



The Demon Queen And The Locksmith

Spencer Baum

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In Turquoise, New Mexico, a small group of hippies believe that the mountain north of town emits a constant, resonant hum that is only audible to a chosen few. They call themselves the Hearers, and the fact that fourteen-year-old Kevin Brown has never trusted them makes it all the worse when his own ears begin to ring, and he comes to realize "The Turquoise Hum" may be much more than a sound.

The Demon Queen And The Locksmith Details

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From Reader Review The Demon Queen And The Locksmith for online ebook

Susan says

This must have been a free kindle book because had I known it was a YA and totally stupid I wouldn't have bought it. The plot line was absurd and then it ended abruptly....and yet I read it.

Kelly says

I have one word of advice for you with this book: Don't let the title fool you. Trust me on this. I let this one linger on my Kindle for months after picking it up as a freebie because I kept thinking "I don't know if I want to read about a demon queen and a locksmith." I mean, the title tells you exactly what the book's about yet at the same time it doesn't really do the book justice. This book was interesting and intriguing and it wasn't at all as silly as I thought it was going to be based on that title.

And that last sentence makes me sound like a title snob or something. I don't even know if they're such thing as a title snob but if there is, apparently I'm it. Here's the thing, when I picked up this book I thought it was going to be very juvenile. Yes, it is a young adult book but it's far from juvenile. Like I said, it's interesting. And there are lots of bugs. I hate bugs. But I liked reading about them and seeing how they fit into this story.

Okay. Enough about the title. Seriously, there's more to the book than the title. I swear.

The entire book is interesting and imaginative. It's different enough from what I've been reading lately that it caught my attention from the first page and kept me hooked. It does indeed have a demon queen and it does indeed have a locksmith. Both of those individuals are critical to the plot.

I don't know. I liked the book. Yay!

-Kelly @ Reading the Paranormal

Amy says

I kind of want to review this one but I also can't think of much to say about it, I'm afraid. Essentially this is a lackluster fantasy set more or less in our own world about irritating teens who gain super powers after eating tree sap, a mysterious hum from deep within a mountain that calls to 'Hearers' and a demon queen who isn't actually a demon OR a queen - at least not in the traditional definitions of those words. She's just kind of an evil giant ant woman with a sad childhood.

This was ok but I didn't really enjoy it. It was free (or almost free, I forget) on the Kindle which makes it not so bad but still not really ok. Urgh. It's not bad but it's not good, either and I would suggest not bothering with it, in all honesty.

regina dentata says

This book was far more interesting than I expected it to be, but it doesn't remain without flaws. The characterisation was very solid, but the teenagers felt older than they were supposed to be. Some of the additional information offered between chapters should have come out naturally within the text, rather than told straight up. Other than that, I found this a surprisingly enjoyable read.

It definitely needs a new title, though.

Al says

The fantasy genre has been severely neglected in my reading materials over the years, although I have read some. One way "The Demon Queen and the Locksmith" differs from what I've previously read is the "story world" is at least nominally the world in which all of us live. Whether genre purists would still consider this fantasy or not, I have no idea. At least for me, that doesn't matter, the story does, and in this case it is a good one.

The first day of high school is trying for everyone. For Kevin it starts out worse than most. His reaction, fleeing school for the day, sets off a chain of events leading to a magical adventure. It allows him a temporary escape from his less-than-perfect life and in the end to change it for the better.

Throughout the book, it felt more like a fairy tale than a typical fantasy. I often found myself thinking the story was allegorical although, if so, I was never able to pinpoint why I felt that or deduce the symbolism. In the end it doesn't matter whether this was my overactive imagination or not, because the story works so well. If escapism is one of the reasons for reading fiction then "The Demon Queen and the Locksmith" should allow a teen (or an adult for that matter) an escape from the problems of their real world life as they follow Kevin on his adventure.

Originally written for "Books and Pals" book blog.

Chloe says

This is one of those books where I just went to read the first few sentences so I could figure out which genre it was and add it to a collection on my kindle and I was hooked at the first sentence.

The beginning had that fresh, free feeling of being a kid. The characters were fun and unusual -- two kids were kids being homeschooled (how often does that happen in a book?) -- and the plot was strange and unique. The descriptions of everything were really rich.

Alice Yeh says

The so-called "Turquoise Hum" is an unique phenomenon, one that is not quite spiritual and not quite

corporeal; it is a signal inextricably interwoven in the lives of individuals the world over. Kevin Brown's father is one person whose existence has been touched by the Hum. He is a Hearer, one who was able to follow this combination of life force and echolocation to find his way to a small town in New Mexico.

While the concept itself may seem extraordinarily complex, Baum feeds it to us in digestible chunks through the main character's thoughts and experiences. The plot was well-conceived, one that flows naturally through the author's words and his innate grasp of storytelling. From the moment Kevin meets Joseph and Jackie to his struggles with telling his dad about the Hum, each passage draws you deeper into the tale, even if the fire ants and termites make your skin crawl.

One of the author's greatest strengths is that he allows readers to discover things alongside his characters. For example, instead of being told of the children's newfound superpowers, we are able to witness their inception. This sense of involvement is ideal for younger and older readers alike, though it is especially important in maintaining the interest of those who are easily bored by academic text.

While it is evident that both fire ants and termites were heavily researched prior to the writing of this book, one major typographical error did bother me to no end: the substitution of "etymology" for "entomology", especially since the misuse of the term came from a character who is supposed to be a specialist. Another source of frustration is that almost all of the speech was indicated using "said" or "asked". With the plethora of dialogue-related verbs available, the unnecessary repetition chafed my ears, and I started sticking to the words inside the quotation marks to soothe the consequent irritation. If only the run-on sentences were so easily managed.

The Demon Queen and the Locksmith is an entertaining story that children and adult alike can enjoy. Just plan to set aside a few hours, or perhaps learn how to read and sleep at the same time.

Stimulated Outlet Book Reviews

Kim says

ONE AND A HALF STARS

TRIGGER WARNINGS: bullying, violent content, domestic violence, epithet for movement disability (the 'L' word) used for a disliked thing

Three star novel, one star ending. Giving it two stars would be far too generous. Too much expectation of suspension of disbelief, such that it's not "The real world with (x) changes" but just random exceptions to physics and biology to fill whatever plotholes the author has created or magically perfect (x) the author wants to insert.

Really sub-par. Not recommended.

Vicki (The Wolf's Den) says

*I got this free on Amazon

This book was...bizarre. But that in and of itself isn't a bad thing. I don't even really know where to start...

For a book aimed at YA or middle grade, Kevin and his friends didn't read like real kids/teens. In fact, none of the characters spoke with anything other than required exposition. They weren't characters as much as they were pawns. Kevin was really close a couple times, struggling with how to communicate with his father, but ultimately an unseen force (plot convenience) convinced him to stay quiet. There is no motivation behind any character's action, just names acting so that the plot can advance.

Okay, I take that back. The flash-backs did show some actual characterization, goals and feelings and whatnot. Gretchen's was especially fascinating, and I kept looking forward to seeing what had become of her. Unfortunately she became nothing but an exposition-spewing monologuer along with the rest of the cast.

But exposition is to be expected when the world doesn't make any sense. The year is never mentioned, but we're in a time where kids still listen to radio, cell phones are prevalent, and there are digital espresso machines in everyone's homes. Okay, maybe the radio was an individual thing, so let's say mid to late 2000's. The world seems a lot like our own, so you'd assume that any magic stuff going on would be very small so as to remain hidden, right? Or if there was large-scale stuff going on, there would have to be systems in place (like MiB or the Wizengamot) to make sure nothing changed the status quo.

(view spoiler)

I guess that's really what gets to me is the world doesn't make logical sense. It's intriguing and I'd love to learn more about how it works, but I don't see that happening as I don't think the author put any effort into actually fleshing it out. Why are insects involved in all this magic? Why haven't Hearers been scientifically studied? For that matter, why hasn't the mountain been scientifically studied? I don't see any religious protests going on, so why isn't there any research going on? How do the fantasy elements work? Is there any rhyme or reason to them, or do they just do whatever because magic? Is it truly magic or is it science (honestly I would have believed aliens were behind everything before magic)?

Now, a lot of plot holes or logic failures can be compensated by interesting characters, but as I said before, the only interesting people are relegated to flash-backs and then abandoned for Kevin and his conveniently quirky new friends who he's never seen until conveniently 5 minutes before the adventure starts. Gosh, how convenient!

But enough about that. All that being said, I didn't hate this book. There's nothing intrinsically bad about it, but it's also nothing to write home about. I think it's written lower than it's pitched (middle grade instead of young adult), but it's entertaining for what it is. It might be a gateway into more speculative fiction, but unless it's on sale, I wouldn't bother seeking it out.

Fiona Watkins says

Having read other books by Baum I was quite keen to read this one. The story kept me interested although it wasn't the best book I've read and I don't think I'll remember much about it once I've read a few more books, but it was enjoyable whilst reading, and really what more can we ask for? The books was well written and believable in a fantasy way until the three kids met up with Lou Sweeney and then not only did the plot get less believable it also moved so quickly that I feel the story lost out.

Cheryl M-M says

This is more of a children's story than YA. The style, writing and plot are written for a younger audience and I do think readers aged 10 plus will enjoy the fantastical plot.

There are no hell spawned demons in it, just the Queen of the Ants with a fear inspiring name. I mention that, because some parents may be cautious about letting their children read paranormal stories with demons/angels in them. Unfortunately the title suggests a different type of story, despite the ant on the cover. It is good wholesome fun with some bizarre quirks and tree sap that can create super powers if you drink it.

Pauline Ross says

Strange book, quite surreal. It's young adult, which limits the scope, but nevertheless there's some depth to it. The premise: three teenagers meet by chance, it seems, in the park and witness some strange events which lead to them developing superpowers. And if the idea is not the most original ever, the author gives it a whimsical, bizarre spin which is anything but hackneyed. There are butterflies and bugs and an oak tree and strange swirling patterns and a Hum emanating from a mountain and espresso - lots and lots of espresso.

About half-way through the story changes from the whimsical to a straightforward race to flee from the bugs and survive long enough to work out what is actually going on, and this part is a real white-knuckle ride. Of course, this being young adult, the outcome is not much of a surprise, but the story is very readable, there is some knowledge gained along the way (about bugs and pitcher plants and how social insects organise themselves, among other things), and there is a teeny, tiny amount of advice about dealing with bullies hidden in there too. A short but sweet book, and it was free too. Not entirely my thing, which keeps it to three stars.

Stephani says

Personally, I wasn't real impressed. Though the storyline is very unusual and a bit creepy... It was very entertaining and a lot of fun to read. Cute characters, good descriptions, and a lot of in-depth ant stuff. More along the lines for my step son to enjoy, so I am passing it on to him. I did enjoy the book.

melydia says

When Kevin skips his first day of high school, he never imagines the sort of impact it will have on his life. He meets a couple of other kids, they eat magic sap, they gain super powers, and all of it is somehow linked to Turquoise Mountain and its mysterious Hum that only certain people can hear. Throw in termites, fire ants, espresso, and a healthy dose of conspiracy theories, and you've got yourself one strange little tale. Still,

I kind of enjoyed it. It's certainly unlike anything I've ever read before. Sure, there were times when it felt like the author had been given a list of objects and told to write a story around them, but as a fan of writing challenges I can appreciate that aspect as well. I'm not sure who I'd recommend this to, though. Espresso fanatics? Budding entomologists? I don't know. But if you'd looking for some young adult fantasy that doesn't follow the same old formula, try this one on for size.

Lindley Walter-smith says

This is one of the most original and fascinating books I have ever read - and one of the reasons I prefer YA to adult fiction. The generic fantasy name doesn't do it justice. While I've read other books using the particular form of storytelling, it felt fresh and better-used than usual, and the story had mythic proportions that somehow blended well with the B-movie elements. The teenagers are taking characters, and their reasons for not telling what happens to them were better motivated than is usual in YA books. I really recommend this!
