Clarion Review

Young Adult Fiction

Archibald Zwick and the Eight Towers
Robert Leslie Palmer
Crossbooks Publishing
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Five Stars (out of Five)

> *…Archie felt he had been transported back in time to some primitive culture. It dawned on him just how easy it was to shed the …ornamentation of 'civilized' life.*

Archie went from a privileged, middle-class boy to a stranger in a medieval style village after his kayak capsized while he was on vacation with his parents. He must figure out a way to get from this strange land and back to his parents.

Robert Leslie Palmer is an attorney with both a bachelor of arts and a doctorate of law degree. He took a break from his law practice to work on his writing. Archibald Zwick and the Eight Towers is his first novel.

Archie doesn't just have to search for a way home. The villagers and leaders of the new land, K'truum Shra, think Archie's arrival fulfills part of a prophecy. Before they will help him find his way home they insist that he must help them.

To help them, Archie must study and train. He studies with some other squires under an older knight. The knight is very strict and Archie finds that he admires the older knight's discipline and wisdom, although he often resented his parents' attempts at adding structure and discipline to his life.

Virtues are among the things that Archie learns about. We see how Archie learns about pride and forgiveness in the following scene: "'I don't understand,' cried Archie, 'isn't my forgiveness enough?'

'And so you are *proud* that you have forgiven Kotán?'

Archie thought for just a moment and then answered truthfully, ‘Yes, I am. Why shouldn’t I be?’

‘Tell me…what was the source of your anger with Kotán?’

‘…I was mad at Kotán because he did something that I would *never* do.’”

Although it took Archie a bit longer to realize why he wasn’t admitting the truth to the elder knight or himself, he did finally admit to himself that it was pride that made accepting the truth so difficult.

The biggest drawback of the book is the difficulty encountered in pronouncing names. The name of the older knight who acts as a mentor to Archie is T’lot’aris. The knight that Archie is in service to is named Pwradisa.

This book is a well-written and enjoyable read. It is aimed at adolescents and teens, but adult fantasy readers might also enjoy it as a light read.

Archie learns about humility, forgiveness, pride, and other virtues as he sheds the worries from his “civilized” life. As he regains the civilized qualities of life, he also retains the old-fashioned virtues of his “uncivilized” days.

Laura Munion