

RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper primary and lower secondary
Ages 11 to 14; years 6 to 9

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Literacy; Personal and Social Capability; Critical and Creative Thinking

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Exploring the speculative fiction (fantasy) genre

THEMES

- Learning new skills
- Teamwork
- Magic
- Adventure
- Survival
- War and battle

PREPARED BY

Stuart Daly and Random House Australia

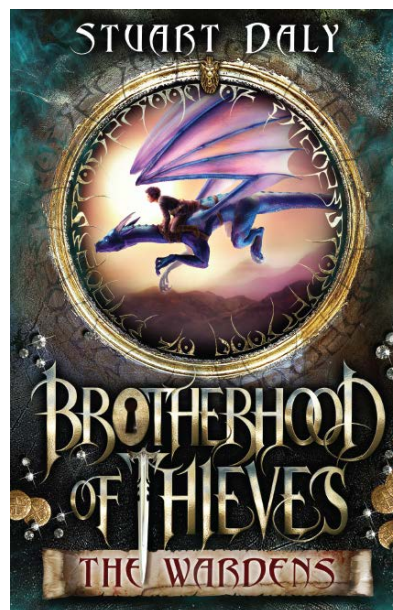
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Brotherhood of Thieves: The Wardens Stuart Daly

PLOT SUMMARY

A secret brotherhood of treasure hunters. An invading army coming ever closer. Five young recruits. The race is on.

Life as a thief is cold, miserable and hungry. Caspan leaps at the opportunity to compete to join the Brotherhood – a secret order sanctioned by the king.

What the Brotherhood seeks are the lost magical weapons of an ancient race that will help them defeat the Roon, the invading army who creep ever closer. Defeat seems inevitable. Unless Caspan and his fellow recruits – Roland, Lachlan, Sara and Kilt – can set aside their differences and use their new skills to help turn the tide.

With swords strapped to their belts, riding magical beasts called Wardens, they leave the sanctuary of their training ground for their first mission. Will it be their last?

'This book was excellent and I know anyone who reads it will be excited and on their toes.' – **Kaleb, age 12**

'A non-stop action thriller that has a mysterious and completely unseen twist at every page-flip. A fantastic roller coaster ride.' – **Henry, age 12**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stuart Daly is a History teacher in a private high school in Sydney. Stuart is the author of *The Witch Hunter Chronicles* for young adult readers, an epic tale of witch hunting and demon slaying set in the seventeenth century. His new series, *Brotherhood of Thieves*, is an action-packed fantasy series for middle grade readers about a secret order of treasure hunters. Stuart lives in Sydney with his wife and three children.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Stuart Daly says:

The hardest thing about writing fantasy is trying to come up with an original idea. Sometimes it can be right under our noses and we don't even notice it. In the case of *Brotherhood of Thieves*, it came from watching my six-year-old son play *Skylanders* on his Xbox 360. I was fascinated how the figurines, once placed on the Portal of Power, came alive and appeared inside the game. Of course, this didn't have anything to do with magic but computer chips located in the bases of the toys, but it planted the most wonderful idea in my mind. Imagine if magical guardians, called Wardens, could be summoned from figurines. What if these were hidden deep inside trap-riddled tombs and could only be recovered by a band of highly trained thieves? And what if these Wardens were needed to repel an invading enemy?

It's amazing how once the initial idea has crystallised in your mind the story writes itself. It certainly also helps having a fantastic publisher who's prepared to sit down and discuss your ideas and guide you in the right direction.

A challenge faced by all fantasy writers is to create a world that's not only unique but believable. In my case, I decided to model the Four Kingdoms on medieval Europe. Most readers have some understanding of the Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, feudal society and siege warfare, so it offered a great setting for the series. There's something inviting and comfortable about the familiar, and it allowed me to create a world that would be welcoming to readers.

Although I didn't think much of the books I was forced to read at school, I've always loved fantasy stories. I first read Tolkien's *The Hobbit* when I was eleven, then moved straight onto *The Lord of the Rings*. This introduced me to heroic fantasy, and I devoured the works of Terry Brooks and Raymond E. Feist. I then branched out into the darker sword and

sorcery genre and entered the worlds of Fritz Leiber, Robert E. Howard and Robert Adams.

Unlike my first series, *The Witch Hunter Chronicles*, which was inspired by Matthew Reilly's *Ice Station*, I don't think it's possible to say that one particular author inspired me to write *Brotherhood of Thieves*. It's a homage to all the fantasy writers who allowed my imagination to run wild as a boy and embark on the most amazing adventures. I believe authors are products of the books they've read. Not only do they inspire us to write, but they mould our writing styles. Indeed, they influence the worlds we create. So thank you to Raymond E. Feist for allowing me to stand beside Prince Arutha at the siege of Sethanon; to Fritz Leiber for leading me into countless adventures in the twisting alleyways of Lankhmar; and, of course, to Tolkien, for allowing me to wander the byways of Hobbiton. If not for them, I most probably would have never started writing.

As I've always said, we all have the most amazing stories to tell. Don't let anybody stop you from putting pen to paper and bringing them to life.

FANTASY TROPES

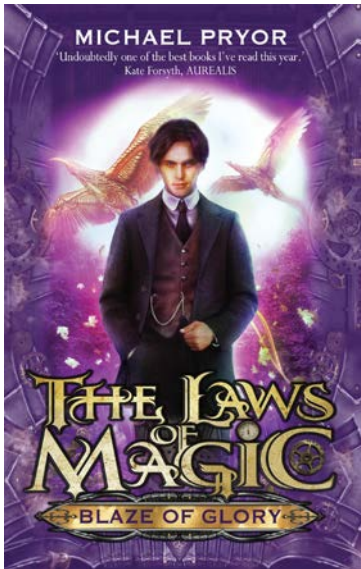
Books in the fantasy genre often feature recurring elements, called tropes. Some of the fantasy tropes or conventions you might recognise in *Brotherhood of Thieves* include:

- Caspan is an **unlikely hero**, a former pickpocket and thief who has grown up on the streets.
- Caspan is also an **orphan**.
- There are various **guardians and mentors** in *Brotherhood of Thieves*, including Raven, who helps Caspan to join the Brotherhood, and the Brotherhood Masters who train the recruits.
- The recruits go on a **quest** to explore an ancient site. However, their quest is subverted when they discover a threat to the Kingdom.
- The swords and soul keys are **items invested with special powers**.
- The Wardens are **magical beasts from myth and legend**, including a drake (small dragon), griffin, manticores and pegasus.
- The Wardens come from an **alternate plane of reality**.
- The Dray are an **ancient race** whose great wisdom and magical knowledge has been lost to the world since their disappearance.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Examine the map at the beginning of the book. What do the shapes remind you of? Why do so many authors set their fantasy books in settings similar to medieval Europe? Do you agree with the author when he says, 'There's something inviting and comfortable about the familiar'?
- Now create your own fantasy world based on environmental landmarks that are familiar to *you* – perhaps blue-tinged forests and cliffs, like in the Blue Mountains, or mangrove swamps like in Australia's coastal areas, or a dry desert. How might those environments affect the characters in a story? (For instance, in *Brotherhood of Thieves* the Scar, a long chasm, is one reason that the Roon have not attacked Andalon; the weather is also a factor, because the Roon have mainly attacked their neighbours when cold winters have driven them from their mountain homes.) See *Worksheet: Fantasy Worldbuilding*.
- Do you think the magical Dray weapons found will be enough to win the war for Andalon? Is it dangerous to use a magic or technology that you don't fully understand?
- In what ways have we learnt from our ancestors in real life? What ancient manuscripts, scrolls or parchments have we discovered and translated that tell us about how other civilisations lived and what they believed? Try looking up the Rosetta Stone, or the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- Was Caspan cheating when he spied on others to help solve the clues and join the Brotherhood, or was he being inventive?
- Who had the best method of opening the locked chest: Caspan with his lock-picking skills; Lachlan and his strength; Roland's and Kilt's speed; or Sara's knowledge of languages? Which method would you have chosen? Out of the five recruits, which one do you think is or will be the most valuable member of the Brotherhood? Why? Or do each of them bring unique skills that will be necessary in their missions?
- If the recruits had to choose a leader, who would they choose? Who would *you* choose, and why?
- You are a travel agent for Andalon Tours. Create a travel brochure for a five-day highlights tour of Andalon. Mark your route on a map of the kingdom and write your itinerary. Remember to use persuasive language to encourage as many people as possible to join your tour.
- Design an emblem to be worn on Brotherhood cloaks. Discuss how your choice of colours and symbols are relevant to the order of treasure hunters.
- Draw a blueprint of a Dray tomb. Include descriptions of the ingenious traps you would include to stop intruders, and describe the magical artefact buried in the final chamber.
- What is your favourite scene in the novel? Describe it and explain why you like it so much.
- Write the letter of introduction Raven gave to Caspan, allowing him to compete to join the Brotherhood. Remember to explain why you think he would be a suitable candidate.
- Imagine you could have a Warden. Which magical guardian would you choose? Name it, and describe its physical appearance and personality. Draw a picture of its soul key.
- Research the mythical creatures in the book. Find an example in history of a story of or belief in a drake/dragon, griffin, mantichore or pegasus.
- Caspan is relieved to return to the House of Whispers after his journey north. How has he grown and changed by the end of the novel? What has he learnt about himself and the world?
- Kilt is often confrontational and moody, particularly towards Caspan. Why do you think she acts this way? As a former thief, does Caspan deserve her hatred? Do you think she'd make a good friend? Why/why not? Compare Kilt's behaviour with Oswald's – their teacher had his belongings stolen by Caspan and his foot stomped on, yet he is kind to Caspan.
- Can the Wardens understand what the recruits say, or do the recruits just imagine that they do?
- Gramidge enjoys making ciders. Create your own fruit drink. Describe its ingredients, give it a creative name and design a logo for it.
- Imagine General Brett is captured after the siege of Darrowmere and accused of committing treason. Write a speech to be delivered at his trial to prove his innocence or guilt. Support your discussion with evidence from the book.
- At the feast held after the siege of Darrowmere, a ballad, named the Lay of Darrowmere, is composed in Caspan and Lachlan's honour. Write the lyrics, detailing the role the boys and Master Morgan played in the defence of the city.

FURTHER READING

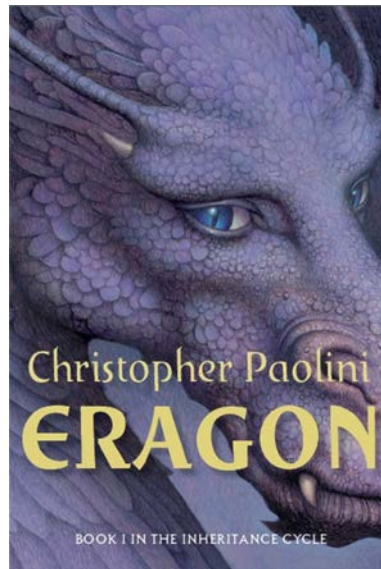


The Laws of Magic series
by Michael Pryor

Why this story? The Laws of Magic series also uses ancient times to inform the magic system and worldbuilding.

Aubrey Fitzwilliam is the son of a prominent ex-prime minister. He's also brilliant at magic, but he's stuck at military school. At least he has his best friend, George, there to back him up. George would follow Aubrey anywhere - and with Aubrey's talent for thinking up daring schemes that will get them both in trouble, that's no easy thing to do.

Teachers' resources available.



Eragon
by Christopher Paolini

Why this story? If you like dragons, legends and battles, then this bestselling series is for you.

When Eragon finds a polished stone in the forest, he thinks it is the lucky discovery of a poor farm boy; perhaps it will buy his family meat for the winter. But when the stone brings a dragon hatchling, Eragon soon realizes he has stumbled upon a legacy nearly as old as the Empire itself.



Ranger's Apprentice series
by John Flanagan

Why this story? The Ranger's Apprentice series is also set in a fictionalised medieval Europe - but in these books there is no magic, just adventure!

Will is small for his age, but agile and energetic. All his life, he has dreamed of becoming a great knight like the father he never knew, so he is devastated when he is rejected as an apprentice to Castle Redmont's Battleschool. Instead he is apprenticed to Halt, the mysterious Ranger whose uncanny ability to move unseen is thought to be the result of black magic. Reluctantly, Will learns to use a Ranger's secret weapons: a bow and arrow, a mottled cloak and a stubborn little pony.

Teachers' resources available.

WORKSHEET: The qualities of a hero

The recruits and Masters in *Brotherhood of Thieves* sometimes demonstrate the positive values or qualities that are associated with being a hero, as well as being a good leader and team member. They will need these skills when they pass the test to become members of the Brotherhood and must work as a team to undertake dangerous missions to find magical treasures.

Can you find examples in the book of a time when a character demonstrated each of the qualities below?

Write your answer in the box beside each quality.

Quality	Example
<i>Generosity or willingness to share</i>	<i>Sara gives Lachlan and Caspan help with their language lessons.</i>
Loyalty	
Bravery and courage	
Teamwork	
Willingness to learn	
Compassion and concern for others	
Curiosity	
Inventiveness or creativity	
Unselfishness	
Determination	
Humility or modesty	
Respect for others	

WORKSHEET: Fantasy worldbuilding

Setting is very important in writing a fantasy story, as the setting will help to determine what happens to the characters and what actions they will take in a situation.

Consider each of the following environments. Now imagine you are writing a story where your character will encounter that environment while they are on a quest or mission. What challenges, obstacles and opportunities will that environment present to your character? What story ideas does that environment present that will be exciting and adventurous? There will be some facts to think about, but there's plenty of room to be creative!

Decide first who your character is and what their main personality traits are. For example, they might be a princess, a warrior, a wizard, a thief, or a normal boy or girl. The information you decide here will affect how your character reacts to each environment. A princess in a castle will act, and be treated by others, very differently to a thief! A few examples have been given for the first environment.

Who is your character? _____

What are their main personality traits? _____

Environment	Possible effect on your character or actions they could take
Castle	<i>Examples: A thief could hide in secret rooms, but be locked in a dungeon if they get caught. A wizard or princess might have a room in the tower. A soldier could be guarding the gate against enemies.</i>
Thick forest	
Boggy swampland	
Hot desert	
Grassland	
Tall cliffs	
A raging river	
Farmland	
A bustling marketplace	

WORKSHEET: Vocabulary

Do you know what these words mean? Look them up in the dictionary if you need help.

Word	Page	What does it mean?
perilous	3	
despicable	11	
resplendent	12	
archaic	20	
incongruous	27	
tankard	33	
scabbard	37	
corsair	46	
archivist	60	
gambeson	62	
eyrie	64	
inscription	92	
dialect	94	
circumvent	97	
humility	102	

ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Brotherhood of Thieves	Stuart Daly	9780857983275	6-9	\$17.99		
Witch Hunter Chronicles Book 1	Stuart Daly	9781742750521	10-12	\$17.99		
Witch Hunter Chronicles Book 2	Stuart Daly	9781742750552	10-12	\$17.99		
Witch Hunter Chronicles Book 3	Stuart Daly	9781742754802	10-12	\$17.99		
Laws of Magic Book 1	Michael Pryor	9781864718621	8-12	\$17.99		
Eragon	Christopher Paolini	9780552552097	7-12	\$19.99		
Ranger's Apprentice Book 1	John Flanagan	9781864719048	6-9	\$17.99		
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