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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ FANTASY

Majik: The Beginning

Jack McGlame
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Presenting creative ideas about the meaning of magic, this fantasy quest explores the concept of destiny and the purpose of games.

Author Jack McGlame presents some very creative ideas in an attempt to explore the meaning of magic. The novel follows protagonist Wilhelm Redheimer's quest to find a hidden magical realm. The clues to the path the hero must take are found in a child's game.

Wilhelm is the youngest magistrate in his uncle's kingdom, where magic is forbidden. Yet Wilhelm longs to be a wizard and feels trapped and repressed. Sneaking out of the castle to go exploring with his friend, Tibed, the pair ends up on a quest for the hidden valley of Majik, a secret land where dragons, witches, and wizards live. As the boys get deeper into their journey, they discover that Wilhelm's father is plotting against the king, and Wilhelm must decide on the right action to take. The lessons he learns about magic ultimately lead him to his destiny.

The book contains a large cast of characters but not enough detail about any of them to allow an understanding of their roles in the story. To even speak the word "magic" is absolutely forbidden in the kingdom, and yet it seems to be all that anyone talks about. The children play a game called "majik" that is supposed to illustrate the way into the hidden valley. Though the author provides a lengthy explanation for the game at the end of the book, the rules of the game are not clear. The game seems to be very complicated, involving multiple game pieces, color patterns and dice. The author has provided no explanation for some parts of the game, such as when dice can be used or what type of dice can be used, and he contradicts himself in explaining how the various pieces can be moved, describing the warlock as: "noted as being able to jump any player to strike his opponent, but they cannot jump an opposing player to do so."

The writing in *Majik* also needs a great deal of work. There are numerous run-on sentences and sentence fragments. There is little by way of organization to allow the reader to understand the meaning of individual paragraphs. Each chapter reads like a stream of subconscious thought, and the reader will be hard-pressed to follow and understand the story.

This is true in the descriptions as well as the dialogue. For example, McGlame writes: "The magic they share is shared by the entire kingdom. Not the prize in winning but more the play of the game. Sometimes we try to be more than what we are, or to be something we are not. We take our lessons well, and the magic is never lost. Have you ever ridden the bell of a cat? You must be careful with magic."

Though *Majik* does not completely deliver on its promise, the book starts out with a very creative premise.
CATHERINE THURESON (October 8, 2013)

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