Clarion Review

Young Adult Fiction

Reality and Dreams
Jackie McEntree
AuthorHouse
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Two Stars (out of Five)

In this novel aimed at young adults, twelve-year-old Dylan learns that his dreams may be more than just dreams, and that he himself is not who he thinks he is.

Dylan's dream world is strange and full of adventures. In one dream, he travels to the land of the forty-nine creatures of the night, where he must find the creatures of the day and destroy them to set the night creatures free, which he can do with the touch of his hand. In another, he dreams of a woman on her deathbed at the end of the 19th century, informing her children, twins Dylan and Gordania, that they have magic powers, as she did, and that they must use it for good, not evil. Dream Dylan, who looks and sounds remarkably like Dylan himself, agrees to use his powers for good, while Gordania chooses evil.

Through a series of strange events, including his dog speaking to him, Dylan learns that his dreams are true; he has been reborn into modern day, about one-hundred years later, to prepare for a final battle with his sister. With the help of his dog, the forty-nine creatures, and a few new allies, Dylan learns about his powers and prepares for battle.

While there are interesting concepts introduced in *Reality and Dreams*, the format does not do the subject matter justice, using the language and rushed development of an early chapter book for a deeply philosophical novel for teenagers. The use of repetition and short sentences, as well as more than a few fragments, detracts from the overall effectiveness of the story. It is a short book as well, resulting in little time to explore the world that first appears to Dylan in his dreams, the kind of magic Dylan possesses, or his back story. The characters are wooden and overly simplified. Dylan himself makes no decisions and takes no real action. Additionally, no information is really provided about what's at stake: The reader knows Dylan must fight his sister and that for the fate of the world he must win, but no details are provided about why.

While the premise of *Reality and Dreams* is interesting, far more development of both

the setting and characters are necessary to bring this dream world to life.

Heather Talty