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Scott L. Collins

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When Argyle's men come to take Daniel, Aidan uses his little-known gift to fight off the gathering party. He does so with only two goals in mind: to save his older brother from a lifetime of serving Argyle, and then escape together. Fleeing the only home they have ever known, they must avoid Argyle's men, werewolves, and a fire-breathing dragon looking for an easy meal.

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Scepter Details

Date : Published April 11th 2013 by Createspace Independent Publishing Platform (first published December 21st 2012)
ISBN : 9781482741568
Author : Scott L. Collins
Format : Paperback 228 pages
Genre : Fantasy, Adventure

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From Reader Review Scepter for online ebook

Cherie says

What a great story for young kids! This story shows kids that not giving up and working hard can have great rewards. That despite adversity you can still achieve successes. I felt the story kinda dragged on a bit in the middle but I love the plot and am anxious for the rest of the story. I can't wait to see what adventures come next and how the characters and story will develop

Chameleon says

Scepter by Scott L. Collins is the story of Daniel and his younger brother Aidan. King Argyle's soldiers are on the move, taking parents and older children into slavery and forcing them to work in the mines. Having come of the proper age, Daniel knows that they will be coming for him soon, and he frets over what will become of his brother who is a few years younger. But Daniel and Aidan have a secret. Since having a sickness called Witch's Breath when they were younger, they have developed special abilities. Daniel can move faster than the eye can see, and Aidan can communicate with animals and even turn into any animal he's shared water with. It's Aidan that saves his brother from being taken by the king's men. Calling on the animals in the area, he's able to defeat the men with the help of the animals. After the battle, they discover a girl in chains cowering near a tree. Once they free her, she's determined to go back home and get her younger sister. And so it begins. The three set out, determined not only to save Lilly, but ultimately all the slaves taken by the king.

Scepter by Scott L. Collins is an endearing story. As an adult, it was gripping for me because I worried about these young people barely into their teens going up against hardened soldiers. But also against goblins, gnomes, and even a dragon at one point. Their encounters with a unicorn, fairies, and a centaur clan deeply enriched the mythical tones of this story. Scott easily made me care about these young people, and that speaks very well of his excellent, yet subtle, character building. I especially appreciated that this book was error free and well written. I highly recommend this book to younger and older readers alike. I look forward to reading Book 2 in this series!

Reviewed for Reader's Favorite by Barbara Garcia

Fiona says

A little gem of a book for young readers or to be read to younger children.

Imaginative world building that puts the two young heroes right at the centre of things. Exciting adventures, magical creatures, friendship and sibling rivalry - all without an adult in sight!

The magic of the area has been destroyed by the evil usurper Argyll. He has taken the parents as slave workers and now he is coming for the eldest son, Daniel. His younger brother Aidan has different ideas. As children both Daniel and Aidan suffered Witches Breathe an unpleasant childhood disease. However, those who survive are left with special powers. Aidan's is to communicate with animals and shapeshift. When Argyll's men come for Daniel he calls on the animals of the forest to help.

Once Argyll's men are dealt with the boys realise they are fugitives. They use their experience and special

skills to save other children being captured by Argyll's men. Along the way, they help the fairies in a battle against the gnomes and are given the very scepter that kept their kingdom safe before the arrival of Argyll. And so their fate is sealed.

Fast-paced, action-packed read. I'll definitely be reading the rest of the series.

Recommend.

Julie Powell says

A nice fantasy story for younger readers, with realistic characters and some great descriptions, which demonstrated a good sense of place.

Some of the paragraphs could be shortened to rid the story of repetitions, but it still was an enjoyable tale.

Overall, a worthwhile, fun read and perfect for lovers of fantasy, adventure and magic.

Lex Allen says

This was a fun read that contained a wide variety of different characters from humans to animals to fairies, goblins, dragons and werewolves. Add some unique paranormal abilities for several of the main protagonists, and you've got the makings for a compelling story. While the premise is not unique, it sets itself apart from comparable stories with a set of very young principal characters facing almost impossible odds in their battle to obtain justice and freedom from an evil ruler. Therein, however, is the point at which I was not able to completely suspend disbelief, a primary requirement when reading fiction of this type.

While the characters are fully and well developed by way of their actions and interactions with each other through a variety of situations, these same actions, their dialogues and maturity do not (for me) complement their ages. The characters range in age from 11 (if I recall correctly) to 14, yet their manner of speech, knowledge of battle tactics, first aid and survival in the wild far exceeds normal levels of knowledge... even for these otherwise precocious children.

The story itself, almost error free writing and a balance between first rate action and intermediate "homey" scenes among the characters, lends themselves to a fast and enjoyable read until the end which for my taste was too abrupt. I don't mind cliff-hangers when the book is obviously part of a series. The ending here, however, was more like stepping off the proverbial cliff into a deep black hole, rather than catching oneself at the cliff's edge and hanging on for rescue by the sequel.

My actual star rating rests between 3 and 3.5 stars. I recognize that my particular quirks are not universally shared, so I always round up. This is especially the case when the "target" audience is far younger than I normally read. I'm relatively certain that readers in their pre - early teens will find this book absolutely amazing, and though I had some difficulty suspending disbelief, the story will almost certainly draw me back for the sequel.

Christoph Fischer says

"Scepter" by Scott Collins is the beginning of a new young adult fantasy series that is set in the Kingdom of Castiglias where King Argyle rules and abuses his power to enslave people.

Daniel and Aidan have escaped so far but are now being pursued by the King's men, leaving them to fight for their freedom.

Collins has created a magical and beautiful world with medieval feel and lots of classic ingredients, such as unicorns and dragons, but he has also given his heroes some unusual supernatural abilities that make the story more special and unique. By changing perspective we also get to see the story from different angles, which makes the characters more real and relate-able.

This is a fun read with strong and interesting main characters and a great fantasy setting.

K.T. says

This novel is Lord of the Rings meets Eragon with a bit of Famous Five thrown in for good measure. It was absolutely awesome and I felt thoroughly sorry when I got to the last page. It is so well written that I found myself immersed in the adventure and completely caught up in the lives of the characters. It will appeal to teens and intermediate age children, because although there are hints of budding romance, it is thankfully not explicit, graphic or filled with any of the usual awful detail available for that age group. It was refreshingly well edited and instead of reading it over the first week of the holidays, I am embarrassed to admit that I devoured it before the end of the first weekend. I absolutely loved it and will definitely look out for the sequel.

Yafa Crane Luria says

I love this book for middle graders - the writing is simple but the plot is interesting. The kids are believable and relatable. Very empowering for 8 - 12 year olds

Erica says

This book was fun! My only complaint would be that it ended. My only option then is to eagerly await the next one. Will the kids restore the scepter? Will they defeat Argyle? And what about the dragon(s)?

Eric Michael says

I read this book with my two sons, and they really identified with the story of the two brothers and their adventures. Even though they were a bit young for the intended reading level of the book, it definitely kept the boys' attention and interest throughout the story line.

I felt that the author did an excellent job using his imagination to lure readers into the setting of the book. The descriptions of the fantasy world pulled me into the book and the plot line with the brothers and their character development kept me turning pages. I thought that the dialog was a bit choppy at times, but it did not take away from story. Overall, a very good adventure book for kids.

Tywyll says

This was an interesting middle grade/ya novel. The world is clearly formed in the authors' mind. I enjoyed the aspect of Witch's Breath and how it affected the kids. I enjoyed the brothers' powers, and that someone won't let a handicap slow them down

This novel has great potential, but I feel it got bogged down with monotony. Numerous times in the books the kids repeat events that have occurred mere pages before. The author seems to detail every time the kids eat a meal or go to clean up. If these parts, which don't really add to the story, aside from some table conversation, could be condense, I feel the book would have flowed better, smoother. It has quite a lot of fantasy elements, maybe too much for one novel. Also, the language at times jarred me out of the fantasy realm. I wondered what time period or world they lived in where the kids said things like "heck," "kick more butt," and "get a grip." The last chapter was what I had been waiting for since chapter 2, what I expected the entire book to be. Still, this novel does introduce the main plot of the series and lets the reader draw closer to the characters before their ultimate quest starts.

I have a feeling the sequel will be as full of adventure as the first novel, but with more of a sure goal in mind. If one can overlook its few flaws, I believe kids would love this novel.

3.5 stars

Note: I received a copy from the author for a fair and honest review.

Lita Burke says

Scepter by Scott L. Collins, is a YA fantasy novel about Argyle, an evil magician, who usurped the previous king and destroyed the Scepter of Harmony--a gift from the Fairies of the Wood. All but the most attractive people were cast out into the wilderness to survive as they could. King Argyle sent raiding parties into the countryside to take the able-bodied adults as slaves, leaving the children to fend for themselves. When the children turned fourteen, the raiders returned to collect the orphans to work in the slave camps.

Three years after Argyle's men take their parents, 14-year-old Daniel and his younger brother Aidan escape Argyle's slave collectors by using their budding magical talents. They rescue other young teens, and the group becomes vigilantes that destroy the slave raiding parties. They befriend many magical creatures along the way, including the Fairies of the Wood.

What I liked best about the story was the interesting native magical talents for each teen. Daniel received an injury early in the story that built suspense while rescuing one of his friends--this was well done. The developing friendship between the boys and sisters Olivia and Lilly had some fun moments. The story was free of typos and the e-book formatting was fine. Collins did an excellent job of showing teenage angst,

recklessness, and stubbornness in his characters.

There were some parts that could be improved. The plot got bogged down with the story detailing everyday activities. Several times, the narrative described the four teens collecting food, preparing a dinner table, eating voraciously, and cleaning up. These passages could be replaced with a single sentence saying they ate a simple meal, cleaned up, and prepared for the next day's fight with Argyle's men. There were many unnecessary adverbs (words that end in "-ly"). These could be removed or reworded with a stronger verb to improve the narrative. The magical creatures could be quirkier and less predictable. More things could go wrong for the four heroes during their adventures, creating tension and believability.

William Stuart says

I was looking for a new fantasy series to read and found Scott Collins' Scepter. I decided to give it a look. Read on for my review!

Synopsis (from the author): Daniel and Aidan have spent their lives apart from the rest of the kingdom of Castiglias and its subjects. For the last three years, they have been left with only each other for company since King Argyle's men came and took their parents to be slaves. The boys' survival has been dependent on the lessons learned from their parents, as well as their own unique powers.

When Argyle's men come to take Daniel, Aidan uses his little-known gift to fight off the gathering party. He does so with only two goals in mind: to save his older brother from a lifetime of serving Argyle, and then escape together. Fleeing the only home they have ever known, they must avoid Argyle's men, werewolves, and a fire-breathing dragon looking for an easy meal.

What begins as a fight to save one boy and then disappear unexpectedly turns into a battle against the evil forces of Argyle, a war that may affect the lives of not only the many children waiting to be taken, but the existence of the kingdom itself.

What I liked: One of the cool things about fantasy novels is that they often transport the reader into a new realm where anything is possible. In Scott Collins' world, the good king was betrayed and killed and the evil King Argyle forcibly removes parents to work as slaves. This leaves the children to fend for themselves. Against this background, we find Daniel and Aidan, brothers who have lived as orphans and survived. Blessed with powers brought about after an illness, the boys use their talents to stop the soldiers who came to take Daniel away to the work camps. They flee pursuit and begin a campaign to stop the King from taking more children. This plot line works very well, the story is well-written, and the characters are memorable. I especially liked the powers that Aidan used, and the other creatures like the werewolves and dragons, lent a nice element to the story.

What I didn't like: There wasn't much I didn't like about the book. Scott Collins did a great job of weaving the plot and developing his characters. I guess about the only negative comment I could make is that the ending was a bit awkward, but did lead into the second book of the series.

Overall impression: Scepter was well-plotted, well-written, and was a good story. I would recommend it to any fantasy reader!

Linda says

As this epic adventure begins, Daniel is agonizing over being taken away leaving Aidan alone to fend for himself. Daniel seems resigned to accept his fate; however Aidan has a different plan. The sibling rivalry between these two brothers was wonderfully depicted and realistic as they faced the challenges set before them in their journey. All of Scott L. Collins' characters were strong and well rounded, Olivia provided a nice counterbalance between the brothers and Lilly, her blind sister, showed handicaps didn't have to be a hindrance. There were a lot of great lessons to be learned in this book as these kids fight back evil forces and learn to deal with injuries and sickness on their own.

The author paints beautiful pictures of this fantasy world with some horrifying elements that are not too frightening for the middle-grade audience it is intended for. As the book draws to a close the kid's journey turns into a quest that will bring peace and harmony back to the kingdom of Castiglias. I have a good feeling about this series turning into a challenging adventure full of battles of wit and cunning as well as an outright war as this small band rallies allies for their cause.

I enjoyed this novel a lot but I think it could use some condensing in the first half of the story. I found there was a lot of repetition that could be edited out that would not affect the story. At other times the story was slowed down by the mundane chores where the author spends more time telling us daily routines, unlike later in the book when the kids are actually having conversations as these tasks are taking place. I think this proves the author is getting more comfortable with the story and his characters. This is a very promising new series and I can't wait to see how it all moves forward and what elements are brought into play next.

Format/Typo Issues: Other than the tightening up of the prose there were no significant issues that I noticed.

****Originally written for "Books and Pals" book blog. May have received a free review copy. **** Monday, July 8, 2013

Sonya Dodd says

If you like a good fantasy book then this is the read for you. Well-written and engaging from page one, this tale of loyalty and bravery will have you turning the pages quickly to find out what happens next.

Daniel and Aidan are brothers, their parents were taken into slavery by the cruel ruler and now it is their turn to fight if they are to remain together and remain free. Along their way they befriend two sisters who join them on their quest.

This novel is full of magic and enchanting scenes which come alive at the hands of the writer. Expertly told this is a story which has to be read.

Brilliant!
