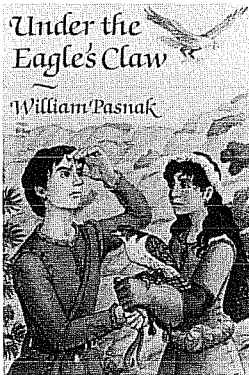


*Review articles & reviews /
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AN OVERDOSE OF MAGIC



Under the eagle's claw. William Pasnak. Douglas & McIntyre, 1988. 136 pp., \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-88899-078-2.

Under the eagle's claw is a workable sequel to the fantasy *In the city of kings*. The same terrain, the mythical dreamscape of Estria, is traversed by young Elena, an entertainer and juggler and her mysterious companion, Ariel, a far-older male partner. The word "Lolita" leapt unbidden to my mind. Alas, this plot is more meandering and far less lively than that, due to an unfortunate surfeit of magic and contrivance.

The book opens nicely with Elena, shrouded and hooded, searching narrow alleyways for help in a well-drawn atmosphere of fear and shadow. Ariel is gravely ill and must be healed by a doctor skilled in the occult. The wise doctor reminds Ariel that as a member of the Brotherhood of the Silent Heart, he must attend to the ceremony of the opening of the Dome of Ver and the accompanying return of the power and light that it brings. With subtle and oblique warnings, he directs the beginning of the mission and task. It is the brave and independent Elena who must carry on, accompanied by Welf, a young boy bound to her by the knot of Ismay. With the capture of the young hawk Blackwing, in a particularly exciting and realistic scene, they are ready to deal with the treachery and intrigues that threaten Estria.

Welf is nicely drawn as a human being who speaks sensibly, providing a good counterbalance to too much enchantment. His information about hawking is fascinating and rings true. Their relationship is lively as they battle and compromise. Elena, a strong and natural feminist, competes with Welf and learns to be both his determined opponent and loyal friend. Both grow and mature during their adventures with Elena gaining a far wider sense of her powers and strengths. Indeed she must use these to their fullest extent to deal with betrayal and malignity.

The reader is led gradually through a convoluted web of intrigue and magic to an exciting and chilling climax. Elena and her hawk, Blackwing, must men

tally and physically destroy the bleak eagle-man and his fierce eagle minion who seek to steal the jewel that controls the power of the Dome.

Pasnak has written an interesting book that would be strengthened by a sparer and more carefully constructed plot. It suffers from an excess of secret societies, strange names, and obscure quotations and warnings. The straightforward adventures and relationships succeed in absorbing the reader more than the distant echoes of C.S. Lewis. However, Elena is an appealing character and the reader would enjoy sharing more of her life.

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GARÇON MANQUÉ OU FILLE RÉUSSIE?

La sorcière et la princesse. Henriette Major. Illus. Garnotte. Montréal, Héritage, 1987. 120 pp., 5,95\$ ISBN 2-7625-4459-9.

La bande de la rue Monplaisir, c'est un groupe de copains d'école: Sophie, d'abord, fière de ses talents de sorcière, jette des sorts, mais ses sorts sont rarement mauvais. Dotée d'une imagination fertile, elle fait preuve d'un esprit d'entreprise qui va lui réserver quelques aventures imprévues. Selon Antoine, Sophie n'est "pas un garçon manqué mais une fille réussie", nous allons en juger. Passons donc à Antoine et sa couleuvre Hortense, les grands amis de Sophie qui aimerait bien avoir l'exclusivité de cette amitié, mais qui cependant doit la partager avec Chantal. Chantal, c'est la princesse: elle est belle, blonde, les cheveux frisés, la bouche en coeur, toujours vêtue de belles robes à la mode, elle rend Sophie jalouse. Sans s'en douter, cette princesse en robe bleue sera la cause d'une série de situations à la fois drôles et touchantes dans le cadre de la fête d'Halloween. Il y a aussi Lucie la petite Coréenne à la peau dorée et Nadia à la peau brune d'origine haïtienne. *La sorcière et la princesse*, ce sont d'abord les costumes choisis par Sophie et Chantal pour le sketch d'Halloween que les équipes des Ecureuils et des Marmottes doivent jouer en classe. En même temps, le titre du roman suggère deux personnalités bien différentes, l'ange et le démon en quelque sorte.

Henriette Major évoque discrètement ici le divorce des parents de Sophie qui vit avec sa mère et son petit frère et rend visite à son père en fin de semaine. Il permet de mieux expliquer sa nostalgie de "l'ancien temps", celui où son meilleur copain s'appelait Ti-Claude, son chagrin d'avoir laissé dans son ancienne école Bernadette, son institutrice adorée, et sa rancune envers Hervé