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Clarion Review ★★★★☆ JUVENILE FICTION

Freddy Fumple and the Mindmonsters

Vegard Svingen
Øyvind Skogly Pedersen, Translator
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Svingen brings pages to life in this story of adventure and intrigue; it's a fun and mysterious read.

Using snappy dialogue and vivid descriptions, Vegard Svingen creates a treasure for tweens in *Freddy Fumple and the Mindmonsters*. Good must find a way to triumph over evil in this fantastical adventure about a ten-year-old boy named Freddy and his unusual friends.

All is not right in Freddy Fumple's world. Having just moved with his family, he quickly discovers that his is no ordinary house. He soon encounters odd characters, struck by tragedy, who are in desperate need of his help. An open mind and an open heart, all but lost to most ordinary humans, hold the key to saving a lost soul named Jonathan and a population of forgotten creatures from imminent destruction by their enemies.

Three elements keep the story moving along at a pleasant pace, at once both focused and diverse, and designed to hold attention. First, geared for younger audiences, the narrative is divided into easily digestible chunks. Each chapter depicts a scene bearing just enough detail to capture the essence of what is happening without weighing the story down. At an average of roughly six pages per chapter, the book has just the right make-up for the intended readership. Second, parallel story-telling in the first several chapters of the book is a clever way to introduce two key characters whose interconnectedness is slowly revealed. And, third, the informal, slangy dialogue, sprinkled lightly with expletives, creates a familiarity and believability in the characters.

Colorful language creates impressive mental imagery, especially in the character descriptions. Freddy sports "a pair of red socks peeking out from a pair of dark blue sneakers." Jonathan's "sizable set of blue-striped jammies *almost* conceal his enormous tummy." And, the queen's "white, curly hair … flows down her back in two lush braids." Likewise, scene particulars are conveyed with just as much flair.

Freddy Fumple and the Mindmonsters is a translation, and there are multiple instances of erroneous punctuation, wrong word choices, and word omissions throughout. With a thorough proofread, the stops and starts, which otherwise are the only interfering elements, would be eliminated and the resultant book would be nothing short of brilliant.

Svingen brings pages to life in this story of adventure and intrigue. A fun and mysterious read, *Freddy Fumple and the Mindmonsters* delivers. From the ominous front cover to the promise of further adventures in the final paragraph, this story is a pleasure.

LAURA MAHON (June 23, 2015)

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