



Defender of the Realm

Books Reviewed:

[Defender of the Realm](#) [1]

Issue:

[225](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Lynne Taylor](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This novel is set in a reimagined United Kingdom, where King Henry IX is on the throne, and his son Alfred, Prince of Wales, otherwise known as Alfie, is the heir. Fourteen-year-old Alfie is at Harrow School with his twin brother Richard, closely supervised by his bodyguard Brian. He would like nothing better than to throw off his royal status and lead a normal teenage life, but instead he finds himself unexpectedly propelled on to the throne by the death of his father. He finds that there is a lot more to being king than he could have ever conceived. With Brian, and the Lord Chancellor, by his side, he has to learn how to control supernatural powers in a world he didn't know existed.

Hayley is a young carer, looking after her grandmother, who has a form of dementia. She gets caught up in the adventure when she takes her grandmother on a trip to see the Crown Jewels at the Tower of London. Here they witness a violent attack from an other-worldly creature like a giant lizard, who defeats the UK's superhero protector known as the Defender of the Realm. Hayley joins forces with Alfie to save crown and country.

This is an exciting thriller with non-stop action. I liked the combination of history and myth, with superheroes thrown in for good measure. Young readers will identify well with the characters. Alfie has to face up to all his insecurities and accept the mantle of great responsibility that comes with being king. Hayley is a strong character who helps cement the story in contemporary times, bringing her technological know-how to improve the armoury of the Defender of the Realm. Her lack of deference to the British establishment is refreshing. The story is left with a twist at the end, setting it up for a next instalment.

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