

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

KAZIN'S QUEST

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BOOK REVIEW

Scheppner presents the first volume in an epic fantasy series about a student of magic who embarks on a prophesied quest.

Kazin is a young human attending “the school of black mages.” When readers first meet him, he’s about to take a difficult and crucially important final test, and he and fellow student Max are excited, if nervous. Students are only allowed to take the test once, and it’s known to be tough. Nevertheless, both boys earn perfect scores—an occurrence foretold in the Book of Prophecy: two mages who earn perfect such scores will defeat a dragon to obtain a powerful “dragon orb.” Mage instructor Sandor guides Max and Kazin to the dragon in question, but his intentions aren’t as pure as they seem. Meanwhile, in the nearby minotaur empire, Zylor dreams of avenging his father, Trogor, who was poisoned by his brother and current minotaur emperor Traygor. Zylor plans to defeat Traygor in an “election duel”: “By killing my uncle in a duel to the death, any supporters he may have will have no choice but to change their support.” But it turns out that Traygor is in cahoots with an “inherently evil” group known as lizardmen; such an alliance could destroy the fragile peace that exists between minotaurs, humans, lizardmen, and dwarves. The narrative follows Kazin, Zylor, and others in a straightforward fantasy setting full of magic and action; plenty of spells are cast and the minotaurs’ bloodlust is extensively detailed. Characterizations are typical for the genre, with few surprises (dwarves are weaponry enthusiasts; goblins are dumb and vicious). However, the story moves along at a brisk pace, without wasting pages on lengthy backstories or uninteresting worldbuilding details. The quest is ultimately epic in scale, and there’s no telling when, for instance, an army of skeletons or elves riding centaurs might turn up. The dialogue is a bit predictable at times (“You’ll never get away with this!”), but the appeal of the main players will keep readers turning pages.

An often entertaining and eventful journey, despite rather familiar genre elements.