



Anaimon: The Starfall

Timothy Nancarrow

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The reign of the Gods of Anaimon is sundered abruptly, when Propagatoris, ruler of Anaimon's divine pantheon, casts himself into the twin suns of the world, obliterating him from existence and triggering a cataclysm that tears apart the Gods' star-lit ethereal home. Their divine forms broken and ruined during the sudden, violent descent, the Gods fall and smash into the great cities of Cpharan and Cphesus, killing thousands, almost destroying with them their most beloved priestess, Burning Flower.

Amidst the desolation and chaos, the Gods utter a final pulse of communication, telling Burning Flower with their dying breath that Anaimon is but one world, and that other cycles of Anaimon exist beyond even the Gods' reckoning. If Burning Flower can find the three sigils that lead the way through these worlds to 'Horizon', she may be able to restore Anaimon and the Gods, and undo the great calamity that has occurred.

Burning Flower is not alone in her search for the sigils, as a bestial enemy breaks free of their borders and begin to march across Anaimon; ravenous nightmares and misshapen hordes come to destroy all that Burning Flower and the Orders have fought for. Amidst such turmoil, the human enemies of the Order find new resolve; the nomadic, scattered tribes of the Iera who have been persecuted for their animistic beliefs and customs; the Aletheians, apostate criminals, smugglers, and exiles who value free will and their 'ultimate truth' above all else; and the Syndicals, rebellious heretics who have devolved into a broken people concerned only with survival in the bleak, barren emptiness of the world.

These factions and forces surge and swell even as the Orders slowly fray and tear themselves apart in the wake of the Gods' death. Pursued relentlessly by friend and foe across their slowly dying world, Burning Flower and those survivors willing to restore Anaimon must journey across the lands in search of the sigils, to find their way to 'Horizon', and the enigmatic power that lay beyond.

Anaimon: The Starfall Details

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From Reader Review Anaimon: The Starfall for online ebook

Leone says

I liked it! I am married to the author though ;)

I spend most of my days talking to my baby and toddler, the language got me using my brain once again more than I usually do.

Berry says

Here's my shortened review of Anaimon: the Starfall. For the full review, please visit the bestfantasybooks dot com fan forum.

Here goes:

What I liked best about Anaimon: the Starfall is the writing style of the author, the setting (the world of Anaimon), the story and the magic system. What I felt could be better were the characters and the pacing. More on all this below.

What I liked best

Writing Style:

If you've ever read something written by Timothy Nancarrow then you know this man is amazingly articulate. His short posts on the BFB forum often have the feel of Arthurian legend, and this is exactly how Anaimon often feels. I don't care if you're an Oxford professor with a degree in linguistics; Anaimon will teach you a thing or two about the English language, I can guarantee that. Long story short: Nancarrow has a way with words. This eloquence also flows over into the dialogues of the characters, which is most often very fitting. The descriptions of the world of Anaimon are breath-taking. Tim makes you see the sprawling city state of Cphesus, makes you gaze upon the plains of Renth and makes you shiver from the cold in the mountains of Heddenlach. In the dialogues the characters make use of the same descriptive style, which occasionally makes one feel as if you're reading a Shakespeare story (in my opinion this is a good thing, as it is very original. I can safely say I've never come across anything like it in the fantasy genre).

Setting:

The world of Anaimon is big, rich in history (kind of reminded me of Malazan) and full of different races and peoples. The erudition of Nancarrow and his knowledge of all things historical becomes readily apparent when you read about the different nations, peoples, tribes, creatures, legends, myths and so on.

There are the great city states of the Order; reminiscent of the ancient Greek poleis in how they are governed (if you've read The Republic from Plato or Aristotle's Politics, then you find much you'll recognize), but have a Meso-American feel to them as well. The names of military and bureaucratic facets of the Order are Greek and/or Latin sounding (Militares, Basileia Acolytus Prima, Polemahkes Midniarios etc), while the character names are reminiscent of old native American names (Burning Flower, Wandering Star, Little Fire etc). There's much and more to tell of the Orders, but suffice it to say that they're basically theocracies where a priest-ruler with heavenly mandate of a very diverse (and cool) pantheon rules swathes of land with the help of a strong military establishment.

Always threatening the Orders are tribes living on the outskirts of civilization. There are for example the Iera, a proud, roaming people that have fought (and mostly lost) many wars against the Order. There are the sea-faring Alethians who are shunned by the more civilized peoples of Anaimon (for good reason?). Then there are the Viking-like Syndicals, roaming the Northern reaches of the continent of Heddenlach. The list goes on and on.

There are also many fantastical creatures roaming the world of Anaimon; some sentient, others not, and others god-like. Special mention has to go out to the War-Harlot, the champion of the evil Madritaihri creatures. Awesome!

The Story:

Can't tell much about this without spoiling anything, so you might want to read the blurb of the book to get an impression (it's up at the top of this page).

What I can say about the story is this: it's engaging, in places quite original and fun.

Magic-system:

The magic system is well thought out and subtle. The main magic system is that of the Order. The Gods grant the experienced magic users visions of the past, present and possibly, the future. These visions are called memory-echos. The subtlety lies within the fact that it's more a mnemonic experience than a supernatural experience (if that at all makes sense...). I believe it would be very well possible to actually use the memory-echo technique in real life to be honest (although maybe in a slimmed down version). In any case, I think it is highly original and it suits the story and the world of Anaimon really well. Other magic systems are also hinted at (the Iera rain dance comes to mind), but are not yet elaborated on.

So those were the best parts. Now on immediately to the parts I felt could have been better.

What could have been better?

The Characters:

I felt the characters could be fleshed out a bit more. I also felt the motivations of the lead characters were sometimes a bit unrealistic. I didn't particularly like the characters of Burning Star and Little Fire. Burning Star is holier than the pope and Little Fire is a whiney know-it-all. On the other hand, Wandering Star was a cool character; brooding and melancholy, yet with a big heart and a taciturn type of humor that occasionally flashes to the surface (especially during, after, or right before battle). Coiled Storm was also a likeable character. She's really feisty and I hope we get to see a lot more of her in the sequels. The protagonists could also use some of Abercrombie's or GRRM's 'greyness'. I don't want to read about how Burning Flower is beyond reproach and sometimes downright angelical. I also want to read that, although in essence she is a good person, she also really likes to pick her nose when she thinks the others are sleeping. Or that she has secret cravings for Coiled Storm, which is eating at her conscience, because she knows such lust is wrong! Okay, that's perhaps taking it a bit too far, but I think you catch my drift.

The Pacing:

Now this is the point that bugged me the most. The book takes off pretty slowly. Even though the cataclysm of the Starfall takes place pretty early on in the book, I didn't feel the book really took off until about 150 pages in (the book is 400 pages long). Also, in some parts I felt the story dragged a bit (for example when our heroes reside with the monks). However, the final 200 pages of the book are fast-paced and a lot of fun. Never a dull moment. I particularly liked the part where our heroes reside on a boat. Cool stuff! I think it's a bit of a shame that the first 200 pages are not as engaging as the final 200 pages.

Minor irk:

I was sometimes confused when the characters where having a conversation. It was sometimes difficult to know which of the characters was talking. After some chapters I realized this is because Nancarrow first lets the character say his/her piece, and only after that he indicates which character said those lines. Example:

"Who do you suppose is out there? Should we attempt to ascertain their identity, or do we remain here and hide?", Little Fire asked her in a breathless, muted voice.

This scene had multiple characters in it, so there was really no well to tell up front who said those words. It would have been clearer if that line was formulated in the following way:

Little Fire shook his head. "Who do you suppose is out there? Should we attempt to ascertain their identity, or do we remain here and hide?", the small scholar asked her in a breathless, muted voice.

This is just a suggestion of course, and I'm not even sure other persons will have the same irk, but there's that.

That's about it! I listed the goods and the bads and like in every other review I seem to have rambled on quite a bit, so without further ado here we are with the final verdict:

I grade Anaimon: the Starfall by Timothy Nancarrow with an 8, so you guess you can say I enjoyed this title quite a bit. Looking forward to the next installment (and to more scenes with the war-harlot!)

Cheers,
Berry

Nathan Schmidt says

I received this book through Goodreads First Reads, and I am grateful for the opportunity.

I really enjoyed reading this book, as it had an epic and complex nature to it that kept me interested. All of the characters were intriguing, and the depth of the god element of the setting was nice, along with the way you had a variety of different opinions and philosophies.

I had no major issues with the story, but it was kind of jarring how you went from Coiled Storm to Burning Flower after the first chapter, and how you had the two meet all of a sudden. Given how she was discussing the circumstances that led to Coiled Storm getting exiled, I thought that the early scenes with Burning Flower were happening perhaps at the very same time that Coiled Storm was leaving, so I was confused as to what had happened to her aunt all of a sudden. But it might have been me not paying attention enough, I admit.

The second issue I had was that the ending, though it's just the end of the first book admittedly, seemed a

little anticlimactic. I was really hoping for a second battle against Jagged Meadow for the finale, or some other kind of battle, and the monsters near the end, while still exciting, wasn't quite what I'd hoped for.

Finally, I appreciate the depth of worldbuilding that you have done, but I would suggest putting a glossary of some sort after the end of the book, as I sometimes got confused about things.

Overall, this was a great book, and I'm dying to see what comes next.

Jill says

A riveting debut. It is an interesting and vibrant world. A great adventure story. I really like the developing relationships between the main characters. I appreciated the wide range of language used, which helped to establish the different backgrounds of some of the characters, Coiled Storm in particular was entertaining. It was a little short at 398 pages but still a great read. I will definitely be purchasing the remainder of the series when they are released.

Grimread says

So a whole while back I won this book on a FB book competition and as I finally got around to read it. It is now time for me to review and rate it.

Unfortunately I'm one of those reviewers that are brutally honest when it comes to bothersome things. So here goes and this is right to the point with "spoilers" and all:

As a reader you are too preoccupied with the way how the book is written instead of focusing on the story.

I find it a great shame because the story does have a great potential to be exiting but is undermined by the constant misleading dialogues. you never know who is saying or doing what to whom because of overuse of names in every conversation. If this is supposed make this book more original it's a hit and huge miss, as this confusion pulls the whole narrative down.

Having this third person POV narration makes it sound like every character that speaks or thinks is alone with nobody as a companion. I thought they were travelling as a group, but most of the time you get the feeling like the character just walked somewhere on his/her own then suddenly the whole group is back together. Anything that Coiled Storm or Burning Flower do together with the guys always sounds like they are alone be it running away or eating.

page244 "Burning Flower had travelled all through the night and most of the next day, finally finding shelter in a stand of thick trees and vegetation. Satisfied that they had outrun their pursuers and were safe for the time being, Wandering Star had apologised to her before he collapsed in front of her;..."
Wait!? You mean he was with you? I thought Burning Flower travelled alone.

The main characters are missing personality for you to love, hate, understand or relate to. They are all so bland that you can easily just ignore them. Is what I would like to say but another thing adds to the dislike. While reading you form a picture of the characters personality and you picture their facial and body responses accordingly but in this book the emotional responses of the characters are almost all the time

contrary to the readers notion of the character. I don't expect that the book characters have to conform to the readers vision but when the response just doesn't match the situation or the portrayed character that does become annoying. Just when you thought -'Ah, Little Fire is behaving like this because of what happened in the past', yet in the next situation (usually the end of the paragraph or dialogue) this image of him is crushed because he acts like a completely different character. It's hard to like a character if the personality is so inconsistent.

One thing that I don't understand so I thought it might be an Australian thing is Coiled Storm's speech pattern. What are all those extra words (any, some)? Why use them at all? If it's her accent, why is she the only one in the family that speaks so. If it's slang, wouldn't teachers want for her to speak properly so wouldn't she at least try to speak properly to them? If it's to hide her origin when she meets others back at the destroyed city, why did she speak like that even before going to the Iera? I'm sure of one thing, It's not an Iera thing since she spoke like that even before going there. Also nobody at Kheimona spoke like her either. Is it to portray her as dumb? Wasn't she top of her class?

And now to touch the subject of the Gods and the plot hole. The (Great Puppeteer) Proskaleos commits suicide by throwing himself into the two suns. 'Why?' you ask yourself. 'Maybe it will be revealed later in a bombastic revelation,' and you let it go even though it makes absolutely no sense. Unless the god is so bored of his immortal life that he prefers to just kill himself. And you start to think 'But why does that cause every other god to fall and die too? And how come half of the world (two of the cities) know about the fall while everybody else is ignorant of the fact?' Neither is it explained why this fall leads to the end of Anaimon except by Burning Flowers constant nagging that it is The End.

The Gods don't really have any higher function but sending visions past, present and future only to Basilea and they could interpret them however they see fit. The Basileas are the ones who really manipulate with peoples lives.

In retrospect the peoples knowledge is very inconsistent. Either the character knows or is aware of far too much on a subject, usually with information that is just so conveniently placed there to find. And I must say Burning Flower has an incredible capability of weaving a grand tale from one vague sentence but the author is trying to explain way too much ending up not really explaining anything at all. On the other hand the characters are so naïvely ignorant of general things that are public knowledge and the character should have known, just so the reader has the chance to learn something new of the world.

Of course Coiled Storm can ignore all the ornate masonry and vegetation in the city she lived in her whole life but is being so meticulously described for us. She is not an outsider as the reader.

And one more thing. **I refuse to do the glossary for you!!!!**

Would it really be too much trouble to put all the titles and names of ranks, places and persons in a table with an explanation? 100 pages into the book and I had no idea what a Proskaleos Midniaros is. Sure it's nice and fancy to use a composition word of Latin and Greek but if the word loses its meaning because I didn't remember the definition of it from 50 pages back... Wait! I wasn't really defined so I should I just ignore it for the rest of the book? Maybe it is the best option. It might never come up again. But the title Basileia Tychesis will forever mean God's Whore for me.

I have never had so many notes and in so many places for a review as for this book. And I'm confident that I would come up with more stuff to write about if I tried to read more. But as this book was such a tedious read I doubt I would get a chance to get the next instalment the same way.

Cathy Williamson says

I loved the concept of the book but was a little disappointed when I read it. It seemed to be very long-winded and it took a long time to get into.

I found the plot quite convoluted, and the language used for Coiled Storm's speech just annoyed me. Yes, I know it was part of the characterisation, but the excessive use of the words 'any' and 'some' was just irritating after the first 50 pages.

I also didn't like the repeated use of names - in one paragraph the name Little Fire was used 5 times, which meant it didn't flow very well. A few personal pronouns instead would have made all the difference.

All that being said, I did enjoy the basic story and thought it could progress well in later novels.

Andrew Clementson says

Well I bought this book when it was first released, however it coincided with the year my son was born and leisure reading time has been at a premium ever since! However, I have now finished the book and wanted to give it the credit that this first novel deserves. I won't deny that I consider myself a friend of Tim's and he has put his hand to many things during his life and succeeded at them all and this novel is no exception.

I believe it had a slow start but this did a good job of building the humanity of the main protagonists and allowing you to empathise with them. When the Starfall does occur, there is the sudden jump to action which rides on through to the end of the book. There is a wonderfully elaborate description of the environment throughout which allows your imagination to run wild and visualise the world that Tim has created. I like the novel naming system that has been used but it can take a little getting used to and to remember who is who to start with.

I like the addition of the romantic aspect between two of the main characters and the hint of a long standing but unspoken love between them.

I was a little confused as to the portrayal of Coiled Storm as she seems to go from young girl to maturing woman back to being like a girl again. That aside there are many more aspects to the story that i really enjoyed;

-The build to the reveal of the different enemies gives a sense of foreboding and stacking of the odds against heroes.

- The description of the fight scenes is very good and intricate.

- The use of the 'memory echoes' is a great idea as it allows those readers with a vivid imagination to relive those memories themselves! Also, they are a nice way of recalling events in the history of the characters and in the world they live.

- There is a good placement of the main characters being split from each and the uncertainty of their survival.

- I really like the teasers about the other continents, other races, the enemies and a potential leviathan in the sea. There is so much potential for future books and spin-offs.

I'd like to finally say that there is truly beautiful piece of writing done for the poem and Tim should be very proud of that.

Considering that this is Tim's first novel it is a great piece of work which clearly has had his heart and soul poured into it. I can't wait for the next one!

