I Shall Wear Midnight by T. Pratchett

Diana Keto

DOI: https://doi.org/10.20361/G2Z30C

Abstract


"I Shall Wear Midnight" opens with our female protagonist and witch, Tiffany Aching, now in her 4th book and grown up to nearly sixteen years old. We were introduced to Tiffany as a young 9-year-old in *The Wee Free Men*, and followed her in sequels *A Hat Full of Sky* and *Wintersmith*. She is no longer a little girl, but now a young lady who is the sole witch in her hometown of Chalk.

This story revolves around the fact that there is a formidable and evil force that is turning the townspeople against witches (who may be considered good or bad in these books, depending on how they use their magic). Also known as “the Cunning Man,” this wicked figure first attacks Tiffany as she is on her way to inform Roland, the son and next-of-kin of the Baron, of the Baron’s recent death. The Cunning Man is supposedly the spirit of a man once slighted by a witch whom he loved, and his angry soul is devoted to exacting his revenge on the witches of the world. In this novel, it is up to Tiffany to come to terms with the Cunning Man and defeat him in order to restore order to her hometown.

This fantasy book also brings in important themes that older children will be interested in and can relate to, with somewhat mature themes of unrequited love. It is revealed that Roland had been a love interest to Tiffany, but is now engaged to be married. While she initially battles with this and is somewhat bitter with the prospect, ultimately she comes to terms with what is happening and convinces herself it wasn’t meant to be. Later in the book, she starts a relationship with a guard named Preston, which will hopefully be developed further in books to come.

Pratchett uses charming wordplay and puns that makes the book an interesting read. Comic relief comes in way of the Nac Mac Feegles – mischievous little blue men who tend to follow Tiffany around and cause a ruckus, whom we first saw in *The Wee Free Men*. Originally intended to watch over her and make sure she’s safe, the Nac Mac Feegles have a way of getting into trouble by drinking and fighting; in this novel, they are accused of destroying a pub. These little men are quite rowdy and add to the ‘mature’ theme of the book, which help make it suitable for older children and pre-teens.

Overall, this book is an interesting read – one part Harry Potter and one part Monty Python. For older children who are fans of fantasy, this book would be an excellent choice; an added bonus is that reading the previous three novels isn’t a prerequisite for understanding and enjoying this installment. Pratchett’s unique writing style helps develop the imagination of the reader, though it is a bit slow in the beginning. If the reader is patient and takes time to get into the plot, they will be rewarded in the end.

Recommended: 3 out of 4 stars
Reviewer: Diana Keto

Diana is originally from the Washington, D.C. area, where she worked for several years at a government library. She received her MLIS in 2009 and works at University of Alberta as a Public Services Librarian in the humanities and social sciences library.

Author Biography

Diana Keto

Diana is originally from the Washington, D.C. area, where she worked for several years at a government library. She received her MLIS in 2009 and works at University of Alberta as a Public Services Librarian in the humanities and social sciences library.
About the Journal

The Deakin Review of Children's Literature is an electronic quarterly review of contemporary English-language materials of interest to children and young adults. Of particular use to librarians, parents, teachers and anyone working with young people, we also publish news and opinions relevant to children’s literacy.

Learn more
Terry Pratchett. It starts with whispers. Then someone picks up a stone. Finally, the fires begin. When people turn on witches, the innocents suffer. . . . Tiffany Aching has spent years studying with senior witches, and now she is on her own. As the witch of the Chalk, she performs the bits of witchcraft that aren’t sparkly, aren’t fun, don’t involve any kind of wand, and that people seldom ever hear about: She does the unglamorous work of caring for the needy. But someone—or something—is igniting fear, inculcating dark thoughts and angry murmurs against witches. Chilling drama combines with laughout-loud humor and searing insight as beloved and bestselling author Terry Pratchett tells the high-stakes story of a young witch who stands in the gap between good and evil. Year: 2010. Publisher 355 pages ; 24 cm. Fifteen-year-old Tiffany Aching, the witch of the Chalk, seeks her place amid a troublesome populace and tries to control the ill-behaved, six-inch-high Wee Free Men who follow her as she faces an ancient evil that agitates against witches. Possible conclusion to the Discworld series.
The I Shall Wear Midnight is a comic fantasy novel by English writer Terry Pratchett, set on the Discworld. It is the fourth novel within the Discworld series to be based on the character of Tiffany Aching. It was published on 2 September 2010 in the United Kingdom, and on 28 September in the United States, and won the 2010 Andre Norton Award. It centres on Tiffany Aching, who is now fifteen years old and getting on with the hard work of being a witch. The title is taken from a quotation in A Hat Full of