



# The Dreamsnatcher

*Abi Elphinstone*

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## **The Dreamsnatcher** Abi Elphinstone

Twelve-year-old Molly Pecksniff wakes one night in the middle of the forest, lured there by a recurring nightmare - the one with the drums and the rattles and the masks. The Dreamsnatcher is waiting. He has already taken her dreams and now he wants her life.

Because Moll is more important than she knows... The Oracle Bones foretold that she and Gryff, a wildcat that has always been by her side, are the only ones who can fight back against the Dreamsnatcher's dark magic. Suddenly everything is at stake, and Moll is drawn into a world full of secrets, magic and adventure.

## **The Dreamsnatcher Details**

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Author : Abi Elphinstone

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Genre : Fantasy, Childrens, Middle Grade, Adventure, Magic, Family, Mystery, Fiction

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# From Reader Review The Dreamsnatcher for online ebook

## Mathew says

The Dream Snatcher is a vibrant story of youth, discovery, love and loyalty in a world where, across the river, dark revelations awake.

The story follows the adventures of Moll Pecksniff, an orphaned Romani traveller whose dreams are plagued by dark visions of a masked man shrouded in fire and night. But she is not alone. A ferociously loyal wildcat is her companion and Moll soon meets up with Alfie whose own past is as mysterious as hers. Together they must face the flames and the darkness for the sake of their people and for the sake of her home.

Elphinstone's first novel is one full of energy, honesty, love and adventure. There are so many aspects of the story that I enjoyed: the descriptive language, evocation of setting (I loved how Moll knows the land and can name the trees and the flowers around her), clarity of character and mastery of a complex plot all help find a fine balance between immersion and pace.

An aspect of The Dream Snatcher that helps it shine a little brighter than other children's stories these days is the inclusion of the Romani people. I loved spending time with them in the forest, leaping over broom handles, listening to fortunes being told telling and seeing their good luck omens swaying gently above the front of their wagons. This is a colourful and exotic world; wholly unusual to most of the readers and that makes it exciting.

The pace of the story is as fast as Moll's own beating heart. Even when Elphinstone feels the need to explain something (such as how the soul-splinter works or subtle allusions to both her and Alfie's parts to play in this story) Moll is restless and working, climbing trees or foraging amongst the undergrowth: she is a hero who is happiest embracing and exploring the wild. This passion and pace comes through so strongly in the narrative that the story, with its short chapters and cliffhanger endings sweeps you along, halting only when Skull appears and commands the pages.

True to his name and the face of Moll's nightmares, Skull and his fellow Shadowmasks make great archetypal villains. Never do we see what lies beneath their masked faces. We cannot look into their eyes or identify with them in any way. These are villains who stay true to their purpose: monstrous creatures that we should be scared of. When I first stepped into that camp with Moll I could feel a powerful sense of captivation that reminded me of Darth Vader – except Skull is a lot meaner! And in case having a great bad-guy alongside a gang of savages isn't enough to send shivers down your spine, there are savage hounds and vapours too that warp and bend the land for their own devices.

Elphinstone has packed so much into her story: riddles and songs, talismans and superstitions, cuckoo calls and magical amulets; secrets and spells - almost too much for the 278 pages to hold. Thank goodness then, that there are more to come because I get the feeling that Elphinstone is just warming up. She's probably writing down a dank cave or up a tree poking in woodpecker holes looking for her next idea or riding bareback through a forgotten wood. Wherever she is, I promise you, she has tapped into the spirit of adventure and a love of the natural world that many children crave yet are missing.

Put a copy of The Dream Catcher in their hands and they'll happily go with her.

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## Michelle Toy says

This review was originally posted on [www.talesofyesterday.co.uk](http://www.talesofyesterday.co.uk)

I literally have so much to say about this book that I am really hoping that this review can do this debut authors book justice! I loved this book..... a lot! Since the end of Harry Potter I have been looking for a book and / or book series that could fill that Harry Potter void in my life. A book that has the right mix of great characters, humour, magic and action! It's taken me a while...and I present to you The Dreamsnatcher!

The Dreamsnatcher is about Moll, a twelve year old girl who lives in the Ancientwood with Oak, the great leader of the camp, his wife Mooshie who knows how to inflict pain with a tea towel, a protective feline wild cat called Gryff and a great gypsy camp full of characters and community spirit. Moll was found abandoned in the forest by Oak and Mooshie with no family to call her own. Moll, along with her wildcat Gryff, discover that some dark magic is at play and along with her best friend Sidy and a mysterious boy called Alfie they embark upon a magical adventure in search of the old magic of the bone murmers, special amulets, the truth and to find out what the terrifying Soul Splinter that killed Moll's parents is all about!

Right from the start of the book debut author Abi Elphinstone captures the atmosphere and pace of the book perfectly and the sense that Moll and Gryff, whilst rescuing her horse Jinx, are in great danger is apparent and actually makes your heart beat faster routing for Moll from the offset.

The sense of good and bad is fantastically built up in the readers imagination in the sense that one half the forest, the good Ancientwood has good healthy trees and the bad side of the forest, the Deepwood has unhealthy trees with cages of bones, dead rats and a scary bone mask wearing leader called Skull!

Skull, a witchdoctor, is a truly terrifying villain who creeped me out many times. His whole presence is spooky and provides nerve-wracking tension and I think even Lord Voldemort would be quaking in his robes!

There are some touching friendships portrayed in this book my favourite being between Moll, a very head strong, brave and determined lead character and Sidy who provides the comedy element with his earthworm Porridge The Second and being able to fit eleven chestnuts into his mouth that Sidy thinks will one day make him famous was the deal breaker for this character for me. Alfie, a mysterious boy from Skulls camp provides a sense of mystery and along with Raven his noble horse provide some great moments for the reader. This being said Moll and her wildcat Gryff have a heart warming friendship also and again Abi Elphinstone captures the whole premise of a cat and their loving ways and even the cat language was perfect!

The Ancientwood community and gypsy camp family is again written perfectly. Such great characters who all look out for Moll and Gryff. My favourite of the bunch was definitely a yellow toothed, bow tie wearing character called Hard-Times Bob who's party trick is dislocating his limbs for a laugh (ouch!).

Following these characters on a magical journey through woods, heaths, old cottages, rivers and dreamsnatches is completely page turning and with short fast paced snappy chapters the pages really did just keep turning.

This book has everything! Magic, talismans, woods, tree spirits, rituals, voodoo wax figures, tree houses, oracle bones, witch doctors, riddles and puzzles, touching friendships, fab characters and an adorable wildcat! This book is a real magical adventure. The keywords that jumped out to me from this book were

friendship, family, community and courage.

Upon receiving this book I literally had to prise the book from my 9 year olds, Corey's, hands and in the end had to book share with him! The fights we had over who's turn it was to read the book before bed led to an interesting week or so. Corey is planning to post his own review of The Dreamsnatcher on Tales Of Yesterday very soon over on his first Corey's Corner post....but I can tell you now he absolutely loved this book!

I will be recommending this book to all the children (and adults) I know as one to read in 2015 and a fabulous author to keep an eye on and with the ending setting up book two nicely and is portrayed in such a way that you actually feel scared for what is coming I cannot wait for 2016 when the next book is published!

A fantastic, magical debut Children's novel The Dreamsnatcher is a dream to read!

For more book reviews please visit [www.talesofyesterday.co.uk](http://www.talesofyesterday.co.uk)

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### **JackAndrew Harford says**

What an amazing story!

As soon as I started reading this book I was drawn in to the world of Moll and Gryff. There is excitement written into near enough every page which helps the story keeps it's fast pace. As I was reading I found myself becoming more and more involved in the relationship between Moll and Gryff and think that most children would be able to relate to it. The relationship between them both made me as a reader feel a surge of different emotions from happiness, anxiety and sadness.

The story itself does remind me of other classic children's stories which I think makes the story more interesting. This is because the reader can make connections to childhood memories of reading. Personally I was reminded of The Golden Compass (Gryff = daemons), Harry Potter (Amulets = Horcroxes) and Bridge to Terabithia (crossing the river to strange places).

I can honestly say that I cannot wait to use this book with children in a classroom!

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### **Gilly says**

This book had been on my shelf a few weeks and so I took the decision after ploughing my way through a 10 book series that I needed a quick read and this was my choice.

The story follows Moll and her wild cat Gryff on their quest to destroy the magic of the Soul Splinter after it took the lives of Molls parents.

The world building in this book is superb and the writing captivates it's reader with a fast spaced narrative. The sense of good and bad is fantastically built up with any reader it has one half of the forest with good trees, good people and the second half with bad trees, bad people and a scary bone mask wearing villain called Skull. His whole presence throughout the book is quite scary and keeps you on your toes.

The book explores magic , talismans and the friendships , family and community spirit are very well depicted too.

Well done to Abi for a lovely book  
I gave the book 4 stars.

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### **Amanda says**

I had high expectations for this, which in hindsight probably sabotaged my reading experience. Is "gypsy" a derogatory term? If so, this book has a major problem there as it refers to the main character and her community as "gypsies." I didn't connect with the characters at all and didn't understand their motivations. There was no world building and the bad guys seemed unreal and ridiculous to me. It seemed a bit like the author thought up a cool name for something and then stopped developing that feature (cool name = my readers get it and I don't have to explain anymore). The only reason I finished this was because of the wildcat character, even though Moll sometimes reacted to him more like a love interest than a friend or pet... it was a bit weird. Not going to be continuing on with this series, unfortunately.

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### **Luna says**

With my ever growing TBR pile I didn't think I'd read Abi Elphinstone's debut prior to publication but much like Moll being called the Dreamsnatcher there was something about this book that kept calling me. I just kept picking it up so better read it to find out why.

I loved the world-building and characters. There is this bit towards the end, which I won't spoil because it's SO awesome and that would be mean but I was literally happy-clapping while reading it. The clue is 'tree'. When you reach it you'll know what I mean. If you weren't loving Moll's world before you will be then. It's so vivid and the description – wonderful!

Moll, Sidy (and of course Porridge the 2nd), Mooshie, Oak... I liked them all. Moll is headstrong, which is a trait I personally love in protagonists but Gryff. Can I have my own Gryff please?

The Dreamsnatcher is a brilliant debut and I can't wait for the sequel. Seriously I can't... please don't make me.

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### **Raimy says**

4.5. But that may be because I didn't want it to end where it did!

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### **Satsuma says**

The Dreamsnatcher is a thrilling page-turner. It really is. I am a great fan of the author, and have read quite a few of her books, so really enjoyed this one. I was taken on a journey with Moll and Griff, and then Alfie,

weaving through each page one by one. The definition of a GoodRead!

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### **Harriet Jane Mitchell says**

Possibly because I read the book in such a stop-start fashion on bus journeys, I found it took longer than expected to get into.

However, in my opinion, the book got better as it went on so I am now looking forward to finding out how the adventure continues when the sequel is published later this year.

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### **Rebecca McNutt says**

Eerily haunting yet strikingly fantastic and magical as well, *The Dreamsnatcher* is an excellent and original novel with a lot of imagination behind it.

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### **GaiasWonderland says**

*"Gypsies, travellers, wandering people, we believe our souls are part of our natural surroundings - wild and free. That when we walk through the forests, the heath, the fields or the moors, our souls walk beside us, as a shadow."*

I enjoyed this story. It was fast-packed, mysterious, and funny. I loved that there is a wild cat in the story. Animals are always the best part, as they are more awesome than most *humans*.

It had some original parts inside the story. I enjoyed the dynamic in the "tribe". The writing was good too. I definitely will read the second one just to see where it goes.

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### **Matt Woods says**

This book fills you with imagination. You can feel the darkness seeping through the pages, yet to discover the light through fantastic writing by Abi Elphinstone. I loved the story and each characters prospective within it. Brilliant writing. Brilliant story. Can't wait for the sequel next year!!!!

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### **Anne-Marie says**

Rounded up to 5\* because got me out of a reading slump. Definitely will read next in series. Gripping and well imagined.

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## **Emma Carroll says**

Wow! What a debut! 'The Dreamsnatcher' is so fast paced it left me breathless!

The story follows feisty young Moll and her wildcat Gryff on their quest to destroy the magic of the Soul Splinter, which has already claimed the lives of Moll's parents. The world-building is superb: we have a gypsy camp, tree spirits, old woodlands and heath, magic systems, talismans, all intermingled to create a rich, atmospheric narrative. The chapters are short and pacy with plenty of horse galloping, tree climbing, river crossing action sequences to keep any reader hooked. Yet there are quieter moments too, where Moll hears of her parents' fate, and how she must learn and move on. I particularly loved the characterisation- this is finest amongst the gypsy camp. Sidy and his pet earthworm are hilarious, as is Mooshie with her tea towel, whereas Oak is strong and true like his name. A very clever ending too in that there's resolution and a sense that all is not quite as it should be. Yet.

The Dreamsnatcher confirms Abi Elphinstone as a hugely talented and exciting MG author!

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## **Peter says**

A fun and scary middle grade fantasy adventure for 9-12 year olds.

The creepy prologue, gives way to an opening chapter filled with action, and Moll makes an enjoyable and opinionated hyperactive-heroine, who barely stops moving throughout the book. She's the sort who says what she's thinks, and means what she says. Clearly and beautifully written with lots of action and movement, so you can almost see her. I loved her line in insults - calling Alfie a spudmucker, and telling him to wipe his behind on a tree-root.

The other characters are great too. Especially Moll's friends: Sidy and his earthworm Porridge, and of course, Gryff the wildcat. Also Oak and the extended gypsy family who take care of the hyperactive Moll! And there's a scary coda at the end that sets up a new villain.

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