



2006

### Ambergate

Kate Reynolds

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#### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Reynolds, Kate (2006) "Ambergate," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 27 : Iss. 4 , Article 16.  
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol27/iss4/16>

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Elliott, Patricia. *Ambergate*. Little, Brown, 2007. ISBN 9780316010603. \$16.99. 390 p.

Reviewer: Reynolds, Kate

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Significant shortcomings

Genre: Fantasy;

Subject: Orphans--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Orphan 102, otherwise known as Scuff, finds herself on the run when soldiers come searching for her. As she stumbles from one incident to another she collects a motley assortment of friends and enemies.

Though *Ambergate* has an intriguing beginning, it only sets up for disappointment. Scuff is a well written character, but most characters surrounding her seem incomplete and one dimensional. The character Chance seems interesting and well-rounded until late in the book when his actions and motivations become inconsistent with his previous characterization with almost no explanation. The narrative constantly switches from Scuff's first-person telling to a third-person omniscient voice for other characters, which makes for a choppy story.

Just about the only interesting thing in the book is the fact that Scuff is wanted not for the crime she thinks she is condemned for, but for being the illegitimate child of the Lord Protector's late wife--but this detail gets lost in the hustle and turns out to be a very minor plot point. The climax is set very close to the end and there is no resolution, giving the feeling that the story just trails off into nothing. Obviously it sets itself up for a sequel, but with the dubious merits of this book, it doesn't have much to recommend for itself.