



Firebird

Anthony Bellaleigh

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Myth has been unleashed.

When an industrial accident on a tiny Mediterranean island unexpectedly pours tremendous heat into ancient bedrock something long-hidden is lying there, waiting. Trapped for over two millennia in the dark and cold of the ground no-one could have predicted this sudden burst of incubating heat. This maternal warmth. This nuclear reawakening.

Myth has returned as a dreadful reality. A reality so dreadful that the mighty Roman Empire tried to erase it from history. So dreadful that humankind would rather not remember - would rather not even recognize it in the first place.

Myth has suddenly become a swathe of death and destruction and now only one man has the knowledge to track it down...

15+ Action & Adventure, Sci-fi Fantasy Thriller. Full length (c.114,000 words). First published May 2011. This edition (June 2012) set out using International English spelling (where relevant).

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Firebird Details

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Author : Anthony Bellaleigh

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Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Adventure

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From Reader Review Firebird for online ebook

Rich K. says

I like to read Indy authors as a matter of support and diversity. Is this book perfect? No. Is it fun? Yes. Kept me reading at a good pace, and I did enjoy it. Like any story, I can't help but think of things I would have handled differently, but that is my nature and not my place. This is his work, and I applaud Bellaleigh for putting forth the effort and entertaining me. Some of the what I will call "science of sight" is murky at best, but we need to give scifi/fantasy authors a bit of leeway; remember the "fi" is for fiction. It was exciting and if it sounds like a story that might interest you, give it a try. I have no regrets.

Gabe says

I had to remove this book from my reading list. I just couldn't put anymore time into it. I'm not sure if it was just me but it really seemed to be hard to follow. Messy at best.

J. says

Misused commas and hyphenation are driving me nuts and regularly jolting me out of the story, which is starting to stray into political thriller territory along with a special forces trained scientist who just happens to believe There's Something Out There. Except for the commas, the writing is solid and inviting. The characters are better developed than the norm, and honestly, I'm a sucker for a good Godzilla-type story. But the scientist expecting it, looking for signs of it... eh, my disbelief is no longer suspending.

Matthew S. says

Totally forgettable and a waste of time. I was interested in the concept, which I thought was brilliant. I think the myth of the Firebird, as in the subject of Stravinsky's Ballet, or the Phoenix and the idea of an animal that has to burst into flame and die to be reborn, are relatively unexplored in literature. This novel also makes the wonderful connection between the Phoenix and the Dragon--and in so doing, I think it unifies and provides an explanation for the disparate accounts of the same mythical creature. However, the telling of the story is awkward and disjointed. It tries to superimpose a love story on top of a nuclear tragedy and tremendous devastation wrought by the Phoenix, and it does little to illuminate the origins of the Phoenix or to make it relevant. By attempting to impose a pseudo-story of a covert military operation to capture the Phoenix and to use it for military purposes borders on absurdity.

I think the most telling example that provides the reasoning for my rating is that the one scene that was the most moving in the entire book was at a Greek aquarium dolphin show where the dolphins can recognize the Phoenix while the humans can't seem to see it until it is too late, and through their heroism, save the life of a small child at the cost of the life of one of the dolphins in the aquarium. If only the humans in the story were as likeable as the dolphins.

Georgie says

Originally, I'd picked this book to read at random from a list of recs and thought the premise was interesting enough to warrant a read.

I'm rather interested in Greek mythology as a rule and am a bit of a sucker for modern-vs-myth stories.

For the first couple of chapters I was quite interested in the characters and their situations, but I became disappointed and disenchanted fairly early into it.

The plot seems to stagnate in the middle, the female characters (bar one) only seem to be there as romantic interests and at times I had a job recalling who was who as the author likes to switch between referring to the characters by their first and last names.

There are one or two aspects of the book I liked- Mike being a soldier and not just a scientist made a nice change to the norm and the p.o.v. of the Phoenix (or is that dragon?) was interesting.

Despite my issues with varying points, I made myself read the rest of the book in the hope it would pick up (plus I refuse to let a book beat me into discarding it before I'm done), but sadly I was all too pleased to delete it from my kindle with no regrets.

All-in-all, it's an interesting idea but is unfortunately rather poorly executed.

Norma Budden says

This is a great book about a being which terrifies and wreaks destruction to everyone in its path. However, long after the last page has been read, I've come to realize the creature wasn't deliberately being cruel; he was just doing what he had to do to survive.

The Pirate Ghost (Formerly known as the Curmudgeon) says

Firebird

By Anthony Bellaleigh

Since this book has undergone revision, I've decided to suspend the nitpicking comments of my review until I can revise and extend my remarks accordingly, taking the changes into account in their proper context.

I've wrestled with what to comment on in this review. The rating is easy for me 3 stars. For an explanation of what that means for me, go here:

<http://www.goodreads.com/story/show/2...>

“3 Star Read – A good read. This is not a perfect book, but the problems aren't insurmountable. It meets a

standard of enjoyability. It's a recommendable read that anyone could enjoy. It probably has no special message embedded in the plot. It's just a fun read."

I'd even expand on my explanation to say a 3 star read can be a heck of a lot of fun to read and this book is. I liked the characters. I liked the plot. And I loved the monster. There are some things that set off the "nag-monster" that lurks in the back of my mind so, it's not a perfect read and, I can see some people not being willing to rate it well.

Despite the problems I had with it (more on that later), I felt that wonderful lift and desire/compulsion to read more and more that comes with really good reads. This I chalk up to the magic of the author. I've known some guys that could write a really good, solid, helpful technical manual before who also "dabbled at" something more mainstream and entertaining. Then when I read it there was that awkward silence that comes between the thoughts "Oh, my god he's serious," and, "Did I just throw up a little in my mouth?" Anyone can string grammatically correct words together with machine like precise punctuation but that doesn't make them a wonderful writer. I may love to eat, but that doesn't make me a good cook.

While I read this I did get that sense of magic that let me know, I'm going to get transported somewhere exciting and have a wonderful front row seat for an amazing performance. Some call that skill, and, some believe that's an innate talent. Whatever you wish to call it, that magic is on display in this book. Bellaleigh is a storyteller and this is a wonderful story. I did have some problems with the content and plot, and, as is my wont to do at such times, I wrote volumes of criticism focusing on those. Then, when it came right down to it, even though I feel my critique was accurate, it felt superfluous against the body of work and how much I enjoyed it. Call it unconditional love, or call it a craving for a ham and cheese sandwich, I just liked the book, problems and all. I just can't bring myself to write my usual dissertation about those things I think could have been better (and there are some) because such things would overshadow how much fun the book was to read. So, I'll touch on those things here, and probably send a more detailed version to Anthony Bellaleigh to do with what he likes. My reviews, when printed out, have been known to make good toilet paper.

What do you get with this read?

- 1) You get a wonderful monster. I liked the Phoenix. I liked the way Bellaleigh folded Dragon and Phoenix legends together and I liked the way the creature grew and developed. I thought there might be a better way to approach some of the more scientific aspects of the creature, but, when it came down to a ravaging hungry beast wreaking terror on the unsuspecting bipeds, this critter turned out to be a lot of fun.
- 2) You get a nostalgic read. This book really did remind me of those 1950s monster movies where everybody has to stop the creature before it devours the world. It's King Kong and Godzilla, or "It came from beneath the Sea." This is an era of film making where good guys are just plain good guys. Heroes throw themselves in front of innocents to shield them from harm, A team of knights in shining armor versus a creature more powerful anything they imagined, a story that's two notches, maybe three down the complexity ladder from a modern comic book (which by the way I think is a compliment. Comic Books in the silver age (particularly Marvel Comics) had always been more complex and involved than most non-comic book reading adults ever dared admit).
- 3) You get wonderful "white hat" characters that are likeable. For me, there are similarities between the team in this book and the team battling similar problems around London in the BBC Series "Primeval." A paramilitary group out to catch, explain and combat the super-normal beasts that show up. I thought the characters all had believable back stories, some that we learned upon meeting them, some we learned as we

went along. There were also a lot of things I thought could have been explored further or tangled into the web of the plot. A some of the scenes or flash-back memories or plain descriptive histories reminded me of the old Ian Allen Disaster movies like “The Towering Inferno” and “Airport” where we were allowed a real time peak into the lives of the characters. The Airport Manager having an affair, the playboy pilot with a fledgling love affair or the family on the 190th floor struggling to try and keep their parents together. We start off with a glimpse into how much Pressure Judy is under and how much pressure she in turn puts on her staff. (I’ve got some don’t likes I’ll get to later on, but, nothing is ever 100 percent good or bad when dealing with people.)

4) A realistic and yet romantic, view of Southern Europe. The sidewalk cafés and restaurants on Corfu before the Albanian Collapse where I and my shipmates sat at a table ordering three entrees each that everyone else in the dining room was splitting between two. The Little details like the waiter when asked if we could get a Cappuccino after dinner that quickly took off his apron and ran across to the Bistro across the street paid for the cappuccino and carried it back to our table, no questions asked and a reasonable price put on our bill. Americans aren’t used to service like that or the almost lazy, “take your time and enjoy your meal and your company” attitude of restaurateurs in Italy and Greece. Granted these were fleeting glimpses, few and far between but, I felt as if I had been to some of these places when I was stationed in Greece or Italy.

5) The pace of the story in the early going. The story had an “investigative phase” that moved at an urgent yet still leisurely pace. Then it started ramping up as they learned more about what happened and discovered there was a mad biped munching monster on the loose. I liked the element of doubt in the main characters about what was happening and what was going on. The suspense and edge of your seat thrill built nicely in the first half to first 60% of the book. (Something fell away towards the end, but, you guessed it, more on that later, and, I’m not sure if it was a letdown in plot, pace or complexity.)

Warnings (always warnings)

Generally this is suitable for anyone from YA to OA (old age). There is...

1) Some Monster madness—this critter munches down man, woman, child, and live stock without discrimination. Bellaleigh does not pull punches for children, ladies, old timers, men, fish or cattle. I happen to like this and I do not find this story particularly gory or violent but I know that some people really can’t stand to read about children getting hurt. There are some scenes where children get eaten.

2) There is at least one sexist, villain who gets into the sexual harassment of women. It isn’t pleasant. It is not glorified. It is handled appropriately. It’s not a overt or prevalent theme, but it is in here along with some “salty” sexual talk. I don’t think it would upset a reasonable person. It’s used in proper context and is not “gratuitous” in any way, but, I am a retired sailor, it takes an awful lot to offend me. I don’t want to underestimate the affect it might have on some people.

Cathy says

FIREBIRD took me longer to read than any book I have ever read so far in my whole life. And I read a lot! I usually finish a book with in 3-5 days, but this book didn't really pull me in to make me continue reading at my normal pace. It wasn't until about 75%-85% on my Kindle Fire that I picked up the pace since I was more motivated. I wanted to find out how the story was going to end.

There were too many cuss words in this book for my taste. I didn't really care for all the military words....it is kind of annoying when you don't understand the terms. Another thing I didn't like was this book had a lot of words that were not American English words. Most of those words were not even in my dictionary app so it made it hard to understand some lines.

(This may be a SPOILER ALERT.....but not much.)

The plot was good though I don't think it made sense for the Phoenix to be invisible to our eyes due to DNA. The author never mentions if the Phoenix was hibernating, or what, while it was on that island under the Atlas plant. :/ It would have been nice to know.

Lena says

I really enjoyed this book! It was fast paced, the story kept me hanging on the edge of my seat, but at the same time Firebird managed to really pull me in to the story, the characters and the journey travelled. I definitely recommend it!

Jim Brown says

A real nice story

It had me from the start. This book was a very good read. Also very entertaining fantasy as good as it gets. A modern fantasy set in a modern age still with dragons. A nice mix of modern military verses ancient creatures.

Doreen Dalesandro says

Kindle freebie, 12/25/12
