



Good Reads: Dame Alice Owen's School, Potters Bar

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Article Category:

Good Reads

Byline:

Dame Alice Owen School pupils review books they have enjoyed.

Chosen by Years 7 and 8 (11-13 year-olds) from Dame Alice Owen's School, Potters Bar, Herts. <!--break-->

Thanks to Sheila Compton, School Librarian, and teacher Dee Kouloumas.

The Subtle Knife

Philip Pullman, Scholastic, 0 590 11289 9, £5.99 pbk

This book is part 2 of a trilogy called 'His Dark Materials'. It is about two children, Lyra and Will, who are searching for Will's long lost father. They can only do this with the help of the 'Subtle Knife'. In the process they have some gruesome and frightening experiences, but they are determined to complete their quest. The novel is set in three different worlds, Lyra's world, Will's world and the world of Cittagazze. The landscape is the same, but the story seems to be set in the olden days; people have daemons attached to them. Will's world resembles our world more. There are no daemons and it is recognisably Oxford with its row of hornbeam trees on the A40 where he finds another world. The world of Cittagazze is full of soul sucking balls of mist, which feast on the souls of adults. During the book Lyra and Will reluctantly realise they like each other. This novel is one of the greatest books I've ever read and thoroughly deserves all the awards it has received. I would recommend it to anyone whether they be seven or eighty years of age. It would get 10 out of 10.

Orlando Gibbons

A Child Called It

David Pelzer, Orion, 0 7528 3750 8, £6.99 pbk

This book is autobiographical. It describes how as a child David Pelzer was brutally beaten and starved by his emotionally unstable alcoholic mother. A mother who plays 'games' with him, including one that nearly kills him. David has to learn to play mother's 'games' in order to survive. The book is based on David's life between the ages of four and twelve. David's family life is normal, but one day he is told off by his mother for being a bad boy and from then on she no longer refers to him as David but as 'it'. David would go to school with bruises from being hit by his mother. The outside world knew nothing of the nightmare played out behind closed doors.

David survives because of his willpower to live and his determination to beat his mother at the 'game'. He dreams of being superman flying in the sky.

I found the book very interesting to read. It was sad reading the descriptions of his mother's behaviour but I wanted to know how David escaped and how he survived. I would give this book 9 out of 10.

Dionne Findley

Pendragon: The Merchant of Death

D J MacHale, Simon & Schuster, 0 7434 6816 3, £5.99 pbk

The Merchant of Death is about a normal popular boy who goes to school in a suburb of New York. However, Bobby doesn't know that he is a special boy. Suddenly, he is taken to another world called Denduron. This world hangs in the balance of a terrible revolution between the enslaved Milago and lofty Bedoowan. Bobby must try and stop this chaos, however this small fight will only be the beginning of the war for the Universe against the forces of evil and darkness.

This book is a gripping read ? I couldn't put it down once I had got into it. The story is split between Bobby's diaries and Bobby's friends, Mark and Courtney's troubles. I would recommend this book for 10-14 year-olds.

Sam Pigden

Rules of Magic

Annie Dalton, Egmont, 1 4052 0058 8, £4.99 pbk

Rules of Magic is part of the 'Afterdark' series. This novel is set in a busy urban city. It is about a really old building called Mortagaine House. It has 14 floors but when the council numbered it they missed out the 13th floor because it might bring bad luck. There are loads of rumours about the 13th floor and it is said to be where the Lord of Lies himself lives. He bargains with people and takes away their souls leaving behind empty voids. It is a nightmare come true.

There are two main characters, Beatrice Molloy and Konstandino Sherakis, otherwise known as Bee and Dino. Bee is adopted and her adoptive parents have recently split up. She is the coolest girl in the school and everyone wishes they were her, but no one sees the shatters of her life behind her calm and collected face. Konstandino is a Greek, stubble-headed basketball player with a passion for music. He longs to be a DJ. I enjoyed this book because even though it has a really magical, mystical and deeply disturbing plot, the author writes it so you really get into it and start to believe it. I would give this book 8/10 as it is a really enjoyable read.

Hannah Chapman

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