



## The Familiars #2: Secrets of the Crown

*Adam Jay Epstein , Andrew Jacobson*

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Prepare for the unfamiliar

When every bit of human magic disappears suddenly from Vastia, it falls on the familiars—Aldwyn the telekinetic cat, Skylar the know-it-all blue jay, and Gilbert the gullible tree frog—to find the Crown of the Snow Leopard, an ancient relic that can reverse the curse. They learn that the only way to do this is by following in the paw prints of Aldwyn’s missing father, who went searching for the Crown several years earlier. This magical spirit trail extends into the Beyond, where our heroes encounter new enemies and danger, while Aldwyn learns about his mysterious past.

Full of high-flying adventure and heartwarming friendships, *Secrets of the Crown* will make readers want to get even more familiar with The Familiars!

## **The Familiars #2: Secrets of the Crown Details**

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Author : Adam Jay Epstein , Andrew Jacobson

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## From Reader Review The Familiars #2: Secrets of the Crown for online ebook

### Serena.. Sery-ously? says

Non pensavo che questo secondo volume potesse piacermi quanto il primo.. Invece è delizioso! Continua ad essere centrale l'amicizia tra i famigli (e i maghi a casa.. Olè! Mi piace questo cambio di prospettiva! :3) ed è tutto un susseguirsi di avventure e prove.. \*\_\* Certo, alcune cose sanno di già sentite (e sì, ogni tanto Harry Potter & Co si facevano prepotentemente strada nella mia mente), ma non temete.. Ci sarà tanto altro ad intrattenervi!!!

Una cosa che mi ha molto colpito è che pur essendo un libro palesemente pensato per un pubblico più giovane, i cattivi sono **davvero** cattivi, e niente viene risparmiato.. O.O

E poi Gilbert.. Fortuna che c'è lui come personaggio, con la sua scemità galoppante!! Ahahahah!! :D

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### Mary (BookHounds) says

The story picks up four weeks after the Familiars leaves off. The Loyals and the Familiars are now being educated in magical defensive arts when there is a flash of green light disenchanting the human Loyals who lose their abilities to cast spells and which leaves the animals as the only magical creatures. As part of a prediction that the animal will now rule, the Familiars must now race to save the humans against the evil intentions of the queen's familiar, Paksahara who has tried to overthrow her in her quest to dominate the humans. The go on a quest to find The Crown of the Snow Leopard and Aldwyn finds his fathers footsteps which they follow. This leaves the Loyals behind fighting for their lives with hand to hand combat.

There is a lot of action in this follow up to The Familiars and we find the threesome matching wits and talents against a series of evil creatures such as goblins, a creature that can turn you to crystal by the touch of his tail and Aldwyn's uncle, who clearly is on another path in this quest. When Malvern, Aldwyn's uncle, escapes, there is a big opening for another one in this series and I can't wait to read what happens next. This story will appeal to kids of all ages and especially those a bit too young for Harry Potter. If you enjoyed the Spiderwick Chronicles, you will love this one. I also just read that a move of the first book is going to be made.

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### Liza Wiemer says

The familiars are back! Epstein and Jacobson have created a perfect series for middle grade readers with some of the best talking animals out in the world of imagination today. With situations connected to family, friendship, and loyalty, middle graders will definitely be able to relate. Filled with magic, adventure, and plenty of good versus evil, this novel will keep kids engaged.

The three chosen ones - Aldwyn (a telekinetic cat), Skylar (a brilliant, magical blue jay) and Gilbert (a funny tree frog whose spells go wrong) are the perfect team of familiars to save Vastia from the evil hare, Paksahara. Join them on their trek. *Secrets of the Crown* will bring these "Chosen Ones" closer, but there's more to come with *Circle of Heroes*, which just came out on September 4th. I am definitely looking forward

to reading it!

A must read for MGers. This series should be included in every library too!

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### **?????? ???? says**

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### **Brenda says**

Many thanks to the publisher and Goodreads for this advanced reading copy of *The Familiars: Secrets of the Crown*. After having just completed an exciting quest to save their loyals from the evil queen of Vastia our second book takes up with the familiars and their loyals learning how to hone their magical abilities. Suddenly, the city is brought in peril due to the effects of a disenchantment spell and the roles of human and animal companions become reversed. Once again the familiars are called upon for an adventurous trek through the land of Vastia and into the Beyond. More secrets are revealed in this book, but mysteries also exist that hopefully will be answered in the third book of the series. I found this book to be a funny exciting story. The plot was quick moving and I enjoyed it thoroughly. There are very nice black and white illustrations throughout which highlight the action very nicely. New foes are introduced and the characters as well as world the authors have developed keep me wanting to learn more. Plus, I'm hoping Marriane, Dalton and Jack get to team up with their familiars in the next book. I highly recommend this book for middle graders who love animal stories and magic.

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### **Charlie Lewis says**

#### **Personal response**

I thought *The Familiars, Secrets of the Crown* was a good book. I liked the mixture of humor and action. I also enjoy the unexpected twists in the book. This book is an intriguing and interesting book. This is a suspenseful book.

#### **Plot**

The book starts off with Jack and Aldwyn racing Marianne and Gilbert to Black Ivy Manor. Jack and Aldwyn, Marianne and Gilbert and Dalton and Skylar were practicing when magic stopped. The Queen had called a meeting and at the meeting Pakashara told them what she did and that she was going to raise an undead army. The six of them and Sorceress Edna and Elder Feynam went to the cornerstone of the shifting fortress to have Skylar raise the spirit of Agorus to talk to him and find out how to summon the shifting

fortress. Agorus told them the crown of the snow leopard was how to summon the fortress. The eight of them then went to the Historical Archives to try and find more about the Crown of the snow leopard. Dalton found something in the *Wizard's Almanac of Fables* and had Sorceress Edna translate it from Elvish but when she was reading three eight feet tall worms attacked the eight of them and ate Feynam, the book, and one of Dalton's fingers before they escaped. Gilbert remembered part of a nursery rhyme about the snow leopards crown. Gilbert, Aldwyn, and Skylar left after telling the queen about the nursery rhyme being a bunch of clues that lead to the crown of the snow leopard. The three of them left for the mighty dogwood in the center of the hinterwoods. When they got there they went into the tree and avoided multiple traps until they reached a trail. When they got to the end of the trail they found a statue of turtle with a bear on it and a two headed eagle on the bears head. The totem told them that Aldwyns father had came there three years ago and had taken the Spheris. The three left and headed to Maidenmere to look for his father but they worried they would be shunned. Malvern had flaming stick shoot at the trio and Aldwyn stopped them proving he was a cat from Maidenmere. Aldwyn then learned that Malvern was his uncle. They left after Malvern cast a spell letting Aldwyn see his father's footprints. The trio left heading east. They went to a aviary and met Skylar's parents and got help on going to the beyond. They follow clue until they find a village that calls them a whale that takes them to Necros maze. While there they kill the monster and bring all the statues back to life that the monster turned to stone. They then found a hill that looked like a leappad and 12 stones that made it look like it had a crown. The three got there but were attacked by Pakashara and Malvern. Aldwyn killed his uncle shortly before Skylar made an image of all three of them that Pakashara blew up after blowing up the magic stones. The trio went home and found out that a whisper shell caught what the magic stone said. The three, there masters, and the queen all when to find Grimshade the only person who could help find the twelve animals they needed but the undead army was already beginning attacking the city.

#### Characterization

Aldwyn is a telekinetic cat from Maidenmere that was sent to a city when he was a kitten so that he wouldn't be killed.

Skylar is a magic bird that can conjure images but goes beyond what she's supposed to be able to do and practices necromancy. She is also part of a group that is trying to learn how to resurrect the dead.

Gilbert is a funny cowardly funny frog that has puddle viewings.

#### Recommendation

I would recommend this book to middle school boys and some high school boys. I would recommend this to middle school boys because it's not hard to comprehend or read. I would recommend this to some high school boys because some of them are not as good at comprehending and understanding books at the high school level.

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#### **Karolinde (Kari) says**

Secrets of the Crown is the second book in the Familiars series, the story of Aldwyn, Skylar, and Gilbert's quest to save their world and maybe find themselves. Pakshara casts a spell that takes away all human magic and the chosen three embark on a quest to stop her from unleashing her army of the dead. Along the way, we learn more about each character and what drives them. The best part of the book is when Gilbert finds his courage at long last.

Even more than the first book, it is easy to see influences from other fantasy books. Fortunately, the

similarities are not over powering and feel more like homage than copying. I can't wait for the next book and hope to see Aldwyn's character grow beyond his uncertainty and fear.

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### **Brenda says**

Two years ago I read The Familiars. I was attracted to it because that year I had a reader of only cat books. Aldwyn, one of the Familiars, was a cat so I thought I'd give it a try. I did and it was great fun. The main characters are a stray cat, a red-eyed tree frog and a blue jay. I don't think there could be a more unlikely trio and their distinct personality traits had me smiling all the way through.

When I saw The Familiars – Secrets of the Crown in the bookstore I knew I wanted to keep this series growing in my classroom. My to-be-read piles are all over and rather large... finally it was time to read about the Familiars again. I am so glad I did. First, because I was reminded of just how fun the characters and the story line is. One of my favorite scenes is as the quest begins and we find out that Gilbert has blundered a spell (yet again) and now has three extra toes that cause him to hop with a limp and a wobble. Second, because the third is coming out September 4 and I definitely want to spend more time with Aldwyn, Gilbert and Skylar. I can't wait to find out what new challenge Paksahara will put forth, how the prophecy will continue to unfold and how magic will be restored to Vastia (at least I hope it will).

Vastia has been placed in peril. On the edge of a new era, the kingdom is threatened by take over if the prophecy of a new three who will save and guide the kingdom into the future is not fulfilled before evil Paksahara eliminates all remaining vestiges of magic and has her way. In a race against time the keepers, both past and present, of Vastia must decipher the riddles laid out before them. Who are the three? Is it the three children, Jack, Marianne and Dalton? They are learning the ancient ways as quickly as they can, but will it be in time? Or is the prophesied three their Familiars? Could it be a combination? In Vastia humans and animals team up, complimenting each other and completing the circle of magical power. Will they discover all they need to know quickly enough? Time is of the essence. Paksahara is experienced, evil and strong. Will they be in time or Vastia will fall prey to the Paksahara's Dread Army of skeletal wolves, zombie bears and ghoulish animals. Will the uprising begin? How will it end?

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### **Amira says**

Sempre più bello e intrigante e sorprendentemente magico. Questo secondo capitolo mi è piaciuto quanto il primo. Non mi ha mai annoiata.

In questo secondo libro i famigli partono alla ricerca della corona del Leopardi delle Nevi unica reliquia in grado di evocare la fortezza itinerante tra le "zampe" del nemico e salvare Vastia dopo che i maghi sono stati privati della loro magia da quest'ultima.

Una sorpresa dopo l'altra e anche se alcuni "traditori" li avevo già scovati è stato lo stesso un piacere poter appianare i miei sospetti e che soprattutto hanno avuto ciò che meritavano.

Io mi aspetto (spero veramente tanto) che tra tutte avvenga la sorpresa più grande e chi si pensa morto, in realtà si scopra ancora vivo. In questo capitolo si è finalmente scoperto anche il passato di Skylar (molto interessante e sono curiosa di sapere se riuscirà nel suo intento anche se mi preoccupano le conseguenze a venire) e un'altra verità sul passato di Aldwin che non avevo sospettato (Chissà dove mai sarà).

Gli aspetti e legami o morali più importanti sono sempre in primo piano: l'amicizia, il legame tra famigli e

leali, il coraggio e il desiderio di sentirsi all'interno di una famiglia. Ed esserlo effettivamente. Avrei preferito più scene tra i famigli e leali (ma va bene lo stesso, sono sicura che il terzo capitolo della saga ci regalerà molti di questi momenti) e ho trovato Aldwyn un po' troppo ingenuo in alcuni punti (ma riesco a capirne il motivo).

Fine davvero nefasta e aspettata direi e il ritorno del vecchio miglior nemico di Aldwin (adesso alleato sicuramente) ne promette delle belle tra nuove ricerche e appassionanti scoperte.

Fortuna che ho comprato l'edizione 4 in 1 e non devo aspettare di leggerlo.

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### **Lisa Ard says**

Once again the familiars are back! Aldwyn, Skylar and Gilbert, the animal familiars to three young wizards are out to save the world as they know it from the evil hare Paksahara, formerly familiar to Queen Loranella herself. Where book one explained wizards and familiars and the coming together of these three very different familiars, book two shows how the three familiars have bonded and become family.

At the end of Book One Paksahara reveals herself and then escapes, opening the way to the sequel. Sure enough, she's back and powerful. Paksahara has removed all magic from humans, leaving magic only for the animals. This sets up the premise that Aldwyn, Skylar and Gilbert alone can pursue a solution. As the prophesized three, they will battle strange creatures, explore new lands and face magical interventions along the way.

This story is action-packed. The animals overcome one situation to suddenly face another. Perhaps it's a bit too frequent, but the imagination of the authors is impressive. The authors have also done a nice job describing the three familiars, giving them each depth. Interwoven in the quest is Aldwyn's desire to learn more of the father and mother he never knew. While much is revealed in book two about Aldwyn's story, more remains.

The climax and ending are terrific. Look forward to the next book!

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### **?Kimari? says**

This series follows three magical animals on a quest; a Hermione-ish bluejay, an orphaned street cat, and a tree frog who is insecure about his magical talent. The writing is very good, given the target audience, as are the pacing and plot. The anthropomorphic characters, despite being a bit stereotypical, are well rounded; learning, growing, and building a closer friendship as they travel.

The 1st grade me would have adored this series. I read every fiction and non-fiction animal book in the school library that year. Also, every tornado book. I guess I was a weird kid.

If you liked this book, you might also enjoy:

- ★ The Dark Portal
- ★ The Shadows
- ★ Fly by Night
- ★ Here, There Be Dragons

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### **Kat Goldin says**

In this fun- filled, packed, book we revisit the life of magic thru animals and their relationships with humans. There is lots of warmth in this book and great, thrilling adventure, too. The entire book is appropriate for middle school students, although, I think 8th graders might seem it a bit elementary. The ending is easily predicted. The main characters are well developed and easy to identify with as they embark on a quest to find the source of human magic and return it to their village. We also discover the reason for Alswyn's actions and past as his life is closely linked to the Beyond.

I suggest that readers enjoy the first book of the *Familiars* before becoming engrossed in this, the second book in the series by writer and dreamer Adam Jay Epstein.

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### **Candy says**

I love this book sometimes fantasy can be complicated and boring but this was an light easy read. I even convinced my 10 year old son to give it a try and so far he likes it and he very picky about what he reads. Thank you goodreads for the giveaway.

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### **Kelsey Ketch says**

*Secrets of the Crown* didn't have the same magical draw as the first *Familiars*. While a lot happens in the *Secrets of the Crown*, I felt the first book had more humor, more intrigue, and more surprises. However, I did enjoy the basic storyline as well as the clues and journey to the Crown.

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### **Radiolinablu says**

Ne parlo anche qui --> <http://lafedelibrovora.blogspot.it/2013/07/the-familiars-di-adam-jay-epstein.html>

Ho iniziato "The familiars" benché avessi già altri due libri in lettura, ma non riuscivo proprio a resistere alla tentazione di scoprire cos'altro avrebbero combinato i buffi animaletti protagonisti della storia. E' stato bello ritrovare tutti i personaggi del primo libro, in particolare Gilbert, la rana pasticciona, che mi ha strappato più di un sorriso per via della sua incorreggibile goffaggine e la sua divertente rassegnazione. E' un personaggio riuscitissimo, a cui è impossibile non affezionarsi.

Anche gli altri due famigli hanno un carattere ben definito e sempre più approfondito: Skylar, la ghiandaia blu, ha perso un po' dei suoi modi da saputella rispetto al primo libro e Aldwyn, il gatto, si scopre coraggioso e pieno di risorse.

Vengono svelati molti misteri riguardo il passato dei protagonisti, cosa che era mancata nel primo libro. La storia è davvero ben costruita! Capitano moltissime cose, apparentemente sconnesse tra di loro, ma alla fine tutto acquista un significato e nulla rimane inspiegato.

I personaggi umani sono descritti solo per sommi capi, non hanno nessuna importanza ai fini della storia e ne

vengono allontanati quasi a forza: sono i famigli gli unici protagonisti, i tre prescelti della leggenda, e non posso dire che la novità mi dispiaccia!

Il romanzo è corredata di illustrazioni davvero carine, ai ragazzini piaceranno certamente.

In occasione dell'uscita del secondo libro della serie, il primo è stato ristampato al conveniente prezzo di 5,90€! Penso che i due libri possano essere un ottimo regalo di Natale per un ragazzino che ama leggere storie di magia, è un prodotto di qualità e fa sognare!

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