



BOOK REVIEW

Book Title	Kingshold
Author	DP Woolliscroft
Date	July 2018
Stars	

This is a novel which challenges definitions; in which sub-genre does it fit? The world in which Kingshold sits is typically High Fantasy with its use of magic played through an innovative variety of characters and creatures. But it's Low Fiction too. The story is intensely political, its emphasis on treachery and power make it so. But what makes this story so enjoyable is its use of modern-day language and phraseology. It results in situations where characters face exciting challenges, scary monsters and imminent death – and respond by saying exactly what we'd expect to be heard by anyone in our world doing the same thing.

The author of this wonderful story, DP Woolliscroft, contributed a tweet the other day to a question I'd posed on Twitter about 'world-building'. What he said is significant.

'When world building, challenge yourself if it makes sense on a macro level and a micro level. Don't forget about the everyday person and their lives. And don't feel the need to invent everything (esp with fancy names) familiarity makes it easy for a reader to jump on board.'

This is precisely what he's succeeded in doing in Kingshold. His world is imaginative, highly detailed, full of the promise of strange creatures, ruthless leaders and heroic men and women. But it's on the micro level that we find it so 'easy to jump on board'. More than that, he does it in such an under-played way. There are no dramatic build-ups, things happen before you know where you are! But by under-played I mean his characters are so down-to-earth, so natural, like someone you'd meet on a street. Except it wouldn't be a street in this world!

Another reason I love this book is the humour. It's wry and dry. Another feature of the modern-day language he uses. You'd think it would jar, but it doesn't! It makes you laugh.

Throughout the story I've tried to find comparisons for this book and decided there isn't one. This is a story about an election. That's it. Burgeoning democracy in a fantasy world. Sure, people are assassinated, pirates attack, monsters must be killed but this about a city holding an election. The election is the maguffin of course, but what a clever one, it makes the book unique. On its own that might not be enough. But this is a story told with wit, pace, exciting and well-defined characters and in a style that feels so wonderfully relaxed and easy to read.

Wow.