

Timothy and the Dragon's Gate

Adrienne Kress

Weinstein Books (Jan 13, 2009)

Unknown \$16.95 (368pp)

978-1-60286-023-0

Timothy and the Dragon's Gate, the second book in a popular young adult series written by Adrienne Kress, has everything a youth could want in a novel: ninja, pirates, evil old ladies, dragons, treasure hunters, crazy taxi drivers, clueless businessmen, and much more. While the pacing is a bit uneven at the beginning, later in the tale it practically reads itself.

The hero, Timothy, is a smart child with a very bad attitude, one who has been expelled from every school in the city. While he frequently felt persecuted, often with good reason, he purposefully did things to freak out or annoy his instructors, such as squeaking his chair ominously to distract them in class. Because he no longer has any lessons to attend, he follows his dad to work, and eventually becomes an intern at the company.

One day Timothy is left in the care of a neighbor, Sir Bazalgette. Bazalgette is a famous architect who uses mirrors and light to illuminate rooms so that they appear bigger than they really are. He's also an amateur treasure hunter who often loses his findings to governments who claim ownership of them, something he's quite bitter about.

Bazalgette has a very unusual friend, Mr. Shen, a dragon in human form. Timothy learns that Shen was not only cursed to remain trapped in his new body until the 125th Year of the Dragon, but also that he is required to obey the whim of whoever owns the mystical dragon key. Timothy manages to acquire the key and suddenly finds himself the target of a conspiracy, running a gauntlet of ninja assassins, crazy taxi drivers, kid-nappers, and other hazards to free Mr. Shen and keep evildoers from using his powers.

While the tale is aimed at eight- to twelve-year-olds, it will also appeal to slightly older audiences, those whose attention spans are more developed. With solid characters, quirky humor, and an intelligent plot, young adults who enjoy fantasy should be captivated by this story. Kress, a former drama instructor, is a successful playwright as well as an up-and-coming writer. Her previous work is *Alex and the Ironic Gentleman*.

(August 18, 2009)

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