



A School for Sorcery

E. Rose Sabin

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Winner of the Andre Norton Gryphon Award

Welcome to the Leslie Simonton School for the Magically Gifted. A school where students can expect the unexpected. But be careful. At this school the final exam could be a real...killer.

A School for Sorcery Details

Date : Published August 18th 2003 by Starscape (first published 2002)

ISBN : 9780765342195

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Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Magic, Fiction

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From Reader Review A School for Sorcery for online ebook

Patricia says

I love this book. Kind of Harry Potter-ish, only other kinds of powers and a bit more grown up characters. Certainly a book I read multiple times. Warning; towards the end of the book it can get a bit difficult, but hang in there.

Lina Bongiovanni says

Dit boek kreeg ik van mijn moeder omdat ze voor het eerst een boek tegenkwam met een personage met dezelfde naam als ik! :-) Ik vond het een leuk boek om te lezen, maar kon niet altijd even goed mijn interesse erbij houden en dwaalde dus vaak af waardoor ik weer pagina's terug moest lezen. Misschien moet ik het boek binnenkort nog eens een kans geven!

Tanya Bilham says

I really enjoyed the hidden mystery written into the school and much of the illusion vs. reality in it. Get past the first few chapters. Nothing is as you'd think when you first start reading this. This book gets better and better as the plot goes on. I love how tangled the plotline gets. At first I thought some of the characters were a little too archetypal at the beginning, but it starts to make more sense later on. I also love the way the author explores the different sides of villain's character later on, that said I can't say anything or I'll spoil a huge part of it. Reminded me of little bit of a mix between Harry Potter and X-men, in the way each student had their own "gift". This book portrays the importance of integrity and shows the extreme dangers of getting obsessed with power. So much I want to say about what I loved about it, but not wanting to spoil it. The plotline leading up to the end is really well woven together, although I found the very last part at the end up bit cheesy...really didn't like the concept of world-making at the end...

On a side note: The book could have done with a bit more description and some earlier hints in the book about what the antagonist was up to would have made it more interesting.

Interested to see what the other two books will be like, I think the prequel is supposed to show how the school got started with some adult characters as teenagers and the one after this is supposed to be about Grey after he was rescued. If you're looking for a series to get into....

Tatra says

I thought this book was fascinating. It comes across as a bit scattered, but really it's just complex and is just awesome.

Lisbeth says

The [monster] stooped, caught up the panther, tucked it under her arm, and caught hold of [Disposable Dude] with her other hand, lifted him easily, and pinned him under that arm.

"And you, fool!" [Villain] aimed his wand toward [Heroine]. "You see how futile are your puny, ignorant attempts at thaumaturgy. Of what use was your furtive visit to my room? Your quest is doomed. Renounce it or be doomed yourself." [Heroine] spat at his feet.

Yeah. That happened.

Now, admittedly, it's made textually clear that Villain is a bit of a pretentious blowhard, but these two paragraphs still sum up perfectly ALL THE THINGS that don't work in this book. The dialogue is wooden; characterization is weak; the writing technique is shaky; and Heroine is hard to like. The plot is a little muddled (though better handled than the writing) and the world isn't terribly well developed.

This is a very earnest book and dumping on it feels unkind, since it - like the earnest heroine - tries hard. I think it suffers from a long break between completion (it was a complete manuscript in 1992) and publication (2002). It feels like an early 90s YA book, a sort of hopeful for the Diana Wynne Jones and Eva Ibbotson crowd c. 1994, and I think that if it had come out in 1995 it would have settled in with good company on a certain kind of reader's bookshelf. The fact that it was published after Tamora Pierce got *The Circle of Magic* out and, more importantly, after Harry Potter arrived on the scene did it no favors: any school story with this shaky a world and this lightly-sketched a set of characters is going to pale beside the golden trio and Hogwarts. And poor Tria can't help it that Tris got a similar name and personality out there first.

But, honestly, fact is that if you're looking for books about teenage magic students that aren't Harry, you'd be far better off with Seanan McGuire's *Wayward Children* series. Pass on this one and go get your hands on *Every Heart a Doorway*.

Cassandra says

I read this as a kid and found it amazing, but utterly confusing. I had no idea who was who and who was alive by the end of it. There was just this blur in my memory about mirrors, and a panther, and multiple worlds. Copies of the main character? One had a ring? When I was 11 or 12 I started trying to track it down to re-read, but it had vanished from the library.

Now I've just re-read it! Not as bizarre and scary as it was when I was 8, but still pretty good. Some of the twists were a bit too obvious (well, the utter obliviousness of the characters to them was mildly irritating) but the world is great and it's a good story.

Angela Tuson says

II can't decide if I liked this book or not. It won an award in 1992, and it must have been one of the few 'Magic School' novels until Hogwarts was unveiled, and now must suffer comparison. I'd also caution that this is not a children's novel; it's more in line with *The House of Night* or *Twilight* teen readership.

Tria's mother applies on her behalf to the Lesley Simonton School for the Gifted. Having missed her own chance to be one of the few Gifted in an immense (really, a gargantuan) population, she wants her daughter to leave the drudgery and superstition at the farm and so saves up the fees for Tria's first year at the school. Tria is keen but nervous. And so she should be; the school is awful, dreary, inhospitable and then, inexplicably, extremely dangerous. The other kids, unlike Tria, have just the one kind of gift, except multi-gifted and arrogant Oryon, a dark boy indeed. In fact this story seemed to me to be just a shade too dark, what with all the murder attempts, harpies clawing out flesh, rotting corpses, animal sacrifice and so on...all of which could have been leavened by a little humour. I was happy that story focussed on the ethical uses of power over other lives, but didn't see it presented as the alluring option at any point. A tiny feel of Diana Wynne Jones escaped from the pages, but the book didn't have the satisfying feel of evil being understood and Dealt With. Rather, it felt like it could all start up again any moment, and poor Tria seemed to lurch from one confusing awfulness to another, each worse than the last, uncomprehending to the bitter end. I guess... I didn't like it after all.

Abby Cashen says

This book felt like a cross between a Diana Wynne Jones book and E. Nesbet. It was enchanting and absolutely mesmerizing (although it had my head spinning a bit by the end).

(Read full review here.)

<http://sutorinohana.blogspot.com/2015...>

(Includes content advisory.)

Chelsie says

A rather odd book, to tell the truth. I could see very little resemblances to Harry Potter however. I mean, she goes to a boarding school for sorcery. That's just about where the resemblances stop.

The book was definately much more mature of an idea, especially concerning the nature of some of the spells cast in the book, which were rather disturbing in my oppinion. But not that badly written. There were some interesting ideas, and I liked how she grew a friendship with her rather unlikeable roommate.

However, what really bugged me was the climax and end of the book. As has been mentioned by others, the whole dashing through mirror portals really threw me off. An interesting idea, I suppose...but it was so confused and random. Whereas twists and turns are great to keep a reader on the edge of their seat and trying to figure things out, it can eventually become way too much. Also, the ending was rather odd. Suddenly she cries into dust and creates a miniature world? What's that all about?! Without preamble, as well.

Overall, an interesting read, if with a twisted ending.

Kat Rook says

Pretty Review here <https://thebookrook.blogspot.com/2016...>

Alright so there's a Victorian-esque world with trains, cars, and the occasional steam powered device but the real kicker is that there is also magic. Tria is a farm girl who, of course, has magic. In probably the first four or five pages she gets accepted to a school for magic that sounds amazing! But then arrives to find a rundown campus with maybe thirty students.

Now the first part of the book is mostly Tria struggling to learn the rules of the magical world and avoid her frankly terrible roommate. So basically the first semester of college.

The real plot starts later (And it's in the blurb! So don't yell at me about spoilers) when two of the students, who are basically drunk on their own power, trap two of the nice but weaker kids in some sort of terrifying dimension. Yeah said dimension was never really explained so . . . Now It's Tria's job for (some reason) to get the two students back and she has a year to do it.

So I've been intentionally looking for books like Dealing with Dragons or, well, anything by Patricia C. Wrede or Caroline Stevermer. "A School for Sorcery" was sort of advertised as such authors combined with J. K. Rowling. Which I can . . . kind of see. But really only the magic school bit. Anyway on to the characters.

Characters

Tria: She was kind of the normal fairytale-ish main character.

Polite and earnest but not always the brightest. Still when she did screw up she took her punishment with an impressive amount of grace.

So while she wasn't my favorite character ever I still found her perfectly entertaining and in the narrative she worked quite well.

Lina: She's this one character that started out being a jerk for no reason and then mostly became Tria's friend. Well I say friend. More like an ally. Lina was this character who was totally entitled but she was much cleverer than Tria and actually lead her to the solution of most of her problems so she was at least useful if not nice. But hey she could turn into a panther so . . . That's always cool!

Wilce and Gray: These were the two students who got trapped in who knows where. Despite not having a lot of time with them they were both extremely sweet. I have to admit that I was actually very invested in saving them because they were just that cute.

Oryon: He became the main antagonist by trapping Wilce and Gray and then challenging the Headmistress to save them or she would turn the school over to him. Now I have to admit that at first I really did not see his motivation. It seemed like he just wanted revenge against Tria and Lina for ticking him off earlier in the narrative. But as the story unfolded I saw that it was really about his fight with the Headmistress, who was a total hypocrite and I can see why. As an antagonist he actually got pretty creepy which surprised me.

Likes

The romance: What can I say, the romance between Tria and Wilce (while mainly geared towards making you feel for Wilce) was so cutesy. I mean sure it was short and pretty one-dimensional but maybe I was just glad that I didn't have to complain about how unhealthy and illogical it was.

The setting: Like I said I have been intentionally seeking out books with technology and magic because I'm a sucker for those kind of worlds. Though I would have liked to see more of the technology. The school was kind of in the middle of nowhere so while I knew that such a world existed I didn't really get to see it.

Basically everything up until the end: Sure there was some confusing things and several frustrating parts. But it was essentially a run of the mill magical adventure (contained in a mysterious school that looked rundown at times and at other times looked beautiful) except for the ending. I'll talk about it in my dislikes but holy cow it's like it exploded with 'what the HECK' moments in the last fifty pages.

Dislikes

The staff: Okay I've seen complaints of the Hogwarts staff and their inability to help Harry and co. on their epic quest. They've got nothing on the staff in this book. Mostly it's the Headmistress's fault. She is a fraud. She's got this high and mighty attitude about how she's so powerful and she knows so much more than everyone else but in reality she can barely control her less powerful students much less all of them together. So when Oryon called her out for being a liar and frankly just a jerk she was supposed to fold right then and there. But instead she passed the task onto Tria and Lina saying that it would unfair for someone as powerful as herself to accept Oryon's challenge.

She even forbade the other teachers from helping them. Now I expected her to get called out in the end you know Percy Jackson style. But Nope! Which leads to the rest of the ending.

The Ending

Probably the last forty pages when right into what the heck mode. For example, in an attempt to increase her power with some kind of mirror trick Tria accidentally split herself up into four different versions of herself.

Which was confusing to say the least. After an equally confusing romp into the super scary dimension to retrieve the other two students it is then revealed that Tria is a seventh level adept. Which is the highest level a person can achieve, surprise, surprise. Now what does that make her? A god. A literal god.

The book ended with her making an entire world out of dust. What the Heck!? That ending just made no sense none at all.

I don't even really know how to conclude. It was just a bit too convoluted for my taste. I do really love the genre that's a slow paced magical adventure (a la Raven Boys or Dealing with Dragons) but I feel like those work because they're highly character driven with in depth and often amazing main characters and co. I have to say that 'amazing' would probably be a stretch for these characters. So I guess I did like it (well up until the end).

Lea says

An interesting book. I liked it partly because it took a fairly normal idea (Girl at sorcery school must overcome magical difficulties) and made it different. The doubles were what made it different, I think, but also a bit confusing.....

I must say that I disliked the one gory scene near the end. I skip it whenever I read this book.

Marie says

Just my thoughts as reading:

Tria is as judgmental as Zoey and as stupid as Clary.

She causes the problems, relies on everyone else to provide the impetus for the solution--though Tria herself has to actually take action at least, since she's the only one with any power.

Tria does not suffer enough for the consequences of what she does.

The characterization is overwhelmingly shallow.

The worldbuilding fails

All of this is primarily tied to the fact it's mostly telling vs. showing.

I'll try to come up with a more coherent review later, but sometimes it just made me angry.

On the other hand, the concept is okay, and the actual execution of the jumping through mirrors, etc, actually worked pretty well. It just hadn't been set up in the story. The tone is uneven and the plot isn't built.

CLM says

I enjoyed this book (although it is derivative) but it read as if the author lost interest 2/3 of the way through and finished it too hastily.

Cristina Boncea says

Când am terminat-o, am rămas fascinat, gen: WTF is this shit!?

De prima oară când o citisem, cu multă îngrijorare, rămasesem în minte cu o imagine a unei supereroi, cu o poveste romantică și magie, cu detalii și sacrificii. Nu știau ce schimbări ale universului să au putut produce încât, de data aceasta, am citit o carte fără vlagă, neinspirată și incompletă.

Tria și Wilce nu au o relație serioasă după cum credeam că-mi amintesc încă de la viața acesteia nu este într-adevăr puțin pericol.

Cartea nu ne spune nici că cum a ajuns Tria la nivelul 7.

Acum, când am citit toate cărțile, mi se pare o trilogie groaznică de maxim 2 stele, total nepotrivită anilor 2000. Totul este mult prea învechit și nici una din cele trei cărți nu are cine să tie ce poveste sau trăiri intense ciniște personaje să terse (singura care-mi place este Lina, ea ar trebui să fie personajul principal) și dialoguri teribile.

În primul volum, Tria vine din provincie pentru a învăța cum să-și utilizeze puterile de viziune la coala Lesley Simolton pentru cei cu talente speciale.

Își face prieteni și mai târziu, acceptă să ducă o luptă împotriva unui elev, Oryion, care a invocat Femeile Teribile și a trimis cătiva colegi, printre care și Wilce, pe Tărâmul de Dincolo pentru a căuta putere în schimb.

Tria încearcă să-l opreasca pe acesta din preluarea controlului asupra colii.

Ea își descoperă celelalte euri, în diferite dimensiuni în care trăiește și reușește să meargă pe Tărâmul de Dincolo pentru a-i salva pe toți.

Nimic extraordinar nu se întâmplă, cred că totul pare interesant până la jumatea cărăbii, după care povestea

devine din ce în ce mai ciudat?.

O carte mediocr?, care nu merit? nici m?car cump?rat? ?i i-am dat trei stele doar pentru c? e vorba de magie. M? bucur îns? c? am recitit aceast? carte pentru c? acum p?rerea mea este complet diferit? ?i mi-am dat seama c? percep?iile mele s-au schimbat, poate chiar s-au rafinat fa?? de acum ceva vreme.

Anastasia says

A School for Sorcery sadly proves that Sabin is no Caroline Stevermer [to leave J.K. Rowling out of the equation entirely]. The characters are intriguing but ill-developed, left to fumble their way through plots involving mirror worlds and alternate realities until one character is much the same as another. By the end it's more a matter of seeing the story come to its neat resolution than a question of caring for the fates of the characters. The genre of school fantasy has been better explored not only by those aforementioned masters but also by Diana Wynne Jones, Ursula K. LeGuin, and others--best to look elsewhere.
