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Leven Thumps and the gateway to Foo

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Skye, Obert. *Leven Thumps and the Gateway to Foo*. Shadow Mountain, 2005. ISBN 1590383699. \$17.95. 348 pp.

Reviewer: Jessica Farmer

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Magic--Juvenile fiction; Dreams--Juvenile fiction;

Leven Thumps has not had an easy life. Orphaned as an infant, he lives with his wretched Aunt and Uncle who don't care for him at all. One night, as he is lying on a cot on the front porch which serves as his bed, he sees a dark shadow lurking just beyond the light. He doesn't know what it is, but he knows it is evil and with this realization, his life changes forever. Soon, Leven discovers that he is the only one who can prevent our world and the land of Foo, the place where all dreams are created, from merging into one. If Leven cannot close the gateway between the two worlds forever, the evil Sabine will force them to collide and destroy all dreams and hope. Leven is joined by Clover, a small furry creature who is his guide and constant companion and a powerful girl from Foo named Winter. Together with a talking toothpick, they journey across the Atantic Ocean to Germany where the gateway can be found.

This story is full of fantasy and whimsy. The characters are likable, even though sometimes unbelievable. The story begins slowly and the characters don't actually start on their journey until halfway through the book. With that said the quirky characters make the long ride fun and entertaining. Leven is the kind of boy whom most kids can relate to. He is talented and strong but very unsure of himself and what he needs to do. At its core, this is a story about the importance of hope and imagination in a child's mind and how too often, these crucial aspects of childhood are lost. Overall, this book would be great for kids who like fantasy or who need a little imagination pick-me-up.