

Three Genie Brothers

Christian Roulland Kueng

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This family-friendly fantasy proves that boys and girls everywhere are really not so different.

Welcome to the magical world of the jinn, where ten-year-old boys have disappearing pet tigers, dine on rack of dragon, and live in jeweled bottles. In *Three Genie Brothers*, Christian Roulland Kueng introduces Outsiders, or humans, to a fun-loving genie family as they juggle growing powers and growing up.

Triplets JD, Morgan, and Blake are just old enough to begin preparing for their first summoning, and they already show remarkable skill in the magical arts. When they are not playing rousing games of JinJi or cheering a favorite cameleer at the winged races, the brothers enjoy gazing out at the world outside their bottle, a place they have only imagined. When the appearance of a special human girl disrupts their charmed lives, the boys must use all of their genie ingenuity and courage to solve the mysteries that suddenly surround them.

Although the brothers live in a fantastical world that is vividly painted with lagoons, lotus blossoms, and bazaars, Kueng shows that boys and girls everywhere are really not so different. Aside from minor variations in coiffure, the triplets are identical in appearance, but Kueng carefully draws the boys with distinct personalities, mannerisms, and ways of speaking that make them easily recognizable. Brave, reckless, frightened, and even whiny on occasion, the boys, along with their new human friend, Brianna, are believable children in an unbelievable world.

Even the inhabitants of this world find it unbelievable at times, and one answer consistently pops up when the dubious nature of genie life is questioned. Brianna, confused about the metaphysics of the house-bottle's dimensions and relation to the human world, receives this response from the boys' mother: "I can't explain it ... all I know is that once you come into the bottle, you've entered another world." Possibly, this is the response that makes the most sense to children anyway.

Black-and-white illustrations accompany each new chapter; with a casual, sketch-like finish, they could have come straight from Brianna's journal, and provide welcome visual breaks. The depictions are rough; visually pleasing while allowing room for imagination and interpretation.

Junior fiction fans of the Children of the Lamp series will want to check out Kueng's *Three Genie Brothers*. Triplets instead of twins and definitely more sheltered, the boys share the same spirit of adventure and tendency to wind up in tight spots with plots to unravel. *Three Genie Brothers* is a family-friendly choice suitable for school libraries and for independent readers wishing for a little magic in their lives.

PALLAS GATES MCCORQUODALE (December 3, 2014)

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