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Epic

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Not a Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Call your first novel Epic and you run the risk of being thought, at the very least, ambitious - not that such a description will carry anything but the most favourable connotations when the book in question is something such as Kostick's. This is a fantasy novel which, while retaining many of the stock elements of the genre (dragon slaying, a magic ring, cataclysmic battles, treasure chests, fearsome weapons, inter alia), moves well beyond these conventional bits and pieces to allow for the incorporation of a challenging intellectual dimension. This, concerned essentially with political systems and the role of violence in such systems, may at time prove (especially in the earlier chapters of the novel) rather demanding and dense for younger teenage readers. For them, however, there will be other rewards: there will be the two interlocking parallel worlds of the novel and the cleverly devised 'Epic' role-playing computer game which the young Erik Haraldson and friends ultimately attempt to turn to their advantage when opposing the dictatorship of the 'small, self-selected elite' known as the Central Allocations committee. We are now ready for epic confrontations, in various senses, and for the vivid portrayal of a society (with some oblique allusions to our own) on the edge of disintegration. 'Epic,' as one of the committee remarks at one point, 'is a strange game with greater depths, more than perhaps we realise.' Like game, like book: 'clip on', as the characters say when play begins, and enjoy!

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