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Alcatraz vs. The Evil Librarians #5: The Dark Talent

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Book Review

Title: Alcatraz vs. The Evil Librarians #5: The Dark Talent

Author: Brandon Sanderson

Reviewer: Loretta Farnsworth

Publisher: Starscape

Publication Year: 2016

ISBN: 9780765381408

Number of Pages: 304

Interest Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Excellent



Review

Alcatraz Smedry broke the Smedry Talents. As the Evil Librarian army regroups and continues to attack the Free Kingdoms, and with his friend Bastille still in a coma, Alcatraz joins forces with his mother to infiltrate The Library of Congress. He hopes to find a cure for Bastille and the others who were thrown into a magical sleep during the Evil Librarian invasion of Mocia. As Alcatraz struggles to come to terms to life without his talent, he starts realizing his power was more a part of him than he realized. Using his friends and his wit, he manages to find the cure to the magical sleep and distribute it throughout the building. However, an apparent cousin of the Smedry family turns out to be a leader of the Evil Librarians. After shooting—and supposedly killing—Grandpa Smedry, he forces Alcatraz and his father to decide who dies on the alter to allow him to take over the world. Alcatraz's father, in a moment of bravery, offers himself, while Alcatraz offers . . . his father. Alcatraz ends the book there, confessing to the readers that he is a coward. Then Bastille picks up the pen, reveals that Grandpa Smedry is still alive, and says that she'll continue writing the account because Alcatraz refuses to write more.

This is the fifth book in the Alcatraz vs. the Evil Librarians series. The voice that the story is written in is rather unconventional—the author frequently addresses the reader and pokes fun at other famous authors. But it fits with the usually lighthearted story in which a family with unfortunate superpowers (the power to break things, the power to trip over anything, the power to arrive late to everything) battles evil librarians. While Alcatraz himself is ultimately, as he says, a coward, the other characters show promising traits. Grandpa Smedry in particular encourages his grandson to be brave and to trust himself, and Alcatraz's father surprises the reader by turning out to care more for his son than he has shown in previous books. While terrible things happen to the various characters, the descriptions are not explicit. The ending is rather disappointing, but the promise of Bastille taking over the story will be exciting to the reader who is keeping up with the series!

*Contains mild violence.