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Newt's Emerald

by Garth Nix

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Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: Inspired by the works of Georgette Heyer and Jane Austen, Garth Nix's *Newt's Emerald* is a Regency romance with a fantasy twist. New York Times bestselling author Gail Carriger calls it "charming; quite, quite charming." After Lady Truthful's magical Newington Emerald is stolen from her she devises a simple plan: go to London to recover the missing jewel. She quickly learns, however, that a woman cannot wander the city streets alone without damaging her reputation, and she disguises herself as a mustache-wearing man. During Truthful's dangerous journey she discovers a crook, an unsuspecting ally, and an evil sorceress—but will she find the Emerald?

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What We Say

In the last few years, I can't seem to read of a well-plotted historical romance without hearing the name of author Georgette Heyer. Her stock has clearly risen and if you dive into one of her highly entertaining tales, you'll know why. Still, drop Heyer's name and I'm a sucker, ready to give your novel a shot. Well, Garth Nix has a lot of fun combining Heyer's plotting with a dash of magic a la the recent novel "Sorcerer To The Crown" by Zen Cho. This isn't quite as good but Nix's pleasure is pretty infectious. It starts strongly: young Lady Truthful is the heir to a beautiful and powerful emerald. When it's stolen, she heads to London and using a dash of illusion, investigates posing as a young Frenchman. Before you can say "bodice-ripper" Truthful is tied up on a ship headed towards death with the handsome but frustratingly rude Major Hartnett after they're discovered snooping around. In the best set-piece in the book, Truthful uses her nautical knowledge to escape their trap, slow the ship, and engineer their rescue. Unfortunately, that's about it for Truthful using her smarts. She's sidelined by the men (and to be fair doesn't like it one bit) until a supernatural showdown where outwitting ones opponent barely comes into play. It's a pity because by and large this is fun with amusing characters and some satisfying banter. It just feels poorly thought out at the end and rather rushed romantically. Nix clearly has an affinity for this genre. If he can mix in a little complexity in his characters and follow through on his set-up rather than coasting on it, he'll be able to stake his claim more completely. For an example of how it's done, one need only check out Heyer herself. -- Michael Giltz

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What Others Say

"A surprise from Garth Nix: A Regency romance with magic. Charming; quite, quite charming." (Gail Carriger, New York Times bestselling author of the Parasol Protectorate and the Finishing School series) "Part comedy of manners, part fantasy adventure, this lighthearted romp is ridiculous fun." (Booklist (starred review)) "A delightful romp with dastardly plots and romantic confusions that would do Jane Austen proud. Fans of the author and of fantasy or Regency romance will enjoy this tale immensely. (School Library Journal) "Entertaining." (Kirkus Reviews) "This romance should please the author's regular readers and Georgette Heyer fans alike." (Publishers Weekly)

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