



The Farfield Curse

Kaleb Nation

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Bran Hambric was found alone in a locked bank vault when he was six years old. He doesn't have a clue how he got there, or any memory of his past. There's only one explanation: Magic. But magic is outlawed in the Great and Glorious City of Duncce.

Eight years later, a twisted, hissing creature confronts Bran and his foster father, Sewey, on their rooftop. Sewey believes it's a gnome, but not Bran. (Sewey isn't the brightest Duncclander to begin with.) Bran soon discovers that whatever leapt onto his roof is connected to the he never knew...and that Bran himself is the missing link in a plot so secret and evil that those behind it will stop at nothing to hunt him down.

Armed with wands and weapons, Bran's enemies are about to attack--with all the power of a horrible curse and a terrible crime. Magic won't be the only law broken in the City of Duncce...

The Farfield Curse Details

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From Reader Review The Farfield Curse for online ebook

Sam says

A book for Harry Potter readers that isn't quite Harry Potter. Okay, you can't help but draw out the similarities (boy who happens to be a magician living with people who don't want him to be around but who ends up being super important in the whole magic world). Outside of that, there aren't a whole lot of similarities; this is a self contained book that I don't really see anything else arising out of. That is unfortunately one of its weak points as well; young author Kaleb Nation took a great deal of time creating this world with loads of characters and rules only to really cram it into one four hundred page book. There is so much happening towards the latter half of the book that it is hard to keep track of who everyone is and what they're doing.

Bran Hambric lives in the attic of the Wilomas' house in the town of Dunce where magicians and gnomes are strictly prohibited. Sewey Wilomas is an unfortunate, dim-witted banker who happens to find Bran locked in a bank vault at a young age. Under Dunce rules, finders keepers on orphaned kids. The only information Bran had on him was a scrap of paper with his name and birthday. Bran is treated like an outcast; his only friend in the house is poor Rosie who is treated as little more than a slave in the house. But then, in the quiet town of Dunce, things start happening and Bran comes to realize that he has some magic in himself. In fact, he finds out that he is somehow linked to a huge underground plan called the Farfield Curse- a curse that was started by his mother before he was born and eventually led to her demise. Now the people who killed her need Bran and have found where he is, and they will do whatever it takes to get him back to complete the curse. In the mean time, Bran finds out that the unassuming town of Dunce has plenty of its own secrets.

It's not a bad book, particularly for one that was written by such a young author. Definitely intended for a younger teen audience- think upper elementary into middle school, not high school. This is a good choice if you're looking for a quick magic read or a book for someone who likes fantasy but can't commit to the entire Harry Potter series.

Jessica says

This book was very hard for me to get through. It gets better as you go along, but I found the beginning so slow that I literally had to force myself to read this. I even enjoyed Great Expectations better than this book. Nation's sense of humor is much better than Dickens, though.

The first part introduces the family and that's about it. It's long, repetitive, and nothing really happens. The second part is slightly better, but not much. The third and fourth parts contain most of the action and plot and are by far the best. Had the whole book been written in this manner, it would have received a couple more stars from me.

For a 14-year old to come up with this concept is amazing and in that respect I say, "Job well done!" But he's had a few years to edit it, and I think that may have been the key to making it better, especially the beginning.

Chloe says

Kaleb Nation is a fresh, funny voice in YA fiction. While his debut novel *Bran Hambric: The Farfield Curse* shares some elements with other series such as *Harry Potter*, it also manages to be unique and entertaining in its own right. The plot is engaging and (mostly) fast-paced, mixed in with hilarity, whimsy, and adventure. Bran is an interesting protagonist who is easy to care about, and his emotions and reactions are all quite believable and well-written. The majority of the supporting characters also added to the story skillfully, especially Adi, Rosie, and Astara. Sewey, and in fact all of the Wilomases, were especially hilarious. Nation definitely has a flair for humor! It was interesting to read about the different missivs and spells, and to discover Bran's past and what it meant for his future as he did so himself. I have a few small complaints about this book: the Farfield Curse itself played a smaller role in the story than the title would suggest; I would have liked to see more of some of the more villainous supporting characters; and it was a bit predictable; however, it still held my interest from beginning to end. I can't wait to read what Kaleb writes next! I'll definitely be checking out the next installment of *Bran Hambric*.

Erica Martin says

Never finished....

Evan says

It's not BAD, but it's not good either. This story acts as an introduction to Bran's story, and frankly, has a lighter tone than its sequel. The story is very straightforward and follows many cliches found in the fantasy genre, however, it has the spirit in it. It's full of self-parody and puns, things Jo Rowling was incredibly fond of. There's some clever jokes, and the story takes on a nice tone.

The characters are too straightforward, Bran being a very simple character, while the other characters, like Astara and Adi don't seem to go anywhere. Sewey and the Wilomases are very much like the mean family that most orphans in literature have, however, Kaleb does his best to make your opinions about them change.

I'm not real fond of the small plotlines that don't seem to go anywhere, but it's an honestly good novel, and I recommend it to anyone who wants a fantastic sequel. :)

Sarah says

This is a great example of what Christopher Paolini SHOULD have done...written the book when he was 13 and then spend 6 years editing it so that it's actually well-written! :) (Of course, Paolini has sold so many copies, who am I to judge?!)

Anyways, onto Bran Hambric....The start of the story didn't really grip me. I waded through and was really glad I did! Nation did a great job building the suspense, hitting a climax, and setting us up for the next one (well, next 4, but only one at a time).

I can definitely see his influences (Rowling is a big one...Bran suddenly coming into powers he knows nothing about, a huge name in the magic world, fighting the evil entity) in the text, but it's not overpowering. Some of the names are a little too cutesie for me and I didn't always think it was as funny as Nation meant it to be; however, I think for a first novel written by a young author he's done an excellent job. I'll absolutely pick up his next one.

Laura says

I knew nothing about this book going in. Someone had chosen it for a book club so I went along.

I read the prologue and then had to flip to the about the author to see if it was even written by an adult. I was both gratified to see it wasn't and glad to not be a creative writing teacher and have to constantly read this level of writing.

I went on to read the first chapter and skim the second and then I could do no more. There were honestly some good ideas. If the book had been shelved as Mr. Nation honed his craft and then rewrote it, it might be a decent book. But as it is, it's just too stiff, the humor's over the top and not funny, and every sentence has a tense change.

Amelia Loken says

Couldn't finish it. And I was listening to it on Audio as I painted. Maybe, because I've been reading so many books on editing, I wanted to 'cut to the chase' and get the story started. There were soooo many details about Bran's foster family. I get it already. They are self-important boors who are obsessed with keeping up with the Joneses...reminds me too much of Harry Potter but without the humor and too much of the Dursleys. Come On, I want the magic and the Hogwarts or whatever it is with the Farfield Curse. Couldn't get through the second CD. It just wasn't going anywhere.

Jax says

Let me save you some time... Think of Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix. Remember that one - The really slow, murky one. Now, imagine that the first 3/4 of the book is just Harry and the Dursleys. Now, imagine that the Dursleys aren't at all funny - Just dull and petty. And the final 1/4 of the book is just the bit where they end up at the Ministry of Magic, but make sure you leave out any bits that actually stop and explain anything. Got that? Now, give the text to a year 7 creative writing class, and tell them to embellish it. Getting better, eh? Last but not least, dictate the final text to a year 4 class, and get them to type it out for you, and publish without any editing.

Truly awful, but funny in a funny-for-all-the-wrong-reasons way.

Nikki (Wicked Awesome Books) says

What Kaleb Nation has done with Bran Hambric is what all aspiring authors should aim for. The Farfield Curse is interesting, enthralling, and extremely well-written. Nation infuses his characters with so much life and heart that they leap off the pages.

Bran instantly draws readers in with the mystery behind his story – who is he and why doesn't he remember anything from his childhood? He's intelligent and sarcastic and is surrounded by an insane family. I thoroughly enjoyed reading about the Wilomas' and their strange behavior, eccentricities, and very stilted values. Sewey, Bran's father figure (if you can even call him that) does some of the most crazy things, but it makes the story that much more entertaining because I wouldn't put anything past him. The relationship between Bran and Rosie, the 'maid,' is so touching and caring. I loved reading their interactions.

The city of Dunce is a magic-free zone, but signs of magic are all over the place. A favorite bit of the story for me was Dunce's need to be magic free, including hanging a sign outside the gates that states:

no gnomes
no mages
etcetera

A good number of jokes spring from this and I just loved how it was consistently tied into other aspects of the tale.

Even though Dunce is magic-free, Nation brings boatloads of magic to the story. The book is split into four parts and had the beginning not been so funny and filled with crazy Wilomas doings, I may have been bored because the magic doesn't really begin until part two opens up. But once part two begins, magic takes hold of the story, in the best possible way.

Kaleb Nation has melded this fantastical world with the very typical, everyday life in ways that work in perfect harmony. Bran Hambric took hold of my heart and never let go. So much so, that I'm more than eager to pick up the next book to see where the gnomes, mages, and etceteras lead to next.

Opening line: The night was cold and dead, and so felt Clarence's heart. ~ pg. xiii

Favorite lines: "You don't know...or maybe you do know how it feels to lose something that's so important to you, even when you've never had it, you miss it like your life is dependent on it." ~ pg. 286

LilyCat (Agent of SHIELD)-- on hiatus :(says

3.5 stars

I read this a while ago, but I still remember a fair amount of the plot elements.

Although today I'd probably give it a lower ranking, when I read this about three or four years ago, I thought it was a little cliched, but surprisingly original in worldbuilding and setup. Today, I'm quite impressed the author started on this book at age 14.

Anyway, the worldbuilding and background is original and pretty weird. In the place where the book is set, magic is outlawed, and other magical peoples such as gnomes are not allowed in. I still remember how they

explained the "no gnomes part." There is an inscription on a tree that says it. The explanation went something like this:

No one really knew why it said, "no gnomes." It might have said "hog homes" at one point, and someone rubbed off the tops of the h's.

I remember my younger self laughing at that point. Bran is an orphan, but we find out later on that (view spoiler), much like in Eragon. So that was pretty original. Also, the magic system, which has different kinds of magic, was very well described and made sense.

In addition, it was pretty mature for middle grade-- it had some almost horror-like elements and more rounded characters (except for Bran, who's a bit one-dimensional).

Problems with this book mainly consisted of the similarities to Harry Potter and other cliches. (For complaints about Harry Potter similarities, read my review of The Iron Trial here.) This orphan kid is living with obnoxious relatives who hate magic and then goes on this magical journey thing to learn about "special snowflake" powers and stuff. There are different kinds of magic, and our special MC can use *all of them*-- OMG!! There's also a creepy-looking villain who is kind of Voldemort and does death magic or something.

Madison Mcgraw says

Horrible. Poor Imitation of Harry Potter. Even the cover is a rip off. This is getting good/press reviews b/c the author built a loyal following of Twilight lovers - Kaleb Nation even went so far as to write a "press release" that he would play new Edward Cullen in the new Twilight movies.

This book is a testament to the fact that blind consumers will buy anything associated with Twilight and Harry Potter.

Flat writing/boring characters, and "magic elements" straight out of Harry Potter.

Lauren says

After reading that the author of this, Kaleb Nation, had started Bran Hambric when he was 14 and continued it throughout his teen years, I was solidly impressed. Sadly enough that while his dedication to his book payed off by having an interesting and partly unique story filled with some great characters, I was at most times bored with the actual plot at hand since it mostly lacked in action and suspense.

Bran was a character that I enjoyed reading about and could sympathize with his feeling of being lost in a world where he could not use his magical abilities. Plus, it was fun to read about the other main characters who were out right hilarious with their weirdness. For example, one of Bran's caregivers, has this absurd idea that in taking a million pills a day she will somehow in the process avoid all diseases. This and other characteristics these people had was a constant in bringing out some laughs. Though, I felt that while they all were unique and interesting, they lacked reality, leaving it hard for me to be able to relate to them.

Plus, the other thing that Bran Hambric lacked was a fast paced plot at the start. To be honest, it was out right

hard to get through the first half. Luckily, towards the middle it began to pick up speed and make Bran Hambric a good but not out right great story overall.

In all, I feel that these series will grow over time to as Kaleb continues to write on. So, I will probably be picking up the next installment to see where everything goes next, but it will not be a must on my To Do List.

I suggest this book to fans of Harry Potter and fantasy.

Grade: C+

Julie says

(This book is aimed for 8-12 but would be fine for the young adult crowd, in my opinion... the main character is 14.)

I got interested in this after reading Kaleb Nation's Twilight Guy website. Kaleb's writing is entertaining and intelligent, and I've been looking forward to reading his book for some time.

I bought it the day it came out, but hadn't gotten around to it until now (if you saw my bookcases, you'd see why). From the moment I picked it up, though, I was entertained and amused.

Bran Hambric is a sympathetic, smart, fairly normal 14-year-old, stuck in a household of loonies (minus their housekeeper, Rosie). Having been inexplicably found in a bank vault at the age of 6, Bran is taken in by the bank manager (against much protest) under the city of Dunces' "finders keepers" law (hahaha). The Wilomas family takes care of Bran but he is definitely in a Harry Potter-like situation, given the worst of everything and treated like a second-class citizen in his own home.

Until one night, Bran starts to get the idea that there's more to his story, and his past begins to catch up with him...

Bran and the rest of the cast of characters were fun to read about, and the plot moved along quickly enough to keep me interested. The baddies are pretty two-dimensional, but I think that's to be expected in this kind of story. There's some discussion of choice and consequences, especially when it comes to morality, and Bran has a lot of information to assimilate regarding his past, his future, his abilities, and magic in general.

Kaleb Nation is excellent at coming up with fun, unique names.

The one drawback: editing. There were many outright errors, but also many awkward sentences that could have been smoothed out a bit more. Also... is "lowly" a word? I mean, in the context of "he spoke lowly?" Because that is used in this book about 15 times and it really stuck out to me.

Still, it's a fun read that I think upper-level 8- to 12-year-olds would enjoy, especially those who are into HP or Percy Jackson. YA or adults looking for their next Harry Potter contender will probably wish for a little more depth, but find the story entertaining.

Kaleb Nation has my best wishes on his future writing forays, and I will definitely be reading Bran Hambric

book 2 when it arrives.

Bri says

When he was six years old, a child was found in a locked bank vault in the city of Duncie. He's suffering from amnesia and only a small scrap of paper offers a clue: his name, Bran Hambric. His parents' whereabouts are unknown, and so according to Duncie law, whoever found him is responsible for his welfare. The task is entrusted to Sewey and Mabel Wilomas. But nobody, not even Bran, realizes how important the boy's survival is, and his connection to the titular Farfield Curse.

Reading Bran Hambric: The Farfield Curse, the similarities of Harry Potter will occur. However, after the publication of the Potter series, such comparisons were inevitable. Literature throughout the ages has been littered with the archetype of the hero, a boy of extraordinary power and living in ordinary circumstances. Bran Hambric has another thing in common with Mr. Potter: A sharply written novel with an engaging characters, a twisting storyline, and equal dashes of humor and action.

Author Kaleb Nation started Bran Hambric when he was fourteen years old. He completed the novel in 2007. It all started with his imagining a boy and a banker waiting on a rooftop for a burglar to arrive. As Nation tells it, he wrote five hundred pages in six to nine months. The result is a novel meant for middle grades but enjoyable by all ages.

Starting in on Bran Hambric, once I was invested in the story, I didn't want to leave. You know a book is good when you'll torture yourself on an elliptical for another thirty minutes to read it! The characterization is great, from the curmudgeonly yet likable Sewey Wilomas (my favorite) his health-obsessed wife Mabel to the characters who aid Bran Hambric in his search for the truth - Adi and Astara. The book is filled with scenes of Bran's family life, Sewey's outlandish behavior, the mysterious world of gnomes, mages, and etc. This wait for more action, however, might bore younger readers. With so many wild incidents (odd occurrences at a town fair, an unusual bookstore visit), older readers should be entertained nonetheless. The villain, Baslyn, is amiss for a good deal of the book, but his evil presence still fills the novel, making the confrontation of him and Bran thoroughly creepy, and worthwhile.

Nation has mentioned he has enough material written by five more sequels, and hopefully, Bran Hambric: The Farfield Curse leaves readers anticipating more, as Bran is a promising new character whose story has much left to tell.

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