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The Time Wreccas

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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This story is the first of the Greenwich Chronicles, set around Greenwich Park, London, among an invisible community of the Guardians of Time. It is about Old Father Tim, who is making a giant Timepiece to maintain time for the world and shows it to his grandson Tid. Unfortunately the nasty Wreccas, who live in underground tunnels, hate everything beautiful, speak ungrammatically and have alliterative names like Scratch, Spittle, Sniff, Spite and Spew, plan to steal the Tick from the Timepiece. They send a spy Topside, and the rest of the story concerns Tid's struggle to retrieve the Tick, as he was tricked by the spy into showing her the clock workshop. If the Tick is not restored before the new Timepiece is commissioned, 'time would stop for eternity'. The story is exciting on first read, if rather long, the magic world of the Guardians is charming, and one engages with the plight of the spy, the girl Wrecca who decides to change sides and join the Guardians. However, I am uneasy about the concept of the Wreccas, 'nasty, dirty, stupid beings who are smaller than Humans and usually very skinny... they eat rotten food and dress in rags'. Of classic fantasy authors who employ goblins as 'baddies', George MacDonald's goblins are a separate race, and become more peaceable after the story ends; Tolkien's goblins in **The Hobbit** are also a separate race. In **The Lord of the Rings** they have become 'orcs', ugly, perverted creations under Sauron's control; Tolkien did not mean them as an allusion to certain foreign races; he was depicting the wicked side of human nature. Alan Garner had hordes of svart-alfar chase Susan and Colin in **The Weirdstone of Brisingamen**, but in the sequel, he brought in bodachs and palug cats, folklore monsters to replace the svarts. This shows that fantasy authors should beware when devising baddies who combine ugly names and features with hostile attitudes. The Wreccas are probably feral children - 'lost boys' who didn't go to Neverland. There are also girls, who disappear - to rejoin the human race? This concept was far better handled by Michael de Larrabeiti in his 'Borribles' trilogy, and I wonder if Tyler has in mind to redeem the Wreccas in a future book?

Running Order:

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