the Order of Ancients entrusts her with a mission—to find the key that will send the Dark Breed back into Hell for eternity—Kyana has no choice but to accept.

She is furious to learn her assignment comes with an escort ... Ryker, a demigod and fierce warrior who long ago found a way under her skin and stayed there. In a shaky alliance, they discover an ancient cult with dangerous motive and a god who seeks to destroy all others. And as Kyana begins to feel the heat that threatens to bind her to Ryker, she knows she has to resist. For it could only mean the undoing of them both

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Ascension Details

Date : Published April 26th 2011 by Avon Books

ISBN : 9780061964404

Author : Sable Grace

Format : Paperback 374 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Paranormal, Vampires, Romance, Paranormal Romance, Witches

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From Reader Review Ascension for online ebook

All Things Urban Fantasy says

Review courtesy of All Things Urban Fantasy

Step aside vampires and werewolves, a new stomping ground has been slowly emerging in the paranormal genres: Greek Mythology. Sable Grace (the pen name of Heather Waters & Laura Baron) doesn't just borrow one or two elements to create the Dark Breeds world, rather she incorporated the entire pantheon of gods and goddesses. The whole book is really like an urban fantasy version of Homer's THE ODYSSEY.

Not to completely shirk tradition, within this fabulous Greek Mythological world, vampires, demons, and shapeshifters exist as well. The protagonist is a vampire/werewolf hybrid with about as big a chip on her shoulder as you can imagine. It took me quite a few chapters to warm up to Kyana's uber alpha female personality. There's tough and then there's insolent and Kyana tended towards the latter often enough that I wanted to smack her. Her personal history offered an explanation for her behavior, but I was still relieved when she mellowed out halfway through largely due to her relationship with a demigod son of Ares.

Personally, I prefer to read about a couple's first meeting and go from there as opposed to picking up, in this case, a decade after Kyana and Ryker first met. There are a lot of misunderstandings, long held grudges, and missed opportunities mostly because of pride and wounded egos that I would have just as soon bypassed entirely. That being said, once they dealt with all that, I did get swept up in the romance between them.

Overall, Greek Mythology fans are going to be in Elysium (aka heaven) with this world. The gods, the Fates, Tartarus, even Charon are integral parts of the Dark Breed world. There's plenty of well crafted action scenes, and a romantic subplot that comes together nicely in the end. On the flipside, the pace had a tendency to be a little manic at times, the protagonist was uber alpha enough to grow a beard for the first half of ASCENSION, and the supporting cast was less than stellar. It balanced out as a good—but not great—read for me that fans of Jennifer Estep's Elemental Assassin series will want to check out.

Sexual Content:

References to rape. A semi graphic sex scene

Megan says

Ascension started off promising, but very quickly delved into the land of badly plotted, poorly written and cliched urban fantasy. If you care to hear all the dirty details, here they are:

World building was scant. There is some Greek mythology and lots of interesting ideas, but the novel presents it to us in the form of info dump. Throughout, I either felt I was in information overload, or I was struggling to keep up because while some aspects of this world were over explained, other aspects weren't explained at all. At no point was the world building simply a natural part of the story telling.

Character development was nil. The story focuses on our protag, half Lychen, half Vampyre Kyana and a handful of her friends. *Lychen?? Vampyre???* Those spellings are a bit much, IMO. Kyana is a character we have met so many times before; special, one of a kind, super duper powers, frequently follows her heart and

bends the rules, impulsive. *yawn* Her friends are fairly bland and have no discernible personality traits. Even then gods and demigods who should have really big personalities don't.

Love interest is a guy who looks like a laid back surfer with messy blonde hair, worn jeans and sandals but is really a bad ass muscular military guy. Sounds great until you realize that he has spent the past ten years not getting with Kyana (like he wants to) because he wants *more than just a fuck*. He wants to be in her heart, and he wants her to tear down her walls and confide in him. He is disappointed when she doesn't confide her childhood aches, angst and hurts to him. Can you say wish fulfillment to the extreme!

This might, *might* have been a good book years ago. But the bar for this genre has been raised much higher than this and sadly *Ascension* is one of a long line of novels which give urban fantasy a bad name. It adds nothing to the genre. My first thoughts were that the book had promise and despite its flaws I would likely continue on to the second. However, as the book continued it focused more and more on poorly written action scenes that might have me on the edge of my seat if I gave a crap about the characters... but I didn't.

Nidah (SleepDreamWrite) says

While browsing for something to read, *Ascension* was among the many books I was thinking about reading. And I've been reading a lot of urban fantasy lately so I thought this sounded interesting.

The story is what drew me in and throughout the book, I did like the world building, the side characters and fast paced action.

But at the beginning I wasn't sure if I was going to like it. Mostly because of the MC. But she does get a little better once she and co teams up. For me that's when the book actually got interesting.

So despite its flaws, I did like it and will at least give the other books in this series a read.

Kelly says

It's been a week since the apocalypse. The gates of Tartarus have opened, spilling out Dark Breed (demons, vampires, zombies and the like) onto the earth. Many humans have been killed and the rest driven into hiding. Kyana is technically Dark Breed herself — half vampire and half shapeshifter — but has mastered her urges and works for the Order of Ancients, which is fighting the Dark Breed menace and trying to protect as many humans as they can. Kyana learns that a key possessed by the long-dead god Cronos enabled the opening of Tartarus, and with her friends and allies, has to figure out who knew of the key's existence and used it to unleash hell.

“Sable Grace” is a pseudonym for the writing team of Heather Waters and Laura Barone. I’ll say up front that they make a terrific team. Their collaboration is seamless; at no point could I tell they’d switched off.

That said, *Ascension* got off to a rocky beginning for me, mostly because of the heroine. Kyana is abrasive even by urban fantasy heroine standards and can usually be counted on to make the rudest possible remark at any given moment. She’s also bigoted against humans, and it’s some time before we learn her prejudice has been shaped by a traumatic past, so at first it makes her hard to like. Then she’s assigned to team up with

Ryker, a bastard son of Ares, with whom she has a bitter history. Bickering and involuntary dips in the River Styx ensue. Another issue is that overuse of capitalized terms and “creatively spelled” terms are pet peeves of mine, and *Ascension* features Vampyres, Witches, Lychen (lycanthropes), Shyfters, and so on.

I was surprised, then, that by page 100 I was hooked on this story. The authors spin a suspenseful mystery that rings changes on Greek mythology without warping it beyond recognition. Among the changes are the mixing of Greek gods with the more standard urban fantasy creatures like vampires and werewolves, and the concept of the Chosen. Periodically, a god begins to weaken and needs to pass his or her power on to a successor, and the Chosen are the people destined to receive that power. In this apocalyptic world, Chosen are dying alongside other mortals, which throws an additional wrench into the gods’ plans.

Initially I was enjoying the story in spite of Kyana, but slowly I began to like her too. This is partially because more is revealed about her history and how it’s shaped her, and partially because she matures over the course of the story. In the latter half of the book, there are several notable instances where she bites back a snarky comment because she knows it’ll be counterproductive. Ryker is a complex character too, with an admirable desire to be better than his callous father and to show Kyana that she, too, is a better and more valuable person than she thinks she is. Their relationship is compelling once it starts to develop beyond bickering, and the authors write a good sex scene that perfectly illustrates the difference between casual and meaningful sex. I also loved Kyana’s witch roommate Haven, and the enigmatic Irishman, Geoffrey, and the twist concerning him.

My opinion of the ending depends upon whether the next Dark Breed book is set in Kyana’s and Ryker’s points of view again, or whether the authors switch to other characters. (*Ascension* blends the conventions of urban fantasy with those of paranormal romance thoroughly enough that I can’t make a confident guess.) If the next book jumps to different characters, then the ending of *Ascension* is not quite satisfactory; there’s still history to be revealed about Kyana and issues in her personal life to resolve. If we stay with her and Ryker for the next book, the ending works well as a temporary stopping point. It leaves plenty of loose ends to keep me coming back for more — and after a fun, exciting first book like *Ascension*, I’ll definitely be coming back.

Mandi Schreiner says

I made it to 46% before I gave up. First 20% has massive information overload and no action. I was overwhelmed by the world. When things finally get going, I had already lost interest.

I also felt confused by the feelings between the hero and heroine. We are told there is this sexual chemistry between them but I never felt it.

The story just didn’t flow together and did not keep my interest at all.

Kt says

Kyana is the only one of her kind, and she is the world’s best hope in stopping the Dark Breeds from wiping out humanity. She may be a Dark Breed herself, but she has devoted her life to the Order of Ancients and protecting the innocent, despite what has been done to her in the past. She doesn’t hesitate to accept the

Order's mission to find the key to hell. Well, that is until she learns Ryker will be escorting her in the mission. He's the only man that has ever gotten to her, and she wanted nothing to do with him ever again. They will have to team up despite the animosity between them as a dark god is rising and they are the only ones who can stand in his way.

Greek mythology has always been one of my favorite themes in a book, so as I started reading this book and realized just how deeply rooted it was in the mythology, I became one happy girl. The paranormal aspects are perfectly blending into the mythology, making for a completely realized world, full of characters that you can't help but feel for. The fact that the gods are dying, yet are in the process of finding replacements, was really original and fascinating to me. In all of the other books I have read that have mythology in them, the gods are typically arrogant beings that would rather just die out than be replaced. Of course the gods still show some of that self-importance, especially Ares, but what more can you expect from the god of war?

I've always loved books where there is a past history between the main characters, and the current story is based on them being pushed back into each others lives. (Typically much to their dismay.) Kyana is so scared to let anyone close to her due to her past, and heck, even the present as she is treated as unworthy despite all of the good she does. The only man that has ever been able to get under her skin is Ryker, but he turned down her advances years ago. Of course he has his reasons, and they are not what she thinks they are. So when they are paired up, well she's furious, and he is scared he won't be able to say no a second time. The two of them felt like magnets to me. Sometimes they would line up and be drawn together by such a strong force, and other times their polarity would be reversed and no matter what, they just couldn't bring it together. The sexual tension between them was palatable, and made for one heck of a steamy read. I was caught between wishing they would just get it on, and wanting them to wait to make sure it would be something long lasting, as I really loved the dynamic between the two. I guess only time will tell how things play out, but I just can't help wanting to root for them.

There was one heck of a twist at the end that I never saw coming. This twist took me from really enjoying the book and being eager to read the next, to being completely desperate to get my hands on the next one. I simply cannot wait to see the characters' reactions to this turn in events, and where things will be heading. This book was a fantastic blend of urban fantasy and paranormal romance, giving you a fast paced plot with plenty of romance to steam things up. You'll definitely want to check this book out as you won't want to miss this fantastic new author's debut!

Sharon says

my review over at I Smell Sheep. check it out
<http://ismellsheep.blogspot.com/2011/...>

Ascension (Dark Breed Book #1) by Sable Grace

What a fun read! I would classify this as a PNR with UF elements. It had all the things I look for: kick-ass heroine (Kyana), brooding alpha-male goodness (Ryker), side characters with depth, action packed and a new twist on the old Greek myths (as opposed to the new ones, rolls eyes at self).

The writing is very polished for a debut. The book has been getting a lot of knocks because the first 2 chapters are a bit overwhelming with all the world building. Don't give up on it! I swallowed it all in one gulp and guessed I would figure it all out by the end of the book! I was happily rewarded with the snarky

dialog and action scenes that were fast paced. Most importantly, the sexual tension between Kyana and Ryker was steamy (and otherworldly sex is one of the reasons why we love this genre. I am woman enough to admit it). There was even a twist at the end I didn't see coming, and who doesn't enjoy that?

The only thing that bothered me was the way the book ended. You are reading along and there is a big climactic moment, and then....it ends! I honestly thought the next chapter was missing from the ARC . This isn't so much as a cliff hanger as a shove off the cliff, but what can you do? Cliff hangers, we love to hate them. I will be looking forward to the next book.

Some of my favorite lines: (Ryker and Kyana talking)

"Kyana blinked up at him, unable to stop the warmth of satisfaction she felt at seeing the welts of her palm print on his cheek. 'I shouldn't have slapped you.'

His hard glare rested on her. 'No. You shouldn't have.'

'I should have punched you instead.'"

(Haven, Kyana's best friend)

"I'm not staying out here by myself. I watch scary movies. I know what happens to the blond girl in the woods."

I give Ascension 4 mythological sheep (the Greek kind)

SS

Parajunkee says

Ascension (Dark Breed #1) by Sable Grace

Ascension strikes fast, hits you hard as it thrusts you into a very dark world that had my imagination spinning. It wasn't a world I want to visit anytime soon. I was quickly taken in though, I wanted to find out more. There was so much going on in this novel, new breeds of paranormals, mixes...it was quite fascinating. And then with the intermix of the Greek gods and goddesses I thought it might be too much, but it worked and made for one of the most creatively spun Urban Fantasy novel that I've read in awhile. The one drawback of the novel was that it really did drag towards the end of the novel. It was fast fast fast --- and then came to a screeching halt. It would have been PERFECT if it would have kept up that high intensity pace.

Kyana is half Vampyre, half Lychen a dark breed of an unholy joining for two species. Her kind, the dark breeds are overrunning the world after the gates of Hell opened and released madness into the world. Yet, Kyana has forced herself to step out of her kind's usual evil nature and has joined the Order of Ancients to fight the dark breeds and protect the mortals. Kyana is highly ambitious and when she is given one of the most important missions of her career she sees it as a chance to prove herself. But, she is quickly deflated when she finds she'll be paired with Ryker, a demigod who knows how to push all the wrong buttons where she is concerned. Together they team up, but with a lot of reservations, because their mission is a lot more important than their personal problems.

A highly imaginative Urban Fantasy. Ascension is over-run with uniquely formed paranormals. It had my head spinning. And on top of the crazy world-building the sexual tension between Kyana and Ryker was enough to have me salivating. It was one of those romantic episodes where you want to beat both their heads against the table and scream "Get it on already!" Those are always fun...but, Sable Grace took it to a whole new level. This is definitely one you should look into.

Now for the not so fun parts. The dragging almost killed me, at some point I was ready to just put the book down. The anticipation was gone, because Kyana and Ryker had already somewhat settled their differences and then there was just so much more book to trudge through and clue finding and things like that. I also found the patsy rather convenient and I also found it hard to understand how different the dark breeds were from Kyana...I don't think there was enough explanation. Was it just that if she drank human blood it was drive her to crazy hunger that she couldn't control? Besides that the book was an enjoyable read and highly creative. I can't wait to see what Ms. Grace has in store for us next.

Recommended for fans of darker Urban Fantasy series like the series written by Kelly Gay and Jennifer Estep. There is a lot of violence, bad language and sexual interaction in this novel, recommended for adults only.

Jessica says

So I did make it to the end, but only because I skipped large chunks in the middle. This may explain why it seemed *way* more like urban fantasy than like paranormal romance to me... and urban fantasy of the lover's triangle sort, which is not my favorite. If you're looking for a book with a HEA, this isn't it.

The characters

Do you remember that part of *Buffy* where Faith was all psycho rage-girl? That's Kyana, the heroine of this series. I know some people like PNR heroines like that, but I tend to find them less heroic and more to be pitied; a boyfriend is not a substitute for psychiatric help. And I don't mean that in a snarky way. Kyana has a lot of issues and seems to respond to all of them with thoughtless rage and violence. That's no foundation for a life, much less a relationship.

Ryker seems to be the fated-mate hero and Geoffrey is the bad boy/best friend hero. I think Ryker is supposed to be the one Kyana ends up with, but given that he mostly postures and snarls, as a romantic hero I didn't find him that impressive, but like I said... I skipped some parts in the middle.

The world-building

This part was the most interesting to me. The use of Greek mythology, vampires and Lychen (which makes me giggle, because I keep reading it *lichen*) was entertaining and seemed much more thought-out than the

characters.

The plot

Standard urban fantasy, save the world stuff.

Overall, the world-building and story were interesting enough that I'll check reviews for later books in the series. I'd be hesitant to pick them up, but there's enough potential here that I might like later installments better than I liked this one.

This review was based on an electronic ARC received via NetGalley.

Paranormal Kiss says

4.5 Stars

Ascension by Sable Grace is the first book in the Dark Breed series. It is an action packed mix of fantasy, mystery and romance. There are Greek gods, demons, witches, vampires, shape shifters and humans. The plot is fascinating and complex. The pace is fast and holds your attention. You will find yourself immersed in a world that is richly detailed and completely unique. The characters are very well written. Kyana is a great heroine. She is strong, independent and sarcastic with a soft side that she rarely shows. She is used to taking charge and isn't afraid to speak her mind. Her love interest in this novel is Ryker. He is also a strong character, used to leading and the sparks fly when he and Kyana are forced to work together.

Ascension is a terrific book and a very enjoyable read. It has everything you could ask for in an Urban Fantasy novel and shows promise to be a fantastic series. The ending is great and will be sure to leave you anxious for the next book. Ascension is highly recommended for fans of Urban Fantasy.

Blood Rose Books says

In her debut novel Sable Grace introduces the reader to a world that is still controlled by the Greek Gods, but have the vampires working for them in order to protect their Chosen:

Kyana is a rare breed, considered an abomination by some as she is Half Vampire half Lychen, but it is this combination that makes her the best Hunter within the Order. Kyana has embraced more of the vampire side of her, but when the Gates of Hell have been reopened she is going to have to rely on both sides in order to close the gate, protect those that she loves and keep herself alive. Although Kyana has been given help from the Gods, the Gods are becoming weak and there is more to the gates being open, it is a conspiracy in the true sense, destroy those in power, and there may be nothing that Kyana is able to do to stop them.

This book was okay, but I was not as entertained by the book compared to other debuts that I have read this year. There was something missing in this book that would move it from okay to great and I think that it was the overall flow of the story that did not work for me. It seemed too pieced together, that it lacked the natural flow to the story. I think that Grace was attempting to do too much and mix too many genre in order to achieve it. I commend Grace though, for trying something new and different in an over saturated paranormal genre but I think it was just too much to try in her debut

I found I was unable to connect with Kyana, the main character. She was too full of herself and fell into the typical female lead in this genre, which I wish that authors within this genre would get away from. She was headstrong, would not listen to other people's opinions and had to prove that she could do everything herself. She is the best hunter in the Order yet she still felt like she had something to prove. Also I wasn't crazy about her interaction with Ryker, they are supposed to have history and heat and want for each other, but I never really believed it in their interactions. I think Ryker is an interesting character and his path with Ares I think will be interesting, I just do not see him and Kyana together.

I disliked where Grace ended the book. The novel was already short, there could have been one more push at the end there, instead of what I feel back to where they were in the beginning, but starting again. It felt like one big circle and Grace was unsure how and when to end the book, so she just decided to end it now. I think Grace could have continued the novel a little bit longer and started the Hunt in this book, I think it would have rounded out the book better and it would have left the book off in a better place.

This was an okay debut, but I think that I had more issues with the novel than likes. I think that once Grace is able to hit her stride as an author and does not try to do too much in her novels they will be a must read. I may read the next book within this series, but it is not on my Must Read list.

Cheers!!!

Rebekah Lyness says

When I opened this book, I didn't know what to expect. I hadn't read the back blurb but the front cover appealed to me.

To begin with it was a bit confusing to work out what was going on. In brief there are gods, demi gods, Lychen (werewolves) Dark Breed (vampires both good and bad) demons and leeches as well as the kinda slug icky creatures. Kyana is a half breed. She has overcome her bloodlust and now works as a tracker for Artemis Goddess of the Hunt. Her job is to find the people that the gods want protected called the Chosen. The Chosen are humans who have been marked to replace the gods now that their powers are waning. Add to the mix, the gates of Tartarus have been unlocked and with all manner of demons are spewing forth you get an idea of the landscape. Kyana and Ryker's mission is to find the key that will lock the gates of Hell again so that the dead demons stay dead.

This book contains a huge amount of information dumps but instead of jarring you out of the story, they pull you in more. I liked the matter of fact way the characters accept the different types of beings in this world. There is good and bad but not really any interspecies quibbling or fighting. It's more all the beings on the good side, uniting to protect humans.

The intimate scenes are sensual rather than the wham bam thank you m'am or the hard core goes for hours that you often find in this genre. I seriously didn't want this book to end. I got to the last page and couldn't believe it ended where it did. I have so many questions left unanswered I felt myself go "But but but WHERE'S THE REST?"

I'm unashamed to admit I have been sucked into another series. I want more and I want it now. And WOW the sucker punch of Hades,,, Just WOW!

Megan says

I am very proud to say that I have just finished reading my very first ARC from netGalley. Some of the reviews I've seen for this book so far have mentioned that they can't release the review until around April but I looked over everything on netGalley and I can make no such claim. So if the publisher's or the author's would like me to take this review down all you need do is ask.

This book was an excellent first-in-series, as well as a great debut novel. The story mixes Greek myth with vampires, shifters, demigods, and other nightmarish creatures. The door to Tartarus has been opened and all hell has been unleashed on Earth or Above as it is known in the book. Not only are humans being massacred but special people known as the Chosen are dropping like flies.

It is up to Kyana, a vampire/lychen half breed, and the rest of her Dark Breed brethren to protect what is left of humanity and especially the Chosen.

Kyana is the best tracer that the goddess Artemis has so when a very rare artifact, that most believed to be a myth, goes missing Ky is recruited to go on a mission to both find this artifact and the person with the ability to steal it. Along for the ride is Ryker, a demigod, and the only man to get under Kyana's skin and stay there. They set off on a quest to close the door to Tartarus and as the Fates said "save the world."

I really really enjoyed this whole book. Tons of action and romance that made it unputdownable. The heroine is all about kicking ass and she tends to shoot first and ask questions later. I think she is a front runner for my favorite Kick Ass Chick of 2011. I think I also respect her a lot because of all the things she went through prior to her Turning but she still manages to be a strong female. She does have her flaws, as most characters do, she cannot let anyone else be in charge and it seems no matter what Ryker says to her about how he feels she will never believe him. Although towards the end you do see her realize that if she had occasionally listened to her friends things would have turned out differently.

The male lead of course is Ryker, son of Ares. He is an extremely powerful demigod and is in all likelihood Kyana's life mate. He is a lot different from many of the heroes in this book's particular genre. Usually they're all get in your face and force themselves on you until you submit but Ryker is nothing like that. He actually tries to stay away from Ky because he knows that if they were to be together even once it would be his undoing. I think it is so sweet that he wants her to really want him and not just for sex. I see great things in the future of both these characters.

All of the side characters are very well written. The two most important being Geoff, Kyana's vamp tracer friend, and Haven her witchy roommate and best friend. They both play extremely significant roles, which a lot of times the side characters are just there to support the main characters, these two have important destinies of their own aside from Kyana and Ryker's destiny.

This is a bit a lengthy review but I felt the book deserved it. This is the first book this year that I have felt this strongly about. I cannot wait to see what happens next and how Kyana reacts to the news she receives at the end of the book. I believe the next installment is going to be just as action-packed as this one.

Stacy says

Reviewed by <http://urbanfantasyinvestigations.blogspot.com>

I really enjoyed Kyana as a character. She was strong, determined, and edgy. She really is a loner as she doesn't like to show her true self to anyone. She has to grow a lot and put some of her issues on the back burner to help save the world. The world building was great, I loved the descriptions and the different levels of the world that Sable Grace added to the story. The mythology was interesting, and complemented the plot really well. There is a TON of action, and I certainly never got bored. The romance was frustratingly good. Kyana and Ryker have a past and the terms that they went there separate ways on was confusing to both of them and misinterpreted on both sides as well which adds to there love/hate relationship. The ending was awesome, I so was not expecting that to happen even though it is great that it did. I'm excited to see where the series goes. ASCENSION was a great first release for a must read break out (team) author.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

A little review mathematics in thirty words:

Intriguing ideas and use of Greek mythology
- Heroine who teeters on the edge of unlikability more than not
+Supporting hero is great
+ Storyline felt unique from typical UF
= **Good overall!**

3.5/5.0 stars

Reviewed for Bitten by Books: <http://bittenbybooks.com>.
