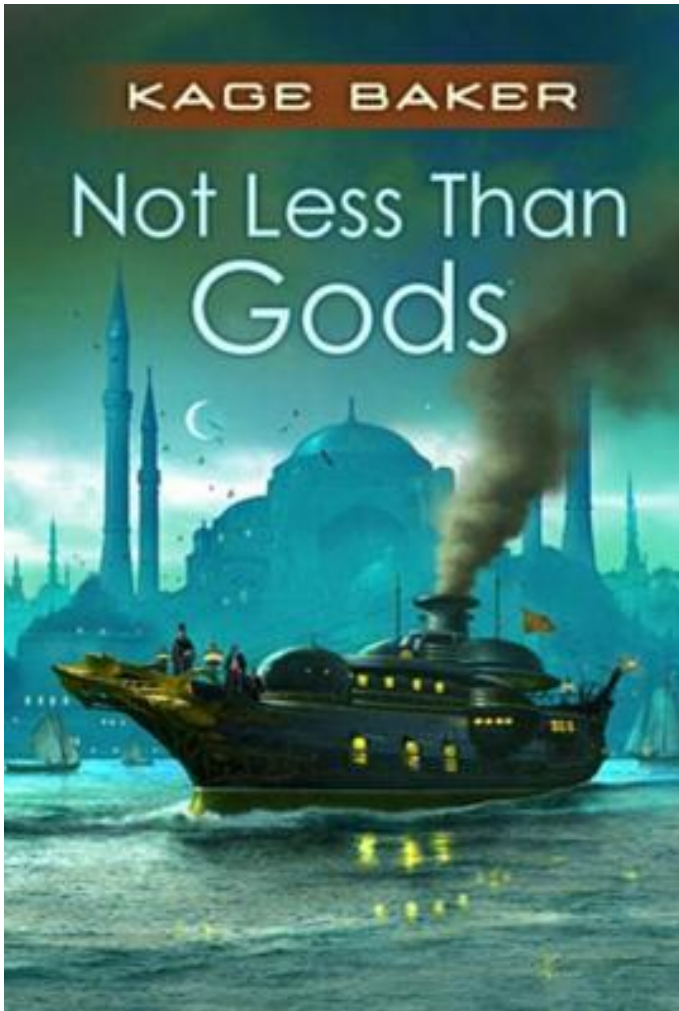

Kage Baker

Not Less Than Gods (The Company #9)



Title: Not Less Than Gods (The Company #9)

Author: Kage Baker

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Description

Recently returned from war, young Edward Anton Bell-Fairfax is grateful to be taken under the wing of the Gentleman's Speculative Society. At the Society, Edward soon learns that a secret world flourishes beneath the surface of London's society, a world of wondrous and terrible inventions and devices used to tip the balance of power in a long-running game of high-stakes intrigue. Through his intensive training Edward Anton Bell-Fairfax, unwanted and lonely boy, becomes Edward Anton Bell-Fairfax, Victorian super-assassin, fleeing across the Turkish countryside in steam-powered coaches and honing his fighting skills against clockwork opponents.

As Edward travels across Europe with a team of companions, all disguised as gentleman dandies on tour, he learns more about himself and the curious abilities he is gradually developing. He begins to wonder if there isn't more going on than simple international intrigue, and if he and his companions are maybe part of a political and economic game stretching through the centuries. But, in the end, is it a game he can bring himself to play?

Edward Anton Bell-Fairfax, the idealistic assassin. Perhaps the most dangerous man alive.

Insightful reviews

Stefanie: i could not even finish this book. I got about half way through and still had no idea of what was happening. The writing style was not my cup of tea and each chapter haf new characters and new setting. it was hard for me to follow that way. I have no idea what was going on. I did not like this book at all.

Diana Gotsch: If you have read Kage Baker's The Company series this book will make a lot more sense. It never really explains who or more correctly what Edward Bell-Fairfax is. Nor does it explain what the Company is what it is really up to. In fact the name Company is never used for the people manipulating the past for their own reasons. I suspect it could be very confusing for a novice reader of this series.

It is the tale of Edward's life before we meet him in Mendoza in Hollywood. It helps explain the man in that book. Someone who has not read the whole Company series will miss some of the irony when the characters in this book talk about the glorious future they are helping bring about. It is also a lot bloodier than most of the other books.

Stefan: Your reaction to the announcement of Not Less Than Gods by consistently excellent SF and fantasy author Kage Baker will probably depend to a large extent on how familiar you are with her The Company series. If you haven't read any of the Company novels or collections, the story of the Gentlemen's Speculative Society (GSS) and one of its operatives, Edward Alton Fairfax-Bell, sounds like an interesting and entertaining steampunk novel. However, if you're familiar with the Company series, your reaction to a novel about "Edward's creation and recruitment by the GSS, his training, and his first mission" will probably be more of the "I want it and I want it NOW!" variety, with the number of exclamation points determined by how

enthusiastic you are about the main series. (I limited myself to one, to avoid the impression that this review was written by a teenage girl. Mentally, please feel free to add a few more.)

In a nutshell, the Company series deals with the operatives of Dr. Zeus Inc., a 24th century company that has discovered the secret of time travel and naturally decides to use it for corporate profit, sending quasi-immortal cyborgs back in time to collect lost art, extinct plants and so on.

One of the things I like best about the Company series is the way the information is slowly revealed throughout the series. For example, the excellent first novel in the series, *In the Garden of Iden*, at first reads like a more or less self-contained story about Company botanist Mendoza, but it takes on a completely different meaning when you read the later books in the series, because there's a huge story arc building up throughout the series, with layers upon layers added to the plot and the characters as the revelations build up.

The two stand-alone Company novels Kage Baker released after the completion of the main series, *The Empress of Mars* and *Not Less Than Gods*, have a completely different impact depending on how familiar you are with the series, because fans already know the entire story and are now being filled in on specific aspects of it — in the case of *Not Less Than Gods*, the early life of Edward Alton Fairfax-Bell, who makes his first Company series appearance in *Mendoza in Hollywood*. In that sense, it's a bit similar to *The Life of the World to Come*, but about Edward rather than Alex Checkerfield. Even though it feels like a prequel, using that term doesn't make much sense in a series that deals with the nature of time travel.

Even if you haven't read any of the Company novels, *Not Less Than Gods* is still a very entertaining read. Kage Baker includes enough hints about the nature of the Company to make sure that new readers will have a broad idea of what's going on — or at least as much as the main characters do. Even without this, the novel is a rollicking adventure story set in the Victorian era, about a small group of GSS agents traveling across Europe and the Middle East, causing havoc and (in the process) affecting history in several ways. They're armed with an array of — for that period — advanced gadgets and weaponry, a distinct appreciation for alcoholic beverages, and a good dose of jolly-old-boy British witticisms. Young Edward is a fascinating character, different from his peers in subtle and not-so-subtle ways, idealistic, tortured, and brave. As always, Kage Baker's prose is delightfully sly, always sounding as if she is sharing a subtle joke with her readers, gradually drawing you in as she unfolds the plot.

As a long-time fan of Kage Baker, I was extremely pleased with *Not Less Than Gods*. If you're in the market for an excellent SF series, I'd probably still recommend starting with *In the Garden of Iden* first, but *Not Less Than Gods* is a solid addition to the Company series and works surprisingly well as a standalone novel.

(This review was also published on www.fantasyliterature.com --- come check us out!)

Lisa: loved this, yet i feel generally simply because i would learn the remainder of the corporate books already. it might be a strange one to learn alone. Steampunky though, in a enjoyable way.

Brenda: No Mendoza, no romance, and the humor is lower-key than the various different corporation books. these are pluses for me. I quite just like the books that pass into corporation secrets, yet this is not a kind of either. That is, the corporate isn't pointed out directly. We spend a short time with Edward in his formative years after which stick with as he is taken in by way of the mysterious Gentleman's Speculative Society. It begins to appear like a undercover agent novel set within the mid nineteenth century. The techno-gadgets might sound like it is a James Bond variety story, yet Edward turns out extra like he belongs in a gentle steampunk John le Carré novel. Edward isn't really going to spell out his innovations and emotions as he will get his first faint glimpses of what is going on. it is all laid out at the pages buffet variety (take what you want). it is a great plus for me, and makes me are looking to rave in regards to the ability of an writer who can do it. i did not care approximately Edward sooner than this, yet now i need to learn the full sequence again. Four stars are simply because i actually loved examining this. The fifth is simply because i will not get it out of my head. loose will and Frankenstein's monster— or perhaps any of us.

Jeremy Preacher: no less than Gods truly works greater than a few of the arc-focused corporation novels, I think, even though Edward ranks very low on my record of favourite characters. Spies operating round Victorian Europe with mysterious know-how and information of destiny occasions is fun, no matter what flaws the publication has. And it has them - fairly it is a personality study, no longer a novel. there isn't any transparent plot, no specific resolution. it truly is only a choice of setpieces. It does make me badly are looking to seek out the ladies of Nell Gwynne's, though, simply because I do benefit from the setting, and dear hookers will be even more enjoyable to keep on with than Mr. Self-Righteous and Neurotic.

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