



Secrets of the Dragon Tomb

Patrick Samphire, Jeremy Holmes (Illustrator)

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A STORY OF THRILLING ADVENTURE AND DESPERATE PERIL ON MARS

Mars in 1816 is a world of high Society, deadly danger, and strange clockwork machines. Pterodactyls glide through the sky, automatic servants hand out sandwiches at elegant garden parties, and in the north, the great dragon tombs hide marvels of Ancient Martian technology.

Twelve-year-old Edward Sullivan has always dreamed of becoming a spy like the ones he reads of in his favorite magazine, *Thrilling Martian Tales*. Instead, he spends his days keeping his eccentric family from complete disaster ... that is, until the villainous archeologist, Sir Titus Dane, kidnaps Edward's parents as part of a scheme to loot an undiscovered dragon tomb.

Edward sets off in pursuit across the Martian wilderness. With him are his brilliant and outrageous little sister, Putty, his impossibly starchy older sister, Olivia, and his secretive cousin, Freddie. Together they must evade Sir Titus's minions, battle mechanical nasties, and escape deadly Martian hunting machines. If they can't, they will never uncover the secrets of the dragon tomb and rescue Edward's family.

Secrets of the Dragon Tomb by Patrick Samphire is a classic adventure story, full of fun, humor and heart with stunning illustrations by Jeremy Holmes throughout. The thrilling adventure continues in Book 2 of the Secrets of the Dragon Tomb series, *The Emperor of Mars*.

Secrets of the Dragon Tomb Details

Date : Published July 18th 2017 by Square Fish (first published January 12th 2016)

ISBN : 9781250104151

Author : Patrick Samphire , Jeremy Holmes (Illustrator)

Format : Paperback 352 pages

Genre : Childrens, Middle Grade, Fantasy, Science Fiction, Steampunk, Adventure

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From Reader Review Secrets of the Dragon Tomb for online ebook

Jim says

I read this one to my 10-year-old son, who goes by Jackson on the internet. So I invited him to help me review it. My questions are in bold, followed by his responses.

In your words, what is this book about?

The book is about the family, and the father is an inventor. At the beginning of the book, they run into their cousin Freddie who stole a map to a secret dragon tomb which is a tomb of the ancient Martian emperors. By the way, this is all on Mars, and it's set in an alternate past, not an alternate future. He stole it from Sir Titus Dane, who had discovered multiple dragon tombs before, but it was proven that he stole the locations, and he actually didn't find them. Sir Titus Dane wants to use their father's invention, the water abacus, to decode the dragon map and find the tomb and get rich. He kidnaps their father, mother, and sister Jane. So the brother, sister, and other sister, and cousin Freddie, have to find Sir Titus and stop him. Also, Freddie is [SPOILER], and that's pretty cool!

What did you like best about it?

I liked the funny bits, and a lot of stuff in it, like the adventure.

Who was your favorite character, and why?

Either Edward or Freddie. They're both really cool. And Putty is pretty cool too, because she just knows absolutely everything about technology and she's just a little kid.

What do you think about a twelve-year-old (Edward) setting out to save his family?

It was kind of like Harry Potter, but with robots instead of magic. [Note from Jim: Jackson just finished reading the Harry Potter books, so they're on his mind a lot these days.]

Were there any parts you didn't like?

Not really, except for the ancient Martian empire killing dragons when their owners died. I didn't really like that, because that's mean to the dragons.

What would be the coolest thing about visiting this Mars?

Seeing the dragons in the museums.

Who should read this book?

I think anyone who likes science fiction books should read it. Probably a lot of my friends would like it.

Do you want to read the next book in the series?

Yes!

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The book is aimed at younger readers like Jackson, but I enjoyed it too. Like Jackson said, there's plenty of action, and a cast of young, smart, determined protagonists. It's not a book that takes itself too seriously — one of the characters is named Doctor Blood. It's more of an old-fashioned pulp-style adventure, but without the old-fashioned sexism and racism that often went with them.

Everything wraps up rather well at the end, but with plenty of possibility for the next books. I have a few guesses about what might happen next, but we'll wait and see when book two comes out.

Patrick Samphire says

The Emperor of Mars, the sequel to SECRETS OF THE DRAGON TOMB is now also up on Goodreads. Add it here!

A bit weird to review my own book, so here are the "trade" reviews:

"Abundant humor, intricate worldbuilding details, and precisely timed slapstick and mayhem mesh as neatly as the gears and levers of the water abacus, producing a gorgeously articulated clockwork of a novel."

– Publishers Weekly (**Starred review**)

"This classic boys' adventure on Mars has dastardly villains, dizzying feats of derring-do, and dragons ... Samphire is clearly having the time of his life with this yarn, leavening character types with emotional honesty ... A bit Tom Swift-meets-early Heinlein, joyfully modernizing space pulp for a new audience."

– Kirkus Reviews

"...fights, kidnappings, attempted murder, and a great chase. All of this is set in a perfectly delightful steampunk and fantasy world complete with clockwork automatic servants, dragon paths, and spaceships. Deeper topics of race relations and colonization are deftly explored through the political unrest among the British, the French, and the Martians. VERDICT A smart addition for middle grade collections; be prepared to purchase planned sequels."

- School Library Journal

"Engaging characters [...] and an action-packed plot are bolstered by some meaningful observations on Martian colonialism [...] this will appeal to fans of zany adventure tales."

- ALA Booklist

SECRETS OF THE DRAGON TOMB is now out in your local bookstore or at:

Book Depository | Books-A-Million | Powells | IndieBound | Chapters | Amazon US | Amazon UK

Janet says

I received an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review.

When Edward's parents are kidnapped for his Father's genius invention, he and his sisters, along with their mysterious cousin race across Mars (yep, the planet) to save them. Simply put, this book is hilarious! And I had to keep stealing it back from my 11-year-old who sneaked it away whenever I set it down. The characters are outrageous, individual, and so much fun. The author's quick wit will keep you laughing even when the characters are in horrible danger.

Even though this is only book 1, the story lines are all pulled together into a very satisfactory conclusion, while still setting us up for the next adventure. And the awesome news is that we will get to hang out with these characters again!

Erin Kelly says

Wonderful, fun, imaginative, steampunk ... perfect for MG, but can be enjoyed by all ages. Highly recommend!

Sarah Glenn Marsh says

I was lucky enough to read an ARC of SECRETS OF THE DRAGON TOMB, and I'd recommend this book for anyone who likes: Mars. Dinosaurs. Robots. Action and thrilling heroics. Smart girls and smart boys working together.

There's so much mystery, action, and so many fascinating creatures in these pages that it's a hard book to put down. Edward's adventure as he tries to save his family is even more thrilling than the ones he likes to read about, and you'll probably find yourself reading this from cover to cover! If you're anything like me, you'll adore Putty and Olivia especially--Edward's brave and resourceful sisters. Their banter with Edward will make you laugh!

Highly recommend this one for all ages.

Kali Wallace says

I love to read adventurous sci fi & fantasy in part because I love to imagine visiting amazing, impossible places, but I am not even kidding when I say I am REALLY VERY ANGRY that I cannot visit the Victorian-era pterodactyl-infested steampunk Mars that Patrick Samphire has imagined in this book.

I want to see all of it! The deserts and wastelands and museums and garden parties and airships! This is SUCH an imaginative book, full of so many things that are 100% pure joy and adventure and FUN. It's like being transported into an old school Golden Era sci fi adventure without any of the icky backwards old school tropes. (Indeed, the girls are just as clever and fierce as the boys--more so, in many instances--and

there's some subtle commentary on class issues and colonialism that demonstrates the author knows exactly what kind of story he is paying homage to, and exactly which parts of those stories are best left in the past.)

Edward is a delightful narrator. He's a twelve-year-old boy who feels like he needs to take responsibility for his eccentric, absent-minded family members, so he's always getting in over his head, and needs a bit of a help learning to rely on the strength and smarts of the people around him to solve the barrage of problems and dangers headed his way. He's not always right, but he's not always wrong either, and it's glorious fun to watch him get into trouble over and over again.

This book is absolutely a delight. I read through it in one evening, barely looking up from the pages, and I don't regret a second of it. Highly recommended!

Lois Sepahban says

I was lucky to receive an advanced copy of SECRETS OF THE DRAGON TOMB. This is one of those rare books that truly does have something for everyone--action, adventure, and even a bit of romance. The setting is so much fun--Mars, 1816! And the world building is amazing. There's a little bit of science fiction, a little bit of history, a little bit of steampunk--and together, they make for a really hard-to-put-down story.

The main character, 12-year-old Edward, is one of the coolest kids ever. Edward has a fantastic supporting cast: His little sister Putty who, in fact, always gets it right. His older sister Olivia who is sweet and kind and SMART. And Cousin Freddie--perhaps my favorite character in the story.

I'm looking forward to the second book in this series!

Jenny Moyer says

I received an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Secrets of the Dragon Tomb is a thrilling MG adventure! Samphire created a world and characters unlike any I've read before. Set in a unique world (Regency-era British Mars!) it has something for everyone: clockwork creatures, dinosaurs, dragons, airships--a wonderful steampunk/sci-fi mash up infused with witty humor and delightful, fresh characters.

This story reminded me a bit of an "Indiana Jones" adventure, but with kids as the heroes. Each chapter reveals new surprises (and laughs), spies, map-chasing, inventions, and villains--all supporting cleverly interwoven themes. I highly recommend it!

Jonah Lisa Dyer says

This is a super fun Victorian historical fiction, sci-fi, adventure mash-up. Like Jules Verne meets Monty Python for kids..in space...with dinosaurs. Seriously, doesn't that sound like a romp? Well, it is. Plus, Patrick Samphire has a blistering sense of humor. Best recommendation I can give...I'm passing it on to my 10 year old son knowing I will get mad mom props when he devours and loves it.

Victoria Coe says

I received an advance readers copy of Secrets of the Dragon Tomb in exchange for an honest review. And honestly, I absolutely LOVED this book! Here's why:

- 1) It's hilarious! I had to pause my reading many, many times because I couldn't stop laughing out loud. Think Jane Austen meets Monty Python. Enough said.
- 2) It's thrilling! The plot is fast-paced and mysterious, full of action and twists and turns and surprises, as the characters pursue a goal that's high stakes and personal for all of them.
- 3) It's set in a totally fresh and compelling world! I guess I'd call it historical sci fi, or steampunk, but that doesn't even begin to describe it. It's 1816 on British Mars, where the British-Martians subscribe to Regency Society and mannerisms and live in typical British homes of the period (on earth), while dealing with unusual creatures and landscapes and clockwork inventions and discoveries unearthed from dragon tombs and Native Martians and inventors and dinosaurs and naturally, evil villains.
- and 4) It's full of fantastic characters! I loved 12 year-old Edward who wants to be a spy, his younger sister Putty (actual name Parthenia) who is way more spy-like than he is, his older cousin Freddie who's extremely un-spy-like, and his older sister Olivia who (like one of the previous three) is full of surprises. Not to mention the supporting cast, who are all equally as interesting and funny and wonderful.

In short, Secrets of the Dragon Tomb is a wildly fun and completely lovable middle grade read. I highly recommend this book to anyone - human, Martian, or mechanical - with a sense of humor, a sense of adventure, or any sense at all. I predict Patrick Samphire is going to need his own water abacus to count up all the five-star reviews for Secrets of the Dragon Tomb!

Monica Tesler says

I was fortunate to read an advanced copy of SECRETS OF THE DRAGON TOMB by Patrick Samphire, an amazing and inventive adventure that takes place in a thrilling world I will be thinking about long after reading the last pages. The story takes place on Mars, but it's not a Mars like we know. There are dinosaurs, clockwork servants, and Zeplins soaring through the sky. Against this exciting backdrop, twelve-year-old Edward dreams of having adventures like the ones he reads about. When a family friend comes to visit, and news of an undiscovered dragon tomb surfaces, Edward gets his adventure. He'll have to brave the Martian landscape and many dangers to save his family.

This is a great, gripping read that I think kids who like fantasy adventures will really enjoy. Edward and the other heroes of the story, particularly his younger sister Putty, are whole and compelling, and the world building is fantastic! The illustrations were an unexpected bonus!

Sarah Ahiers says

I got to read an arc of this book and it was a super fun, steampunk adventure!

Secret of the Dragon Tomb is a story about Edward who wants more than anything to be a spy like the hero of his favorite magazine. Instead he's stuck taking care of his family, which includes a precocious younger sister, two older sisters trying to fit into society, a mother who really only favors his oldest sister and a father who pays him hardly any mind. Throw in an idiot cousin and Edward is almost always overlooked. But when men kidnap his family in order to steal his father's latest invention, Edward learns that maybe looks can be deceiving when it comes to his family, and that maybe spying isn't all it's cracked up to be.

I was immediately in love with the book within the first few pages. Samphire does such an excellent job of worldbuilding his mars, especially when it comes to creatures and creepy crawlies. I absolutely loved reading about all the different kinds of pests and bugs they have in British mars.

All of the characters are so incredibly likeable. Whether it's 9 year old Putty, brawling with adults like the best of them, his cousin who's not quite the idiot he appears to be, or his older sister who's maybe got more under her petticoats than he would have guessed, they all have moments where they shine brightly. And Edward's heart and loyalty and strength carry the story forward in a fast paced adventure.

I think this would appeal to fans of steampunk, of science fiction, of historical fiction, of adventure. There's a bit of something for everyone.

Lee Malone says

In this wildly inventive middle grade novel, Samphire defies many science fiction tropes and cliches to create a world on Mars filled with dinosaurs, strange bugs, and ancient clockwork technologies and populated with Victorian-era characters worthy of P.G. Wodehouse and Jane Austen. An unforgettable page-turner.

(I received an ARC of this book in exchange for a honest review)

Bridget Hodder says

I received an ARC of this book when I was supposed to be packing for a journey. I was expected to honestly review the book (which is what an advance copy is for, of course), and I feared that if I started it, I wouldn't be able to finish before leaving the next day.

Uh. Wrong.

I'm sitting here staring at THE END like an empty bucket of popcorn. How did that happen?

Patrick Samphire's utterly new take on a Martian Chronicle puts us on the red planet with young Edward Sullivan and his wacky British family, in an alternate reality where the British Empire has colonized Mars via dragon pathways between the spheres. Edward's father is an absent-minded genius, and he's invented

something called a water abacus (think steampunk computing) that's attracting attention from some very unsavory characters indeed...including dangerous state-level spies. Will Edward and his oh-so-proper family (proper, that is, with some major exceptions) manage to pull together to outrun or outwit the determined bad guys? And what does this all have to do with the secrets hidden in a Martian imperial tomb, where history says a dragon is buried?

This fast-paced steampunk adventure is part Indiana Jones, part PG Wodehouse, and entirely a cracking good Middle Grade romp!!!!

Stephanie says

I absolutely adore this novel. It's a fabulous MG adventure full of pterodactyls, clockwork crabs, and a wonderful, squabbling, eccentric family, all set on Regency-era Mars. LOVE! And while I admit that, being married to the author, it's hard for me to sound unbiased - well, I'd also just like to point out that when Patrick and I first met at the Clarion West writing workshop, I fell in love with his writing even before I fell in love with him. I would be a huge fan of this book even if I didn't know the author at all.

However, being married to Patrick means I got to read this book before anyone else, and that made me incredibly lucky. *Secrets of the Dragon Tomb* is full of fabulous humor, both hilarious and scary characters, hugely imaginative world-building, and intense action-adventure. (Also, it features the best little-sister character ever!)

Also, the published edition is going to be illustrated throughout. How cool is that?

It's not out until January 2016, but you can pre-order it now. Woot!
