



The Lost Magician

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Piers Torday is a writer capable of inventing magical universes that stay totally believable. But he is not at his considerable best in this novel. Written as a modern take on C.S.Lewis's classic **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**, the whole venture feels forced and lacking in creative excitement. This absence of conviction is also reflected in his laboured writing. The opening three pages employ the word 'very' five times, not a good start, and it reappears three times more before the end of the first chapter. By this time a family connection is described as 'shrouded in mystery' and young characters are twice described as 'sprawled' on different items of furniture. It could be legitimate pastiche to imitate some of Lewis's dialogue at its most hearty, as here, but he almost always chose his other words on the page more carefully than this.

Partially coming to the rescue is a lively story where a post-war family of four children enter a hidden library in which another savage conflict is still raging. This is between favourite characters from fiction and their opposing forces out to destroy them in the attempt to found a new order based solely on facts. There is excitement and movement here, with the whole novel ending on a note of suspense in preparation for the two more instalments still to come. But working in the shade of an acknowledged classic is never easy, and all this ambitious but flawed story finally achieves is to remind readers how good C.S.Lewis was when he first started writing for children.

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