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The Ruins of Gorlan (Ranger's Apprentice #1) by John Flanagan

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Author: Flanagan, John

Title: *The Ruins of Gorlan (Ranger's Apprentice #1)*

Year of Publication: 2005

Publisher: Puffin Books

ISBN: 9780142406632

Number of pages: 249

Rating: Outstanding

Reading/Interest Level: Intermediate; Young Adult

Keywords: Coming of Age; Fantasy; Honor; Challenges

Review:

Will, an orphan, has been accepted into an elite group known as the Rangers. The Rangers are experts in surveillance and archery who are trained to fight battles before they reach the civilian population. While Will is being trained by Halt, the best of the Rangers, the evil Morgarath is gathering his forces to attack the kingdom. Morgarath is intent upon killing Halt with the help of his creatures, and even though he is not fully trained, Will is Halt's last hope when the creatures corner him in the Ruins of Gorlan. Will saves Halt by using a flaming arrow to kill the last standing creature. Together, Will and his mentor complete the defeat of Morgarath's assassins.

Flanagan's strength is his strong focus on character development. The reader really gets to know the main characters and learns to care for their struggles and problems. Despite his strong main characters, Flanagan also tends to use many flat characters. While some of the flat characters help move the story along, Flanagan rarely gives them the depth he is capable of. However, an exciting plot and interesting setting build the story up. Some readers may find the first half of the book slow because it devotes significant time to introducing the reader to the characters' world. But not long after the introduction, the pace quickens, and readers will find themselves engrossed in the adventure. This book will appeal to intermediate and young adult readers, and might be especially enticing for reluctant readers.

Reviewer: Brandon Holst

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