

The Wizards of Once by Cressida Cowell

5 Stars

A perfect book for children of all ages (yes, even those with grey hair!)

*"Once there was Magic. It was a long, long time ago, in a British Isles so old it did not know it was the British Isles yet, and the Magic lived in the dark forests."*

The minute I read/listened to these opening lines of this wondrous tale of Xar, "a wild young boy who belonged to the Wizard tribe", youngest son of Encanzo, the Enchanter, King of Wizards, I was hooked.

Xar is trying to find his magic at any cost because it's embarrassing that his Magic has not yet come in even though he has turned thirteen. He is disobedient, disruptive and always taking chances. Hence the reason he and his followers are in the Badwoods, an area which he is banned from entering, but he is determined to trap a witch so that he can steal their magic in time for the Spelling Competition, where he hopes to beat his brother Looter.

Wish is the daughter of Queen Sychrax, leader of the Iron Warriors. She and her (assistant) bodyguard, Bodkin, have snuck out of the palace to explore the Badlands. Unfortunately, Wish and Bodkin are trapped by Xar's witch's net, and he decides to kidnap them. He takes them back to his father's castle and hides them in his room while taking part in the Spelling Competition.

A very unlikely friendship forms between Xar and Wish, more out of necessity thanks to Xar capturing a really bad witch. He has to rely on Wish to help him destroy this evil he's re-introduced after aeons of the land being "witch free".

Xar learns that sometimes his bad, rude and disobedient behaviour is not the answer, while Wish learns that life is not just about the Iron tribe, but also includes magic, sprites, wolves, giant talking trees and that she, too, might have more than a touch of magic hidden within herself.

Thanks to my granddaughter I met and fell in love with Cressida Cowell's series of books "How To Train Your Dragon." So when I discovered that Cressida Cowell had started this new series, I knew that Rozzi and I had found yet another special set of stories to share.

Cressida Cowell has a way of telling a story that grips the reader from the very first sentence. The characters are unique, but you feel as though there might be a touch of that character hidden within yourself, giving you the encouragement to try something outside of your comfort zone.

I must add that getting David Tennant to narrate the story makes the Magic come more alive and somehow gets the characters to live inside your head as you listen to his various accents for each human, creature, animal or witch. A truly gifted narrator and Cressida Cowell's books can only grow in magnitude thanks to his input.

Treebeard

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.