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# Zal and Zara and the Great Race of Azamed

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

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Media type:

Book

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At a time when Caliphs hold Magic Carpet Races, Zal and Zara set out to discover whether the mythical rainbow carpet exists and, if so, whether it holds the key to the turn of their fortunes. The tale pits the two against the evil Haragan, who is out to thwart their plans and defeat them.

The story's faux-Arabian setting isn't particularly convincing. I'm not looking for a history textbook of the Caliphate, but where fantasy meets history it needs to decide whether it's going to keep in step with its location or play 'Carry On Cleo'. I don't think this book quite made its mind up.

That aside, there's adventure and it's a good ride, with magic spells, lost cities and spider chambers. The dynamic between Zal and Zara works well and children at this age will enjoy the way they are definitely not pairing off while probably doing so. Downes can clearly make good action out of an esoteric setting and has the potential to do something much more appealing in the line of historical fiction, akin to Julia Golding's 'Cat' books. For now, as 'Carry On' might say, this book is worth a ride on the rug.

Running Order:

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