



# Sky City: The Rise of an Orphan

*R. D. Hale*

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\*\*Winner of Wattpad's: Watty 2014 - People's Choice Award for Science Fiction\*\*

My name is Arturo Basilides. I am an orphan living in the slums of Medio City - the capital of a nation ravaged by a war which was won by extremists. Offered a choice between slavery and disenfranchisement, we exist in an underclass so disconnected we effectively inhabit a different era. Daily life involves scavenging, theft and substance abuse with a bunch of misfits who are somehow still in one piece after years of abandonment. I am a natural born fighter and although I despise warfare, I must witness the downfall of those bastard elites whilst fulfilling my romantic intentions with the forever unattainable girl of my dreams.

Sky City is a sci-fi action adventure with light elements of fantasy. It is set in a near future alternative reality where science is indistinguishable from magic and oppression is near-inescapable. Technology has created a newer, 'superior' form of human and genetically engineered monstrosities are as terrifying as anything encountered in your nightmares. The underclass have been underestimated and as they fight back the boundary between freedom fighter and terrorist becomes increasingly blurred. Meanwhile, the drug-induced haze of a traumatised mind places a question mark over the meaning of reality.

'Sky City: The Rise of an Orphan interweaves heavy social issues and philosophy, milking the sci-fi genre for all its worth. The slum dog's efforts to maintain their humanity in such a heartless age, when everything is going against them is palpable. The 99% versus 1% theme focuses our minds on where society might be heading and forces us to look at things how they are, if we wish them to be truly different.' Dean C. Moore - Author of Renaissance 2.0

## Excerpt

*"As the speculation continues, hours pass and nervous energy has me strumming my fingers. Short, sharp bursts of air whistle through my pursed lips and I cannot help, but picture how helpless Dynah appears. Eyelids become heavy through mental exhaustion but concern is no longer the over-riding emotion, rather sadness that our amazing friend may never return. She is likely where she belongs now. When I am close to the point of sleeping in an upright position, the tattered furniture and surrounding grimaces are illuminated by an inexplicable glow which spreads to the four walls. Shadows are cast outwards, indicating the lightsource is directly above us. With elbows resting on thighs, I look up to see a fiery phoenix with a three-pronged tail which descends to head-height. None of us utter a word, unsure if this visitor is a sign, a messenger or a threat. It lets out a piercing cry, then straightens like an arrow to bolt through the door, leaving a scorch mark on yellowish paint. Our heads turn sharply to track its flight path and we sit, gawping for maybe thirty seconds until the firebird returns to once again float between us. 'I think it wants us to follow.' Emmi stands up and the others rub their heavily breathing mouths in hesitation. On fidgety feet we pursue the firebird into the vestibule and it scorches through the doubled doors so I unlock bolts, grabbing the key for the outer padlock. The gang exit our so rarely uninhabited building to see smouldering wings illuminate an oak as the firebird crosses the road and unveils patches of masonry on the far side. Flying through the cold night air, our supernatural guiding light leads all the way to the jungle where it hovers next to a thorny bush. 'Whoa! It wants us to go in there, in the dark. No chance!' Emmi squawks. The firebird nevertheless enters murky woodland and naturally I am first to be absorbed by the eeriness of this uninviting locale. 'Are you guys coming or not?'"*

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