


The Five Fakirs of Faizabad

P.B. Kerr

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John and Philippa Gaunt are off on another spellbinding adventure in bestselling author P. B. Kerr's Children of the Lamp series!

John and Philippa Gaunt are all ready for their lives to return to normal now that their mother has given up her djinn powers. But the siblings are quickly drawn into yet another mystery when the world's luck tips wildly out of balance (to the world's detriment). The key to the world's fate lies with five fakirs who were buried alive, each of whom guards a secret that can answer a great question of the universe. But there's an evil djinn desperate to dig up the secrets. Without their mother's powerful magic, John and Philippa must face this djinn alone.

The Five Fakirs of Faizabad Details

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Author : P.B. Kerr

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From Reader Review The Five Fakirs of Faizabad for online ebook

Doris says

This 6th book starts out with the djinn twins meeting their uncle for lunch, where he informs them that, as they are of a certain age, they need to do a special even to prove to the other djinns that they can responsibly handle their powers.

The story of course goes way off the original plan, as just as the twins are starting off on their quests, Uncle Nimrod discovers that he needs their help to save the world - again.

It is a neat idea, with a twist to the plotlines, where the djinn need to use flying carpets instead of whirlwinds, as the evil of the world (homeostasis) is upset and the whirlwind will make issues elsewhere. However - it really doesn't take that much of the book to explain how they work or how they are cut or how they are to be sold. I thought the rug dealer and his sons were very well drawn, and his idea of a good price for the rugs, and the haggling he and Nimrod do is well done.

The search they are doing is for a set of five special fakirs with secrets that will make a major difference. Of course, the group winds up splitting up, and going different directions, but that is okay. The main thing I did like about this book was that the twins' actions had bad repercussions, unlike in earlier books, where their actions or granting of wishes only did good things, such as granting the housekeeper the winning lottery ticket.

(view spoiler)

Huawei says

This series just gets worse and worse as it progresses. While it started out as interesting spin on the idea of djinns, it quickly degenerated to ridiculous situations. There is no set-up to the plot elements with all them appearing from thin air. A very disappointing direction for a series that started out so promising.

Robert Walton says

Mr. Kerr ties up a number of loose threads with this story. It's especially satisfying that we discover Mr. Rakshasas's fate. He was missing and possibly dead for several installments of the Children of the Lamp. Also, I enjoyed the fearless changes of scene and the metamorphosing characters. This seems like a culminating tale, but we'll see.

Emilie Knudsen says

I'm surprised with this series. I assumed they would slowly start to tank and I wouldn't enjoy them as much, but this book was a wonderful installment! I feel like John and Philippa are growing up and you can witness

that as the reader. Loved the character arcs, the building of the plot, and how the twists resolved. I'm looking forward to reading the conclusion to the series.

aem says

Enjoyable but the ending seemed a little bit of a letdown...

Stephanie says

I love this series, and this book didn't disappoint. It's unfortunate that it's not a more well-known series, because it's intelligent and fun and perfect for kids who are at that stage where they can't stand children's books but aren't ready for YA yet. There are some mature themes (death, mostly, but it's not talked about much) but they are dealt with in a way that comforts the reader. Also, there's an underlying struggle between the good and the not-so-good in all of us, which I think adds a whole new dimension to the characters and makes them easier to relate to.

I definitely recommend this series for kids ages 10 and up, and I'm sure the older generations will enjoy it as well.

Sage says

It was a very good book, but the author made them go back in time, remembering nothing of what they had done, and none of the events in the book ever happened! That is what made me rate it lower. Good book, but I hated the end.

Kristen says

Scattered and not interesting enough to keep my attention. I've loved all the others in this series, but this one is worth skipping.

Tom says

This series is really good! I can't seem to put it down. I don't understand what everybody is complaining about.

Beka says

Another really fun adventure for the djinn twins. When I read the last book, I was just slightly concerned that these were becoming monotonous, but this one banished that from my mind. Very fun and fast-paced.

Darth J says

Book 6 and I'm still very "meh" about this whole series. The first book was good and was quite promising in terms of an introduction. Naturally I gravitate towards series books so that I can read a bunch at a time; I read the first one and if I like it, I just binge-buy the rest to have on hand. I shouldn't have done that with these books.

I want to say that the author both remembers and forgets his audience at random. He certainly knows he is writing to the MG crowd because he keeps pandering to children the way that Riordan did with the early Percy Jackson books. However, Kerr seems to forget that his intended audience doesn't know complicated concepts in physics and rambles on and on about them. Don't get me wrong, the depth of his knowledge in these subjects shows in his writing, but he doesn't really know how to make it palatable for children.

Another thing that irks me about the writing is how dull it is. There are interesting locations and big adventures, but you just don't tend to care about any of it for some reason. Even when characters die it's like, "eh, it happens. Life goes on." Again, the concepts in these books are fascinating, but it's like if Ben Stein were to read it to you in a lecture hall.

Now, onto the story for this book: The djinn twins (just made that up; going to copyright it) are trying to track down a Fakir that holds one of the secrets of the universe. Apparently, there were 5 of them and they each have the answer to one of life's biggest questions such as **"what is the meaning of life?"** or **"what did the 5 fingers say to the face?"** (view spoiler)

Then there's the whole flying carpet thing. It's established earlier on in the series that the djinn no longer use flying carpets. Fine. Cool. Whatever. But then don't make the penultimate novel all about flying carpets. It just feels like a break in continuity. Half the novel is about someone doing something crazy on them. Then they malfunction and more wackiness ensues...

When you finally get to the end, you realize the whole book basically didn't happen because the characters go through a wormhole/mandala at Shangri-La. It's as frustrating as when you finish a story and it ends with "and it was all a dream." Don't do that to an audience; don't make people wade through 400+ pages for nothing. This series is too long as it is, and this book was certainly unnecessary then.

Robin says

When siblings John and Phillipa Gaunt, age 14, learn they have to complete a Djinn rite of passage by choosing a deserving person to grant three wishes, each twin separately stumbles on a plot to tamper with the luck of the whole world. The goal of whoever is causing an outbreak of bad luck seems to have something to do with a group of mystical Muslim hermits from northern India who, centuries ago, buried themselves alive to protect the five holiest secrets known to their order. Unluckily enough, a group of "fake fakirs," who practice just enough Sufist self-denial to be dangerous, have joined forces with one of the twins' Uncle Nimrod's deadliest enemies. To save the world's luck, not to mention Nimrod's faithful butler Groanin, they must visit the worst hotel in the world, travel long distances by flying carpet, and find the lost shrine of Shangri-La.

Like other books in this series about adolescent Djinn finding their powers in the modern world, this one is filled with thrills, laughs, and a surprising amount of educational value. It satirizes the xenophobic manners of some Englishmen, the unsuitability of some hoteliers for the hospitality industry, and the reasoning behind British spies being expert gamblers. It depicts a chilling (literally and figuratively) encounter with pre-World War II Nazis who have become stuck in time, a man-made monster out of Jewish folklore, a man who has fallen out of an airplane (without a parachute) and lived, an elusive monster of the American west, and a couple interesting cases of reincarnation. It's a globe-trotting, religiously syncretistic adventure for spirits of fire and luck who are, nevertheless, touchingly (and sometimes hilariously) human at heart.

My only quibble, besides advising readers who like their religions straight and unblended about that syncretism, is the book's solution to its final dilemma, which effectively resets the characters (with a few exceptions) to their status at the beginning of the book. If I didn't know they would be haunted by déjà vu during their next installment, I would say the ending made the book pointless. But I just happened to have the next book about the Gaunt twins, *The Grave Robbers of Genghis Khan*, on deck to read right after this one, so that worry has been mooted.

This is the sixth of, so far, seven "Children of the Lamp" novels by Edinburgh-born young adult author P.B. Kerr, also the author of the standalone book *One Small Step*. As Philip Kerr, he is also the author of 13 Bernie Gunther/Berlin Noir mysteries, counting *Greeks Bearing Gifts*, due for release in 2018; three Scott Manson mysteries, featuring a London football coach who solves crimes; about a dozen standalone novels for adults; and the children's book *The Most Frightening Story Ever Told*, for some reason published under his adult fiction name.

Jacqueline says

This fifth installation in the Children of the Lamp series really impressed me. This was a substantial book. First of all, I love the title, *The Five Fakirs of Faizabad*, wonderful alliteration!

Second, this book was very well written. It used a large vocabulary, and although it flowed wonderfully, it certainly wasn't an easy read. Matter of fact, I would say that it was a fairly difficult read and a mature book for something written in this century for children. I really feel that the author is maturing into this series. Some series start to get watered down or feel like they are stretched out or that the author is bored. Not this

one. This one has lots of development and growth, especially with this particular book.

There are some deep issues explored in this book. There is the theme of guilt (which is a constant factor in my own life so I really relate to it.) There is an exploration of how to deal with criminals. The book repeatedly dips into a myriad of ideas surrounding death. All this while also being infused with wit and humor.

My one problem with this book and the series as a whole is that the author uses a lot of different locations and quasi historical events in his stories. Many of these are humorous takes on reality, but some are purely made up, and it is hard to discern which is which. I think that children especially could be likely to assume more points of both geography and history are based on fact than is actually the case. Comparing the Children of the Lamp books to other similar series such as The Secrets of the Immortal Nicholas Flamel series this one comes up lacking in the amount of research that went into the reality behind the fiction. Of course, it is fiction, and the author is under no obligation to make any part of the story consistent with reality, but perhaps because so many other contemporary children's authors have, I do feel that the Children of the Lamp books come up lacking in this respect.

Daisy says

This is a really cool book. I think it's the best in the series so far, even though it wasn't the funniest, the most mysterious, best storyline, best character development, most exiting or gripping, it wasn't even the most entertaining! I even gave previous books in the series higher ratings than this! So why do I think it's the best? Simple, it was so clever.

Looking back on when I was halfway through the book, I was not impressed. I thought the storyline was badly explained and it was very hard to follow. I stand by that now, and accept that this book is in no way perfect. If there was one, big, main storyline, I didn't see it. The characters were just kind of blundering around looking for these fakirs (which I still am not entirely sure what they were) and a few other things and instead of one main quest and aim, they tried to accomplish all kinds of stuff randomly. If somebody asked me what the main story in this book was, I don't think I'd be able too explain very well, but then again, you'd be confused by a book if you read a few paragraphs - pages of the book at a time while eating breakfast every few days. I think I need to read this again sometime and see if I can actually understand it properly.

A fair few new characters were introduced in this book, including a new enemy. I totally **did not** follow who the hell the enemy was, and what they were trying to do. Seriously, all I can remember is they were from a "bad" tribe of djinn and their name began with J. I didn't get what they were trying to achieve and how exactly it was stopped. Maybe I'm just dumb, but I think at least some of it is down to bad writing. The new characters of Mr Burton, Mr Swaraswati and Mr Prezzolini gave me a few problems. None of them had a really clear or unique personality and so I found myself being unable to remember which was which. I know one was a fakir, one was Rakshasas' old butler and one was supposedly the unluckiest man in the world, and just when I thought I'd worked out who was who(m?) it tells me Rakshasas' old butler was a fakir too. So confused.

Then there was that old lady, Moo (yes, that's her actual name), who I thought was a great new character. Definitely added something to the tale, although it took me a while to stop imagining a cow instead of an elderly woman!

Of, course, there were the old and familiar characters in the book too, and it was only in this one - the sixth

in the series - did I realize how well moulded the character's personalities actually are. It was when Nimrod had a brief personality change as a result of a blow to the head when I noticed how much of a unique and well-written character he is. Well done P.B.Kerr. :)

Anyway, on the whole, this book was all right, fairly interesting in most parts but quite hard to follow, until the end at Shamba-la and the very last chapter, both of which made the book what it is and made me grin with pleasure. The ending was very cleverly done and I enjoyed it immensely. Looking forward to reading the series finale ASAP!

Sophie says

Another COTL been and gone. With all the different enemy's they've faced I really don't know how the series is going to end. I can't even remember the name of the supposed enemy in this book; he was in it so little. Thankfully this book is much less repetitive than the previous one mainly due to the absence of Sickly and the introduction of a new character, Moo. She made sure Groanin didn't repeat everything twice.

I get quite confused when reading COTL – there are so many characters that only appear in one book and have extraordinarily stupid or long names. For example there was a town called Bumby where everyone's last name was something-bottom, WEIRD! As for some of the main characters I kept getting confused between Mr Burton, Mr Swaraswati and Mr Prezzolini. The one thing I noticed that was annoying was that whenever someone found out that someone had died they just said, 'oh, that's a shame' and didn't seem too sad.

The storyline was clever and the ending was interesting. I have given all the COTLs a four or five star. It's strange because they're not particularly heart-stopping or mouth-gaping. The storyline's aren't particularly ingenious (although they are weird and original!). The COTLs just exist as a great (altogether strange) children's book.

I would recommend to 9-13 year olds if it weren't for the astonishing amount of unpronounceable words. I don't know if it's just because they travel a lot and therefore visit foreign places and people with foreign names or just because everything connected to djinn is unnecessarily long (just think focus words). This is not a great book for reading aloud!
