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Max and the Midknights

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

The front cover of **Max and the Midknights** features testimonials by Dav Pilkey and Jeff Kinney, whose enormously successful **Captain Underpants** and **Diary of a Wimpy Kid** series are easy comparisons to this new adventure comedy.

Max is an apprentice to her uncle, a medieval troubadour of questionable quality. She is ambitious for more and has her heart set on becoming a knight: not a career path available to girls in the Middle Ages! Yet Max is fearless and decisive and, when her uncle is kidnapped by the evil King Gastley, she leaps at the chance for adventure.

Saving her uncle means heading to the centre of Byjovia and finding a team of willing warriors to help her restore kind King Conrad to his rightful throne, from where his usurper, Gastely, has enchanted the hapless Byjovians into a gormless trance. Luckily, the magic can't affect children, so Max is able to find a brave group of youngsters who, with a little help from a rather unconventional (and elderly) wizard, set about restoring Byjovia to its former glory.

Peirce's pedigree as a cartoonist is indisputable. Having enjoyed huge success in books and newspapers, previously, his new characters are drawn with a flamboyance and confidence that is rare for series openers. Max and his friends' personalities are immediately clear, thanks to Peirce's inimitable style: few illustrators can create such characterisation through simple line drawings. Tiny details like the location of an eyebrow, or a well-positioned question mark, tell much more of the story than the prose that links the pictures.

Max's quest gallops along at speed and the jokes, most of which are visual, will keep readers chortling through the pages in anticipation for the next gag. **Max and the Midknights**

is funny, fast and full of mischievous villains and courageous victors. Neither the story nor the style are especially original, but children will love this new offering from a comic author/illustrator at the top of his game.

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