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The Remarkable Journey Of Prince Jen



Synopsis

When Prince Jen volunteers to search for the legendary court of T'ien-kuo, a mysterious old man chooses six gifts for him to bear in homage: a saddle, a sword, a paint box, a bowl, a kite, and a flute. Puzzled by the gifts but full of high spirits and pride, Jen sets off--but stumbles almost immediately into a series of misfortunes. Only with the help of his faithful servant, Mafoo, and valiant flute-girl, Voyaging Moon, and only after a breathtakingly exciting string of adventures can Jen discover the real meaning of the gifts and face his true destiny. . . .

Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

When Prince Jen hears of the happy, prosperous land of T'ien-kuo, he vows to seek out its ruler and learn from his example. And so he sets out, bearing six humble gifts for the emperor of T'ien-kuo. Readers versed in the logic of fairy tales will not be surprised when Jen's route veers from his original plan and the six gifts end up in hands other than those of T'ien-kuo's lord. Along the way, Jen falls in love, has a number of run-ins with an ambitious, bloodthirsty bandit and slowly descends from his exalted station until he is condemned to wear the cangue, a heavy wooden collar for criminals. In the novel's final scenes, the gifts and their new owners return to play an important part in Jen's struggle to save his life and kingdom. Although patchy character development slows the

narrative in places, the elegant, almost archetypal plot offers considerable enjoyment. Prince Jen's travels are pleasantly reminiscent of the series of coming-of-age journeys found in the author's earlier Prydain Chronicles. Ages 10-up. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 5-10-- From deep in the cauldron of world story comes a rich fantasy about a young man's journey from innocence to experience. In China during the Tang Dynasty, young Prince Jen, heir to the Dragon Throne, sets off to find T'ien-kuo, or Heavenly Kingdom, the utopia described by a mysterious wandering scholar. Accompanied by a large retinue of soldiers and his practical, plain-spoken servant, the idealistic, sheltered prince bears six gifts for the ruler of T'ien-kuo. As his journey progresses, he loses everything: his retinue, his possessions, his identity, his illusions, his friends, until at last, in one of Alexander's most moving passages, he finds himself a common criminal, wandering the roads of his own kingdom, wearing the wooden collar of punishment. Although experience is a harsh teacher, Jen never loses his common humanity, nor his faith in the bondmaid he loves. Alexander borrows form and content from the popular novels of the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties, particularly Shi Nai'an's *Outlaws of the Marsh* (China Bks., 1988), and is influenced, as are the Ming-Ch'ing novels, by the vernacular literature of the Sung Dynasty. Yet Jen's story transcends all boundaries, mixing Alexander's familiar cast--the impulsive, good-hearted boy; the clever, independent young woman; the assortment of eccentric, loyal companions--with flavors of European folklore; Hans Christian Andersen; admiring Chinoiserie, Buddhist and Taoist ideas; Arabian Nights extravagance. Alexander satisfies the taste for excitement, but his vivid characters and the food for thought he offers will nourish long after the last page is turned. --Margaret A. Chang, North Adams State College, MA Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Definitely in line with his other writings, great author with epic tales on the mind.

How many years has it been since cute symbolic tales were in vogue? A very long time. That is why this book is such a treasure. Not only does Mr. Alexander give us an entertaining story with lovable, quirky characters, but it works in the tradition of a true fable as it tells of true lessons in life. I know this is but a review, but I'd like to take the opportunity to point out one particular lesson I found: Take notice of Jen's gifts. When first selected, everyone was less than impressed and thought them nothing but junk. But as various people experienced in the lines of the various gifts meet them (i.e.

Voyaging Moon and the flute), they truly appreciate the gifts as practically priceless. So, yes, ignore my annoying observation, and please consider my recommendation of this book. You will not be disappointed.

A great book of values from my favorite author for youth and children's books. A lot of moral analogies and metaphors can be found in this and all of Lloyd Alexander's books.

A huge fan of Alexander's Prydain stories, I was deeply impressed by the Kestrel series as well. Just when I thought my top ten favorite books were set in stone, I read this delightfully profound archetypal adventure filled with vibrant, colorful characters whose seemingly insurmountable challenges wend through exciting, unpredictable yet insightful resolutions. A great read to curl up to at the end of the day!

Exciting and funny story, with a GREAT reader! Too bad it's not out in CD yet.

Lovely book.

Yay awesome. I've been trying to remember the name of this book to buy it for over 5 years. Eureka!

Lloyd Alexander had the remarkable ability to write a new book that immediately seemed timeless, as if he had channeled a story that had been told for generations. The Remarkable Journey of Prince Jen is indeed such a book, unfolding with Alexander's trademark intricate plotting, a Dickensian cast of characters, ageless wisdom, well-researched exotic locales and wry, but not cynical humor. Prior to this book's publication, Lloyd Alexander wrote five novels starring that intrepid explorer Vesper Holly. While enjoyable books, they seem formulaic in plot and often forced in humor. Thus, it was a relief and a reward to see Alexander return to his true form with The Remarkable Journey of Prince Jen. I cannot recommend this book highly enough, both for young readers and adults. This tale set in a mythical China of the past is packed with adventure, travails, wit and wonder. Read it again and again!

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