



The Dragon in the Library

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This is an exciting adventure story that places the library at centre stage of the action. Playing on the fact that some children find libraries boring, Stowell introduces a new series that celebrates everything that is wonderful about libraries, and reminds us why they are such important places for communities.

Kit does not enjoy reading and she does not like hanging out in the library. But her two know-it-all mates love it there, so she's forced to spend a few weekends snoozing her way around the aisles as her friends devour entire series of books. Then she meets Faith. Faith is not a stereotypical librarian (in fact, Stowell has worked hard to entirely avoid type-casting throughout the book). She's cool, confident and fierce and, excitingly, she is a wizard! And, even more excitingly, she says that Kit is a wizard, too!

For a girl whose life is usually so dull, this really does represent a significant step up in fortunes. It is no surprise, therefore, that Kit finds it rather difficult to obey the safety constraints placed upon her by Faith in regard to magical spell safety. She finds herself in trouble, and lost in an imaginary world that is brought to life from the books around her. Soon the perils of the magical world coincide with genuine problems in the real world: the library is under threat of closure.

Kit and her friends show passion and determination in their efforts to cease the evil villain's efforts to turn the library into a shopping centre and, in doing so, remind readers of all the crucial community benefits of libraries: places to meet friends, share ideas, learn new things and, most of all, to exercise our imaginations. It is joyful to read about children who take such pleasure in sharing books - they are not even surprised to learn that magic is real, such is their faith in the stories they have read.

The book is also a celebration of individuality. The unique personality of each character is very easy to see, and it is crystal clear that all of us have the potential to be whatever we want to be and to achieve great things. Age is no barrier to standing up for what is right, gender doesn't define one's interests, and being bored doesn't mean you can't be a wizard!

These positive messages for young readers are successfully delivered, and the story has ample excitement to maintain children's attention. However, an increase in tension and genuine drama would improve the book still further, as the presence of Faith and her confident wizardry means that readers will never really fear for the children's safety. Nevertheless, *The Dragon in the Library* is good fun and is the perfect thing to read on a bean bag in the corner of a bustling local library.

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