



The Magic Thief

Sarah Prineas , Antonio Javier Caparo (Illustrator)

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In a city that runs on a dwindling supply of magic, a young boy is drawn into a life of wizardry and adventure. Conn should have dropped dead the day he picked Nevery's pocket and touched the wizard's locus magicalicus, a stone used to focus magic and work spells. But for some reason he did not. Nevery finds that interesting, and he takes Conn as his apprentice on the provision that the boy find a locus stone of his own. But Conn has little time to search for his stone between wizard lessons and helping Nevery discover who—or what—is stealing the city of Wellmet's magic.

The Magic Thief Details

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From Reader Review *The Magic Thief* for online ebook

Darth J says

Hmm. It's a fun, fluffy book for MG readers who enjoyed the Harry Potter and Percy Jackson books. The illustrations on the inside are reminiscent of Mary GrandPré's Potter artwork, yet it does get repetitive as the same pictures are shown over and over again instead of individual designs for each chapter.

The wizards in this universe must let a magical object choose them in order to access their powers, but instead of a wand it's a stone called the magilicus locus (which just so happens to work exactly like a wand in Harry Potter).

There seems to be a little bit of a steampunk element to it as well as many of the characters wear victorian garb and there are clockwork devices to measure and trap magical energy, which is a major plot point towards the end of the novel.

Since it's a kid's fantasy book, I guess it wouldn't be complete without twee names like Periwinkle. Can we just discuss for a moment why most of these kinds of books have a character named **Periwinkle**?

I think the main thing that sets the Potter books apart from most of the other series with *very* similar tropes is that Rowling had a warmth to her writing; she allowed us to connect with characters and become engrossed in her world. Sarah Prineas and many others can use the same themes but you just don't get as invested. Perhaps I'm asking too much from a MG book. Perhaps I'm measuring all other books in the genre against Potter, but really who doesn't?

Aviva says

Picked this book up last year during a trip to Chicago. My kid had dragged along four thick hard-backed novels for our our five-day stay, and had them all read by day two and needed something to read on the trip back. (I've since bought her a used Kindle so we don't have to pay overweight fees for our luggage!) We hit a book store, and picked up several books, including this one.

She insisted she wasn't going to read it, so I said fine, I'll read it. Turns out, she got to it out of boredom before I did, and liked it a lot. (She doesn't trust me to pick out her books, but I definitely know her genres.)

I found this book entertaining, the characters interested and well formed, and the plot intriguing.

Great book for kids (and adults) who enjoy the Harry Potter and/or Percy Jackson series. I definitely plan to read the next book (and so will Ellie!).

R.J. says

This book made me absurdly and enormously happy.

The Magic Thief has a number of familiar fantasy motifs and character types. But in Sarah Prineas's hands a story that could have been predictable instead has a wonderful freshness and vitality about it. The invented world in which Conn moves has a Dickensian flair without being merely alt-Victoriana, and its magical system is both well imagined and intriguing.

The characters in *The Magic Thief* are realistically flawed and fallible, yet they never lost my interest or (where appropriate) my sympathy; I particularly liked the way that Prineas developed a couple of the secondary characters, subverting my expectations of them in a surprising and satisfying way. And her hero -- well. I have a weakness for thieves to begin with, but by the end of the first chapter I was grinning idiotically (always a good sign) and I knew that I was going to like Conn very much indeed.

The Magic Thief will be out this June, it's the first of a trilogy, and it's wonderful. If you enjoy quick-paced, engaging MG fantasy, you won't regret preordering this one.

Dustin says

Well Connwaer, it has been a pleasure and an honor, but you and I must be parting ways for now. It won't be long before I revisit the initial leg of your epic journey, for my review and the second installment, aptly titled, *Lost*, beckons. Rowan, Nevery, yourself and the gang beckon loud and clear. Until then, I wish you well and good luck as your education continues...and many adventures along the way.:)

Andy says

This book, the first in a trilogy, is a great example of how children's book publishers are putting out way too many series and lots of bad fantasy in an attempt to make money. Connwaer has lots of street smarts and a skilled pick-pocketing hand. At the start of the story he steals the locus magicalicus of the Wizard Nevery Flinglas. This magical device should kill Conn, but doesn't. And so, Conn is taken in with interest and some apprehension by the wizard Nevery. Magic abounds in their city of Wellmet, or at least it used to. Lately, the magic has weakened, and Nevery has come back from exile to try and solve the mystery of its disappearance. Conn is sent to school, he learns to read, longs to become Nevery's apprentice, and struggles for acceptance. Although Conn must prove that he is worthy of magician status by finding his own locus magicalicus (every true magician has one), he is much more interested in doing his own clandestine detective work to determine where the magic of Wellmet is going. The plot was not engaging and, frankly, rather dumb. The characters were predictable and unoriginal, but worst of all was the writing which lacked vocabulary and eloquence.

Kathryn says

Conn is a young thief in the Twilight, managing to stay alive and well when so many others have fared far

worse in the cold and threadbare conditions. But, when he tries to steal a wizard's locus magicalius stone (a source of connection with the source of magic) he ends up winning a new life for himself as an apprentice to the wizard Nevery. For Nevery sees what others never bothered to see in the lowly pick-pocket; a good-hearted boy with an uncanny aptitude for magic. But even in Nevery's home, life is not exactly cozy and comfortable. The magic is fading throughout Wellmet and even in the Duchesses' Dawn Palace, all is not well. Is the magic fading due to forces of nature, corrupt wizards, or something else? And who will be right when Conn and Nevery begin to disagree on the answer to that question.

I really enjoyed the first few chapters of this book. Prineas' wise word choice quickly wove a believable and interesting world. Her use of hyphenated words like "keen-gleam look" really made an interesting style to the story so I became annoyed when, a few chapters in, that style all but disappeared. I felt cheated, as if she tempted us in with promises of being unique and then lapsed back into normalcy. I also felt the first half of the book moved slowly in places, occasionally fell into redundancy or simply failed to really progress the plot or characters. However, I was still interested in our protagonist, his honesty and forthrightness and insight really won me over and I liked that he never made excuses for what he did in the past, never whined or complained for what he had to endure. Some of the other characters, like Nevery, were a bit more "standard fantasy stock" but ultimately wove together to create a satisfying and fresh story. I really ended up enjoying the second half of the story. It became more complex and interesting and I was curious and engaged throughout. That bumped this up to a four-star book for me and I am definitely interested to continue the series.

Connor says

A pure joy to read. It was such a fun little adventure about a boy trying to find his magic. Perfect for younger readers, and it has a fun code that you can translate using a key in the back of the book. I'll definitely be continuing with the series whenever I get the next book.

Kimberly says

Conn just wanted some money to pay for his meal when he picked a wizard, Nevery's, pocket. Taking Nevery's locus magicalicus (a stone that helps wizards to focus when using magic) should have caused Conn to die. But he didn't. Nevery finds this interesting, and takes Conn in as his apprentice (more of a servant, though.)

Life is still difficult for Conn even though he gets fed, has a roof over his head, and he even learns how to read. There is contempt for him since he is a known thief and lock pick. The city that he lives in has a dwindling supply of magic. He is given only 30 days by the Magisters to find his OWN locus magicalicus for himself. He knows that it is not in his academicos' stores.

The Magic Thief was an amazing book, and I really loved reading it. I could hardly put it down once I started reading it. Conn is an interesting character, and I liked how, despite his pick-pocketing and thieving ways, he's still completely honest with Nevery. I loved how Conn is very intelligent; it fit his character completely. I'm excited for the sequel, since the first book was completely satisfying, but still makes me want to read more.

A.J. says

Okay, I guess I'm the first to give this book a review after its official publication date (June 3 or thereabouts).

To begin I think a bit of background is in order, because the 3-star rating I gave is deceptively low. The rating only reflects the book and its success stacked against myself as a reader with particular tastes and preferences. This book is definitely for the kiddies. It isn't designed to thrust itself among the greatest epic fantasy stories ever told, and in the darkness category it dips below even the for-everyone-but-especially-for-kids C.S. Lewis Narnia series. That being the case, I was surprised I got through the book as quickly as I did.

It reads fast. And when I say fast, I mean this thing ZOOMS by. I was clocking 100-page chunks per sitting with enough time left over to catch up on *Battlestar Galactica*. There is very little fat in this book. In fact I'd say this is, as far as fantasy goes, the chick at school you suspect might be bulimic but you don't have the guts to tell anyone. At times the pacing was so lightning fast that I almost wanted to put the book aside and simply imagine how the character was feeling about all this craziness going on. But on the happier side of the coin, I was too interested to see what happens next to bother.

Armed with a pleasant Tolkein lightness and a charming city which manages to be imaginative even in its simplicity, I can't imagine how any fantasy-loving youngster wouldn't get swept up with Conn, his grumpy master Nevery, and the story of one young wizard-thief's quest to be accepted by those around him in the midst of a city where magic is dying.

A wonderful read. Perhaps not in my strike-zone of fantasy stories (I like'em dark), but on a more objective basis, certainly well worth the time. Sure as sure.

Kathy Davie says

First in the *Magic Thief* fantasy series for middle-grade readers and revolving around a young pickpocket with potential.

In 2011, *The Magic Thief* was nominated for the Iowa Teen Award and also in 2009 for the E.B. White Read-Aloud Award....

My Take

...This reminds me of Angie Sage's *Septimus Heap* series, right down to the book size. Prineas, however, does have a different take on how magic works and who her major protagonist is. I enjoyed her dual first-person protagonist point-of-view with Conn, as it gives us his worldly wise street thief perspective on his world, and Nevery's perspective provides good back history.

I got pulled in by that first paragraph with Prineas' combination thought- and question-posing hook. As for changing the font and page background color for Nevery's notes, that was a handy visual cue that the perspective was changing from Conn's to Nevery's. *Thank you!* I always appreciate an author making it easy for the reader [me!] to stay connected to the story. Although, I could wish the page color hadn't been quite so dark. Maybe it's just my old eyes...

Prineas combines the ticking clock scenario with Conn having to “prove” himself with the plot coupon of Conn having to find his magicalicus locus while she beautifully integrates her info dumps throughout the story. There were a few plot twists, but no major issues. Just enough to give the story a bit more interest.

Conn isn't shy about speaking up for himself or for what he thinks, and Prineas uses the epiphany plot beat with that excellent point Conn makes on the truth about magic....

”Spells are a language and we use it to tell the magic what to do.”

The Story

...The boy has potential, but Nevery isn't sure he's worth the trouble. Nor does Nevery have the time to train an apprentice, not when he must discover why the city is losing its magic.

Although...the boy was able to withstand his locus magicalicus. *Hmmm, maybe he should give him a try....*

The Characters

...Connwaer “**Conn**” is between twelve and fourteen years old and a successful lockpick and pickpocket, most of the time. **Black Maggie** was Conn's mother and the one who taught Conn how to pick locks.

Nevery Flinglas is a wizard who was banished from Wellmet 20 years ago after an experiment blew up. His **locus magicalicus** had been his **great-great-aunt Alwae's** stone. **Benet** is hired muscle with a talent for knitting and baking. The house Nevery left behind, **Heartsease**, is falling to pieces. **Lady** is the cat....

Wellmet is...

.....one of a loose confederation of cities, the Peninsular Duchies. It runs on magic and is ruled by **Willa Forestall, the Duchess of Wellmet**, who is based in the **Dawn Palace** in the well-off **Sunrise** neighborhood. **Captain Kerrn, Farn, Jas, and Merik** are guards.

Wellmet Academics is...

...headquartered on the islands which are the homes of the **magisters**, wizards, if you will. **Magister Brumbee** is the Master Wizard of the academy and is part of the council along with **Periwinkle, Sandera, Pettivox** who is also the court liaison, and **Trammel**, who appears to have some skill with healing.

Lady Rowan Forestal is a regular student at the academy — and the duchess' daughter — and has been set to mentor Conn. **Keeston** is Pettivox's apprentice and a real jerk who has been partnered with Conn.

Underlord Crowe is the crime lord of Wellmet with headquarters in **Dusk House** which is in the **Twilight** neighborhood of factories, warehouses, and the poor. He's also Conn's uncle.

A **locus magicalicus** enables a wizard to focus magic and work spells. **Slowsilver** restrains magic, so a wizard can examine it. **Embero** is a dangerous spell. **Micnu** wrote a paper explaining how magic is created; he and **Carron** have written about magical nodes....

The Cover and Title

...The cover is a textured deep and grayed royal blue with embossed gold frames and plaques. The title and author's name are embossed in a deeper gold inside the plaques — top and bottom respectively. The center, inside its round, gold frame is a graphic of Nevery and Conn, using his street skills along with his locus magicalicus. On the left of the cover, just below the pivot of the conjoined frames *is* the leaf-shaped green and gleaming locus magicalicus.

The title could go two ways, for there are indeed two thieves, and *The Magic Thief* could be the thief being reformed or the thief being born.

Craig says

3.5*

Ivonne Rovira says

Like L.M. Boston's Green Knowe series, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, C.S. Lewis' *Narnia Chronicles* and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, Sarah Prineas' *The Magic Thief* represents a children's book that's bound to be devoured by thousands of adults.

The eponymous thief Conn meets his future magical mentor, wizard Nevery Flinglass, while trying to pick his pocket. Nevery's *locus magicalicus*, a sort of magical stone that gives a wizard his power, should have killed Conn on the spot -- but does not, much to Nevery's amazement. Thus begins a partnership and a trilogy that will attract as many adults as members of its intended middle-grades audience. Their city of Wellmet, like other cities in this alternative fantasy universe, literally runs on magic; recently, that magical force has been gradually disappearing -- almost as if it were being drained by some unseen and unsavory force. Hmmm. While Nevery is investigating the strange diminution, the teenaged Conn undertakes to find his very own *locus magicalicus*, a requirement if he is ever to become a full-fledged wizard -- or even a full-fledged wizard's apprentice.

Prineas navigates the plot through terrifying scrapes and close calls for Conn, his hard-earned advancement in the wizarding realm, a possible newfound love, and a search for the cause of -- and solution to -- what Nevery calls "the decay of magic" in Wellmet. Take some advice from me: Buy the other two books in the trilogy -- *The Magic Thief: Lost* and *The Magic Thief: Found* -- *before* you finish *The Magic Thief*. You will thoroughly enjoy the novel and the endearingly sassy and intrepid Conn. How much? So much that you will be eager to pick up Conn's adventures in the sequels just as soon as you finish *The Magic Thief*.

Ann Rees says

As I was perusing the shelves in my local library, I came upon this book, looking deceptively innocent with its nice blue and gold cover. Since I like fantasy, I decided I'd give it a go. Little did I know what horrors awaited me. The plot, (if you can call it that), centers around a young thief oh so appropriately named Conn, who attempts to steal a locus magilawhatsit from the wizard Nevery, which should have killed him. Unfortunately, this doesn't happen. Instead, Nevery decides to take Conn home with him and make him his apprentice. Because really, when a grubby little thief tries to steal your powerful magical stone from you and doesn't die from it, you would obviously take him in, feed him, clothe him, train him in magic, and send him to an expensive school where he receives an education that most orphans can only dream of.

He then begins the search to find his own special magic stone thingy, which he does for most of the book. The plot drags on and on without anything interesting happening besides the numerous boring subplots (except for the biscuit recipe). Conn eventually finds out that 'his' stone is currently in the hands of the

queen. Naturally, he decides to sneak into the palace and take it. I mean, it's not like the ruler of the land owns it or anything. Oh wait, she does. But that doesn't matter because it's HIS stone after all. And after he finds his locus magicachoo, he (spoiler) promptly loses it when fighting the bad guy. The magic stone concept strongly resembles the wand one from the Harry Potter series in that the wand/stone chooses the wizard. Except in HP, you feel Harry's emotional connection with his wand, and his devastation when it breaks. Here, you only feel that the whole 'find your magic stone' subplot was a complete and utter waste of time (and paper).

'Well,' you ask, 'if the plot isn't the most memorable, surely the characters are original and complex? Or at least likable?' No. Not in the slightest. They are all unpleasant stereotypes you can't connect to. Gary St-err, Conn is your average, badly written fictional thief with a heart of gold. He's 'mischievous', 'quick-witted', 'charming', and has the personality of a doormat. Which is an insult to doormats everywhere. He is such a bland, boring character that I literally forgot his name while reading this book. No joke. If you can't remember what the main character's name is in the middle of the book, you know the author is doing something wrong.

Our villain, (whose name I can't remember), is a generic baddie who hates Conn, tries to kill him on various occasions, and has no character whatsoever. The other bad guy (of sorts) is a bully at Conn's school who (surprise, surprise) hates his little pickpocketing guts. He also has no character outside of his stereotyped category. But these are just the antagonists. Doesn't Conn, dull and bland as he is, have any friends? Of course he does. And they also are unoriginal cardboard cut outs. Yay!

Nevery is an irascible old codger who, for all his snapping threats at Conn and making him work for his keep (which seems to be a bad thing in Conn's eyes), puts up with his obnoxiousness thinking that he might be useful someday for saving the kingdom or something like that. He is not the best authority figure, particularly when it comes to the way he interacts with others. If handled well, a bad mentor might make for some interesting reading. However, it is not handled well here.

You may begin to ask yourself, 'Well, where are all the girl characters? There must be at least one strong female protagonist who helps the hero, right?' Um...if you mean the smart girl who does well in school, and despite being kind of stuck up (spoiler:she's a princess), manages to befriend the hero, then yes, she would probably count as one. Yet another used to death stereotype, Rowan is an intelligent princess who attends Conn's school and helps tutor him, since he can't read or write well, if at all. And is it just me, or is Rowan being set up as Conn's future love interest? Of course, I wouldn't know anything about that considering I haven't read the other two books.

Overall impressions? If you couldn't tell from my review, I really don't like this book. The plot (more like a mishmash of subplots) drags in all the wrong places, I've seen all of these characters before, only done better, the writing is nothing great, there aren't any good role models, the world isn't that creative, and all in all it's just very forgettable. There's nothing in this book that makes it worth reading instead of other fantasies. If you do want to read it, I'd advise getting it from the library, so you can see for yourself whether you'd want to buy it or not. There's not a lot that I found morally offensive, but as a fantasy lover I was offended by the number of clichés and recycled ideas that were used here. I have not read the next two books in this series, nor do I plan to. I would only recommend this book to my worst enemies. If you're looking for books about young boys and magic, I suggest you try the Septimus Heap series or reread Harry Potter for the thousandth time.

(No disrespect is intended toward the author in this review. I apologize if it seems that way.)

Ann says

Conn is a common thief, living on the streets of Twilight and stealing what he can to survive. Until he tries to steal something very important from a wizard. But what catches the wizard's interest isn't so much that Conn tried to steal his precious magical stone, but that the stone didn't kill Conn when he tried to.

Twilight is part of a city separated into three sections (basically the good side, the bad side, and the in between), and the city's magic fading - fast. Why? To what effect? And how to rectify it are the pressing questions that need to be answered.

While a lot of this book is a little predictable, I was still surprised at some of the plot points and found them fairly unique and interesting.

This book started a little slow for me. The first two chapters have a very unique writing style, which kind of subsides as the book goes on (though perhaps this is a good thing). But as the story progressed I found myself feeling more and more involved and curious as to how it would end. By the final third of the book I was really enjoying myself and eager to read the next chapter.

I liked Prineas' writing style (once the book got into the flow) and the book is easy and quick to get through. I really liked our main character, Conn! He's very likable, smart, brave and observant. I believe my other favorite character was Benet - though to say why would give it away. I liked the other characters a lot, too, but they never really developed as much as I'd hoped, and thus seemed more one-dimensional than the others. Though, I'm hoping this will be alleviated in following books. Which, I do plan to read, and hopefully rather soon!

Abby says

Plot Summary:

The city of Wellmet is losing its magic and no one can seem to figure out why. It is up to a previously exiled wizard named Nevery and a young thief named Connwaer, to save the town from its untimely demise. The story tells of Connwaer's search for his locus magicalicus, or the stone that allows wizards to harness magic's power and how he enters into apprenticeship with the older wizard. He also helps Nevery solve the mystery behind the lost magic.

Main Characters:

Connwaer: He is a young boy that was raised on "the wrong side of town", quite literally. His mom dies while he is still young and he fends for himself in the "twilight" neighborhood. He has a strong will and does not lie. He is also eager to learn, and will not be entered into servitude.

Nevery: Nevery is an old wizard, who 20 years prior, was exiled from Wellmet because he blew up his house and part of the palace. He is a bit of an ornery older man, who walks with a cane and believes that things are not always how they look.

Benet: Benet is the “hired muscle” for Nevery and Connwaer. Even though he is hired more as a body guard, we find out that he also has excellent cooking and knitting skills.

Key Issues:

Fantasy, Magic, Good vs. Evil, Changing your Destiny

Other Interesting information:

I love how throughout the book, whenever Connwaer felt like he was not going to be allowed to continue his apprenticeship, or if Nevery used corporal punishment among other things, he had such a strong will and pride about him that he would say things like, “I would not be a servant, that would never do,” or “I just would not allow it.” He was quite daring for the time period that this seems to be set in. The reason that I gave this book four out of five stars was that I really did the novel, it had an interesting, page turning plot line, and the characters were funny. The book was a little slow going on the plot, but I would definitely want this book in my classroom, and would recommend it to others.
