Clarion Review

Juvenile Fiction

Hit the Skies: I am Ruby
Joe Seegitz
iUniverse
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Three Stars (out of Five)

This is a big day for twelve-year-old Ruby and somehow she knew that it would start all wrong. Not only is she late for her test but as she finishes her quick shower she remembers that all of her clothes have been removed the night before and she literally has nothing to wear. Thus begins a new adventure that will lead Ruby through her training to become a Red Alchemist.

Ruby's instructor is known as Lethal Weapon but she calls him Artemus. When Artemus first appears he has been enjoying too much alcohol and doesn't appear to be completely in control of his actions. Still Ruby is excited to finally start her training as a member of Squad 8011. When the third member of the team finally joins them Ruby is ready to begin her new life that will be years in the making in the company of these two less than enthusiastic males. Training is exciting as Ruby learns how to create reactions control the pava in her body and draw transmutations using her staff.

As Ruby and Shrugger attempt to develop some level of team loyalty Artemus continues to referee. Although Ruby wants to be the best Alchemist she can be she also wants to learn enough to visit other Dimensions where she believes she will find her missing brother Chance.

In chapter eleven the alchemists-in-training finally get to test their skills against a real villain. Once they defeat Clava and rescue Artemus from her dungeon they make their way to the Mix Games where Artemus will face villain number two in the competition of the Rainbow Alchemists.

Reading the book from the perspective of a sixth grade student it seems to take too long to get to any clear understanding of the plot. Most twelve-year-olds would have given up long before they reach the eleventh chapter when the first serious villain is encountered. Some mention of the missing pieces earlier in the book would also keep middle school readers more engaged. The only mention of it occurs when Ruby is given one piece by a store clerk and it is

subsequently taken away by Artemus.

There is a great deal of dialogue about the training and the performing of various feats but given the length of this book it would be worthwhile for the author to carefully consider shortening these descriptions in order to better hold the attention of the reader. Most early middle school readers are looking for books with fewer than 250 pages; few characters hold their attention longer than that—Harry Potter has been the exception.

Joyce Rice