

## G.L. Giles's Review of The Necklace of Terrersylvanous (Book One of the Protector Chronicles) by John Holland

Although this book is rightly categorized as both fiction and fantasy, it's also a bildungsroman of sorts as it follows the development of the young protagonist, Clara, from her somewhat erroneous and mainstream exoteric ideas and adventures to a more accepting and loving mature character. Though the story centers around Clara, there are other characters that the reader may identify with more due to their lack of rigidity and non-judgmental positions. One such character is seen in the one portrayed by Alexcia, who Clara clearly and frequently holds in complete contempt as seen by her scurrilous remarks. Many readers may forge more of a mental bond with Alexcia because of this fact. Or perhaps because Clara has her facts wrong in some cases, even though her supposedly high-brow morality, she frequently comes across as being dogmatically right, would make one perhaps question oneself. One such example is seen on page nine where Clara asks herself regarding the triquetra symbol why the Pagans would display it when it was a symbol of the trinity? It's true that many Neo-Pagans have popularized it to gain association with the Triple Goddess (Maiden, Mother and Crone), but Early Christianity was guilty of the same thing for they took the symbol for their own for purposes of conversion, so it then became associated with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Truth be told, it was a Celtic symbol pre-dating Christianity and may have been a knotted variation of the Hermetic/Judaic triangle. Also, it was believed to be a version of the Celtic triskele which became the triskelion knot. So, somewhat esoteric knowledge eludes Clara at times. And Clara makes the lesser characters, like Alexcia, though somewhat lascivious, seem more likeable because they aren't professing to be right.

Which brings me to the fact that this book reminds me a great deal of some of the books in The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis. I probably read each of the books in the series at least twenty times each when I was a child. For example, like C.S. Lewis, Holland has a good storytelling style in this book, Book One of his *chronicles*; it was therefore easy to read his book in one sitting. And, also like C.S. Lewis, there are clearly Christian undertones throughout even though the book is billed as Fantasy and Fiction. It's interesting to me that Tal's Son (representing the Christ figure in The Necklace of Terrersylvanous) even sounds a bit like Aslan (the Christ figure in The Chronicles of Narnia).

The illustrations generally add to the storyline, and the "Glossary of Being and Places" is a great addition to enable an easy understanding the book. The colloquial language brought a smile to my face and added to the depth of the tale. All in all, an enjoyable read, and I look forward to the books to come!