



Bobby Ether and the Temple of Eternity

R. Scott Boyer

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Friendship, loyalty, and fantasy adventure highlight this second book in a series.

In R. Scott Boyer's *Bobby Ether and the Temple of Eternity*, readers discover what happened after the cliffhanger ending in book one of this series, *Bobby Ether and the Academy*. Boyer clears up some of the mysteries and sends Bobby, Jinx, and Chief off on a new adventure that centers on the fabled Fountain of Youth.

Fourteen-year-old Bobby Ether has special skills: he can tap into ethereal energies and connect living things to one another. Along with that, he is fearless and adventuresome, never afraid to tackle a problem with his cousin Jinx by his side. Because of the uncertainty at the ending of book one, Bobby's first and foremost task is to learn what happened to his friends Trevor, Lily, and Jacob. Along with that task, Bobby ventures into the jungles of Guatemala to explore an ancient Mayan pyramid that may be under the control of agents of the Core.

This book is considered a young adult science fiction/fantasy book that is appropriate for middle grade students and up. It suffers from an identity crisis, however. The cover will not attract most middle grade readers because the artwork is more juvenile than middle grade, and the characters pictured look younger than the target audience, and much younger than Bobby's given age in the story. Conversely, the text inside is small and there is little white space on the page, making the book seem like it is targeted to an older audience.

The story itself is interesting. Readers are introduced to new places and cultures, and the elements of science and fantasy are well done. The details about the places the characters explore are interesting and very specific. Yet some of the word choices will cause middle grade readers to struggle. "The lone runway at Chiquimula Airport in Chiquimula, Guatemala, consisted of a dirt strip with patches of grass trimmed daily to keep the ubiquitous vegetation from reclaiming it." This, and other sentences in the book, read more like a college textbook than a book for students in grades six through eight.

A strength of this series is the friendship and loyalty that Bobby and his friends exhibit. With middle school as a time of shifting friendships and cliques, this book does a nice job reinforcing the concepts of sticking together and persevering, and Bobby and Jinx are rewarded for their efforts. Middle grade readers interested in green-themed reading and more of a non-Christian spirituality may be good candidates for this title.

LYNN EVARTS (November 5, 2014)

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