



American Solace: An Awakening, a Far Future Coming of Age Mythic Fantasy

Jonathan Cook

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A threat loomed in the forests surrounding their town. The trees tossed about ominously and river pools bubbled where they should only mirror the moon's perfection. Storehouses were dwindling, fishermen were coming home with empty baskets, and for the first time since entering the sixth world, farmers were clearing new fields. And they were finding peculiar artifacts in the soil, though the people had little chance to discern their origin or nature. As quick as they could, the priests would come and snatch them up and hide them away, saying only that the artifacts were from another age, definitely not meant for the layperson's eyes.

Little Owl was content to fish and amuse himself by collecting the shells of freshwater mussels, but a long-held mystery about the end of the last age and their deliverance into the present seemed ready to unfold before his eyes. He breaks taboos, disturbs evil spirits, garners the affection of the war chief's daughter, and raises the ire of his elders. They say it is time for his Rite of Passage, where he will learn what totem will govern and guide the rest of his life. But his uncle recommends an alternative, a vision quest in which his nephew will discover his true totem. However, it is an ancient practice which no one since the last age has undertaken, so it will likely be more dangerous than the Rite. But at least it will be authentic. Reluctantly, Owl agrees to go. After days of fasting and ceremonial purification, he begins a perilous journey through mysterious forests.

Meanwhile, their fearsome enemy is spotted nearby. Aware of Owl's departure into the wilds, the chief's daughter pleads with her father to send an escort. He refuses. But Willow is a powerful warrior in her own right, who may just take matters into her own hands. What will she do next?

Far from home, Owl gains tantalizing clues about their deliverance into the present world. But the truth surrounding the end of the last age remains shrouded in mystery. An unexpected visitor joins him on his journey. An old friendship is rekindled. They press on, to an ancient village, the subject of Owl's imaginings for as long as he can remember. The people of the fifth world had abandoned the old town. It was a place to avoid, a place where lingering ghosts and bad spirits were thought to dwell. As they unravel the mystery, the situation grows ever more dangerous.

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From Reader Review American Solace: An Awakening, a Far Future Coming of Age Mythic Fantasy for online ebook

Emiley Allen Bowes says

A beautifully written, sensitive tale of a young man's Rite of Passage. Little Owl is lead by his Spirit to make a Vision Quest journey. While fasting, he purifies his body and seeks his true totem symbol. He is followed by his friend, Red Willow, who fears he may be attacked by rival tribesmen. He encounters almost impossible adversaries; and must fight for his life along the journey.

Very inspiring, a must read for YA and old folks as well.

Ray Simmons says

American Solace, An Awakening, A far future coming of age mythic fantasy by Jonathan Cook may very well be destined to become an American literary classic. This story is that good. This writing is that good. I've read a few stories concerning the original Americans. Some of them have been good. Most of them have only been so-so. This one is great. American Solace works well on several levels. It is a great portrayal of what tribal life must have been like in most pre- agrarian societies but particularly those on the North American continent before Europeans arrived. It shows the three sides of Shamanism, the personal, the political, and the mystical, and it shows how there are always those who want to use steer and twist, the desire to do what's right towards their own ends and desires.

I don't think it's particularly easy going from boy to Man in any age or society. I also believe it's more difficult than usual when there is war and when that war has cost a boy his father, grandfather, and all male relatives that could offer guidance and history. This is the situation Little Owl finds himself in as the time approaches for him to enter the Rites. Rites his Mother's brother thinks have become politicized. So after a few missteps he chooses another way. He chooses a vision quest and this quest will have consequences for the whole tribe's future. The writing is superb, the characters memorable, and the story wonderful. Jonathan Cook has given us an American Jewel in American Solace.
