



# The Princlings of the East

*Jemima Pett*

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## **The Princlings of the East** Jemima Pett

The Princlings of the East is the first of a trilogy telling of the adventures of Fred and George.

When the King's Birthday feast is ruined by an unnatural power drain, our Princeling heroes leave their scientific experiments to set out in search of answers. They encounter the enigmatic businessman Hugo, the impressive Prince of Buckmore, the wise Lady Nimrod, the irrepressible barkeep Victor, but find themselves threatened by those with vested interests. The scene shifts from a rural, feudal setting to the towers and heights of the curious Isle of Hattan, but where, or when, are they? Time is of the essence in solving this puzzle, and our heroes must keep their wits sharp and their heads clear if they are to survive.

Suitable for ages 8 and over, The Princlings of the East is a fantasy adventure with the charm of the Wind in the Willows in a complete world reminiscent of Anne MacCaffrey's Pern.

## **The Princlings of the East Details**

Date : Published May 2015 by Blurb (first published November 26th 2011)

ISBN : 9781320685009

Author : Jemima Pett

Format : Paperback 162 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Childrens, Middle Grade

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# From Reader Review The Princlings of the East for online ebook

## Kim Headlee says

The Princlings of the East is the first installment of a fun fantasy trilogy chronicling the adventures of twin time-traveling young royals Fred and George.

The year is 2009. Or is it 2021? Hm... whatever the year, no one can argue there are Strange Doings afoot. The King's birthday celebration has been ruined by a mysterious Energy Drain. Princlings Fred and George, two bright kids with too much time on their hands to just sit and Think (in Fred's case) or build ingenious machines (that would be George), decide their august adult counterparts have leapt to all the wrong conclusions, and they want to take matters into their own hands.

The question is... how? They are just two mere (if industrious in their own ways) lads; what can they possibly do to solve this Vexing Problem for everyone's benefit? Especially when they have trouble convincing anyone to listen to them, let alone to believe what they say. To say nothing of the possible consequences if they make too much trouble for the King—perhaps even banishment from the only home they have ever known!

In the midst of their ruminations, they find a mysterious tunnel, which in due course leads them to all manner of amazing wheres and whens and whats and whos, many of whom are not who they seem. Most amazing of all, they meet adults who not only listen but even value what they have to say.

Fred and George, in essence, get to live every ingenious, thoughtful kid's dream.

In the book's synopsis, it's likened to *The Wind in the Willows*, and I can most assuredly see that in the characters' interactions and relationships to one another. However, the literary similarity that struck me most, from the very first page, was A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*. Everything from Fred's propensity to sit and Think (Pooh), to various characters' fussing (Rabbit) and pontification (Owl) about the cause of the Energy Drain and how to solve it made me smile all throughout my reading of the book.

The main—and laugh-out-loud zany—scientific issues presented in *The Princlings of the East*, especially regarding how the world's diet cola becomes "diet" and the process's effect upon the environment, pleasantly brought to mind *The Starlight Barking* by Dodie Smith, sequel to her much more famous work, *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*.

The synopsis also describes *The Princlings of the East* as being "suitable for =good= readers aged 10 and over," emphasis mine. Girls as well as boys will enjoy following Fred and George's adventures to other castles and eras, but it does require some mental calisthenics to keep everything sorted.

And I view that as a Very Good Thing. In today's culture where the propensity is to dumb down children's programming and literature, the world could do with more Princlings to help our kids hone their mental faculties while presenting fun puzzles and fascinating scenarios. The good news is that there are several more Princlings novels in this series!

Brava, Jemima Pett, and do please keep up the great work.

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## **Fiona Ingram says**

Princelings George and Fred leave the safe confines of their home, Castle Marsh, to investigate a mysterious and recurring Energy Drain that ruined their grandfather, King Cole's birthday feast (and led to a lot of good food being wasted too!). They must find the answers since this situation cannot go on forever. Soon, there might be no power left. Leaving the castle is easier than they imagined; in fact the very mention of how useful a tunnel would be is enough for a tunnel to obligingly appear. A Great Adventure calls. Fred and George, inseparable, find themselves separated but they make the best of it. They meet a number of mysterious and sometimes vaguely sinister characters, particularly the ones with a vested interest in the situation. Is the production of a delicious and popular cola drink really the problem? And is time getting messed up somehow...?

George and Fred, although twins, are appealing and different characters. George (the Brains - he is a Thinker) and Fred (the Brawn - he is the Adventurer) make a great team, relying on each other all the time. When their adventure separates them, they must learn to rely on themselves and make decisions and choices depending on the circumstances that confront each one. They are inventive, curious, brave, and sharp-witted, no mean feat to survive in a variety of situations where petty politics rule. Both George and Fred go on a real journey of discovery, but in fact, much of the journey is internal as they miss each other's presence, but make those vital choices alone in the end.

Author Jemima Pett creates a charming and endearing world that is a fantastical mix of medieval with technology. Detailed descriptions sink the reader right into each new location and paint vivid pictures of sights and sounds, and the way the inhabitants live. The secondary characters entertain and amuse as well, with a quaint turn of phrase, or a deep, dark purpose (depending on who it is) to give them definition. Lovely idiosyncrasies such as habits and speech patterns ensure the secondary players are fully rounded in this tale. Ms. Pett's tongue-in-cheek humour will also give many a laugh to slightly older readers.

There is a useful list of characters and locations in the front of the book, which will help younger readers through the twists and turns of this surprisingly complex plot. The author's illustrations that preface each chapter are delightful and help cement the reader in the context. A lovely read for all ages, with enough action, adventure, inventiveness, and fun to satisfy the most demanding reader. Fans will be delighted to learn that George and Fred's adventures continue with the second and third books in the series.

PS: George and Fred are Guinea Pigs!

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## **Ronel Janse van Vuuren says**

Fred and George, a thinker and an engineer, leave home after the tragic food waste caused by the energy crisis at the king's birthday feast.

It's a cute young reader/middle-grade novel about two brothers who have to sort out the energy crisis – they come from an almost medieval background with coaches, castles and feasts. There's time-travel, new media, science and technology just beyond their doorstep.

I really enjoyed the relationship between the two brothers and how they grew as individuals through their adventures.

The story is fast paced, full of lessons about treating the earth right, great world-building and lots of adventure.

I recommend it to all young at heart. (Appropriate for Young reader: 7-9/ Middle-grade: 8-12)

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### **Stewart Hoffman says**

The Princlings of the East is the opening installment in Jemima Pett's, Princeling series. A rich, layered world exploring and blending modern technology and time travel, with an old-worldly feel. It's an interesting set up, and though I occasionally had trouble connecting the dots between the many elements in this story, I would still recommend this. I'm going to hand my copy over to my niece and nephew, who I'm sure will get a kick out of this fun adventure story.

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### **Anna del C. Dye says**

The Princeling of the East is an enchanting tale that will delight boys and be very much enjoyed by girls. This fourth to sixth grade chapter book will keep young readers enthralled for hours on end. You will find well-rounded characters, an interesting plot and many adventures within the pages of this book. I truly enjoyed the tale and loved the telling. It relates a completely new idea in a medieval fantasy setting and plot that will be enjoyed by all the inventors or thinkers in your home. It will be a welcome volume in any home, school, or library shelves. George and his almost identical twin Fred, live in a castle where they work hard at not being seen. Now for some years, the power is being sucked from their castle and they wonder who or what is the cause. George, being the inventor, and his brother, Fred, the thinker, unite their talents to figure the answers to this dilemma. They have never been beyond the marshes that surround their castle, but they both know they need to go and see if other castles have the same problem. In their travels, they meet some interesting people: princelings and others that will help them discover what is afoot. Meanwhile, they learn much from those they meet. The Princeling of the East is a medieval fantasy with a touch of time travel that is very well written and easy to understand. It stays on age level and keeps the reader alert for the thought provoking results. What a wonderful tale with a great story. Well done.

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### **Rebecca Douglass says**

This was a fun read, with a generally well-developed plot just complex enough for adults, but mostly clear enough for children. There are a lot of characters to keep track of, but with the deliberate exception of one or two who have dual identities, they are pretty easy to keep track of. I tested the clarity by doing much of my reading in a sleep-deprived condition, and once or twice had to look back to see which brother we were tracking, but generally was fine. At that point it's hard to say that the book should be clearer; the problem mostly lay with the reader (but maybe that's a good test for whether your typical 3rd grader can follow it? Though I hope most of them are more coherent than me on 6 hours sleep).

The story has a slightly odd (to me) feel of being somewhere between a pre-technology fantasy and a science fiction tale, especially with the introduction of time travel, which takes George to a much more modern-

looking future. I ultimately decided that this was not a flaw so much as part of what makes the story unique. In fact, the only thing I found not quite satisfactory was the guinea pig nature of the characters (all the characters? I wasn't quite sure). In fact, though I knew in advance that Fred and George (at least) are guinea pigs, there was very little in the story to indicate that they are not human, and on the whole they act like humans. I'm not sure that a reader who didn't know they were guinea pigs would ever tumble to that fact. Nor am I sure that matters, though I could see the potential for very cute illustrations including the characters.

On that note, each chapter is headed by a very nicely done pencil sketch (I think) of some element of the story, drawn by the multi-talented author. More illustrations would be a great addition!

I give the Princlings four stars, for a unique plot, great illustrations, and very solid writing with virtually no editing flaws.

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### **Jemima Pett says**

The only thing wrong with this story is that it isn't clear that the characters aren't human. It makes it a little puzzling for a reader to really get them clear in their imagination. Once you have that, you understand the odd references to certain activities and dining experiences. Think Moley and Ratty in *Wind in the Willows*, and you have a series of characters living a life of comfort when problems intrude and mysteries need to be solved. The twists and turns need some attention to keep up since time is involved, but it's an enjoyable tale and our main characters are gentlemen through and through.

As the author, I'm biased, but my readers have given me this feedback, and thank you to those have been even kinder with your reviews.

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### **Christine says**

I found myself enchanted by this tale of time traveling guinea pigs. Guinea pigs who find themselves on a quest searching for the cause of an energy drain. Shortly into the story, I identified with George, the engineer, who gains "excitement over a new project., ...itching to do something to keep himself busy" when one of his creations has been destroyed.

The charming pencil drawn illustrations by the author, at the beginning of each chapter, are a lovely addition to the text. The combination of the sweet drawings along with the chapter subtitles, often made me smile. My most favorite subtitle was the one found at the start of Chapter 7: "A Close Shave, In which George finds that engineers need people skills more than people need engineering skills" had me laughing out loud.

After reading *The Princlings of the East*, I felt as if my IQ had gone up a few points with Ms. Pett's vocabulary choices - what refreshing text. This true adventure book which includes a fight, time travel and mysterious strangers is reminiscent of *Wind in the Willows* - with a twist.

The hero at the end of the story came as a bit of a surprise and everything wrapped up very neatly at the end. The final secret message delivered was a fantastic note to remind us all how important it is to believe in oneself.

I give this book 5 out of 5 stars. I enjoyed it very much and look forward to reading the next book in the Princlings series.

Jemima also has a fantastic blog about all of her guinea pigs that has kept my daughter's interest. I have caught her giggling while visiting Ms. Pett's Guinea Pig World.

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### **Kendra says**

The Princlings of the East is a clever, cute tale about Fred and George, two brothers who set out to discover the mystery of an Energy drain and end up caught in a world of time-travel. This book is appropriate for readers 8 and up, although the vocabulary might be a little difficult for readers under 10 to read independently (but it's perfect for out-loud bedtime reading in any case). I really enjoyed the creativity and the world-building, along with the clever asides and insight into our own world (I had the thought "rock-n-roller cola wars" at one point :D ) If you (or a young reader friend) love Frog and Toad or the Wind in the Willows, they'll enjoy Princlings.

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### **Renee says**

#### **What's it About?**

Meet Fred and George, the young princlings of the Castle in the Marsh, who just happen to be guinea pigs. Fred and George are enjoying the King's Feast when they discover that the mysterious Energy Drain has struck again, ruining the elaborate meal. The two young princlings take matters into their own paws and head out determined to solve the mystery of what is draining energy in their kingdom as well as across the land.

As they head out through the labyrinth of tunnels in their marsh and into foreign territories, Fred and George soon get separated through time and space. Along their travels, the mystery deepens as they meet a colourful cast of characters including the shrewd businessman Hugo, Victor the barkeeper, Prince Lupin and Lady Nimrod, overseers of other castles, and Mariusz and Saku who are involved in the development of the drink du jour: Diet Wozna. Fred and George must identify friend from foe and learn to navigate the time tunnels to rejoin and put an end to the Energy Drain once and for all.

#### **My Thoughts:**

Jemima Pett has woven a suspenseful mystery featuring a cast of memorable characters headed by the two charismatic guinea pigs, Fred and George. Pett dives into the story right away introducing Fred and George and establishing the crux of the plot early in the book – namely, the mysterious Energy Drain. The plot line, with its many twists and turns, is very intricate and complex; thus, making it enjoyable for older tweens and even adults. Science fiction aficionados in particular will be interested in the element of time-travel in this book.

The complexity of the plot is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, this book requires concentration to read, in that, there are many characters to keep track of; there are clues leading up to solving the mystery that you need to attend to; and the element of time-travel keeps you guessing as to who is who really. That being

said, the pace of the book is slow enough to notice and retain all the bits of information necessary to unravel the mystery. On the other hand, the complexity of the plot provides a challenge to more advanced independent readers including adults who are interested in thinking through the plot and trying to guess at the ending. It's very much a "thinking person's" book.

Of interest, is that Pett based the characters of the book on her own guinea pigs. As any pet owner can attest to, cats, dogs, hamsters, guinea pigs or other loving pets can provide a plethora of inspiration for storytelling. Pett attends carefully to the development of the two main characters, Fred the "Thinker" and his non-identical twin brother, George the "Engineer". In addition, as described above, there are many other characters, each of which is uniquely developed in the same meticulous way. Character development is very much a forte in this book.

I do have to comment, however, that I sometimes felt that the characters did not necessarily need to be portrayed as guinea pigs. Ok, yes, underground tunnels played an important role in the story, but I can't help but think that, with relatively minor changes to the context and setting, the characters could easily have been human. I sometimes forgot that they were guinea pigs and as I visualized the story unfolding, I imagined humans as the characters rather than guinea pigs.

Another endearing element to the book that I must mention are the simple pencil drawings (illustrated by Pett herself) at the beginning of each chapter accompanied by the most quirky chapter sub-titles I've encountered in a while. I'd like to provide two examples, so you can see how fun these are. The title of Chapter 7 is A Close Shave and the subtitle is as follows:

In which George finds that engineers need people skills more than people need engineering skills

Chapter 12 is titled The Adventures of Victor and the sub-title is as follows:

In which Victor gets more than he bargained for but finds that brains often skip a generation

I have to admit that I always got a chuckle out of these clever sub-titles. I really enjoyed those!

### **My bottom line:**

Princlings of the East, Book 1 is a suspense-filled mystery strong on character development, with a deliciously complex and engaging plot, that is sure to be enjoyed by older tweens and adults alike.

### **Who Would Like This Book?**

Given the elements of science fiction and fantasy as well as with the anthropomorphising of guinea pigs thrown in, there seems to be a bit of something for everyone in this book. However, given the complexity of the plot, I would recommend this book to children 10 years and older.

*\* This book was provided to us free-of-charge by the author exchange for an honest review.\**



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## **The Reading List (Megan) says**

Rating: 4.5/5

This was an entertaining and quick read. The characters were easy to like, and as an animal lover I adored the fact that they were based on Pett's guinea pigs. George and Fred are inquisitive at heart and it's their curious nature that makes them excellent main characters; but Victor, the barkeeper, quickly became my favorite.

It was easy for me to settle into Pett's writing style; it's been a while since I've read anything by Anne McCaffrey or J.R.R. Tolkien, and Pett's writing is a welcomed reminder of how that style of writing can really add to a good plot-line. I have to say that I was impressed with the novel overall. Although it is for older children, it's still written in a way that will appeal to many adults.

The story itself starts off rather quickly, so it's important for readers to pay attention to the details; but the story wasn't so fast paced that I couldn't keep up.

Pett is the author and also illustrates each chapter. Definite bonus points there. The illustrations help to give the book a sort of whimsical feel that adds to the overall fun and adventurous element of the story.

The story wasn't extremely action packed but more of a mystery. Some parts were a little slower than others but in the end everything ties together nicely--including a side plot involving Victor.

By the end, George and Fred are convinced that they will go back to their boring, mundane routine after the adventure that they had at Castle Hattan. I have a feeling that that couldn't be further from the truth.

Read this and other book reviews on my blog: <http://readinglist-m.blogspot.com>

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## **Ruth Hill says**

First of all, as I was reading this book, I had to keep my daughter in mind. In fact, this would be her preferred genre more than mine, but she was too busy with school to read it. So I had to review it in her place. At times, this was challenging since this is not my kind of book. However, I have reviewed the book to the best of my ability without injecting my personal preferences (as much as I could).

The book itself was an easy read. My only concern on that point would be that young readers who are not familiar with "English vernacular" may struggle with some of the phrases. It would be an excellent way to expose these young people to this way of speaking and writing, but it may also cause young people outside of the UK to give up. Parents and/or educators would need to take an active role in aiding these readers so they get through the book.

I was not overly excited about the time travel in the book, but I know my daughter would have been. This book would have been right up her alley, and I doubt her interest would have waned as mine did. This is the first book in the series, and there were portions that took a different turn than I was expecting. This is a book

that I am pretty sure my daughter would devour (she is ten as I write this review), and it should capture the attention of those who enjoy science fiction and time travel. There is absolutely nothing inappropriate in the book (that is worth something right there since too many young adult/tween books contain unsavory elements). This is a book that you can give to your tweens and know that they will receive some culture with an intriguing story. Not my style, but certainly written with the audience intended in mind.

I was sent a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review. I was not financially compensated, and all opinions are 100 percent mine.

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### **Kirstin Pulioff says**

3.5 Stars - My first impressions of this book were fantastic. The scientific creations, and "Thinking" of the characters gave me the feeling of a medieval Phineas & Ferb. Familiar with the cartoon, my mind simmered with ideas of the adventure to come. What would these brothers come up with, and what adventures would it lead them on.

When a tunnel appears out of thin air, leading the princelings to new territories full of strange new drinks, they will have to decide who to trust, who to follow, and what is causing the energy drain throughout the castles... An adventure certainly awaited, to a different time, unexplored kingdoms, and new friends. Working together, the brothers must solve the mystery of the energy drain, connect strange events, and find a way home. But who can they trust in a world where they know no one and they are separated...

This story started with a great introduction to the main characters a dynamic story line. However, as the story progressed, I found myself often wishing for greater depth in both the characters and world building. The author created a complex world of different locations and time, and there were more than a few moments of confusion, as I tried to connect the dots.

Overall, a pleasant read. But I wished for a bit more... good thing this is the first of a series. Looking forward to seeing where the author takes the characters and the story.

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### **M.G. King says**

Ms. Pett's story reminds me of the whimsy found in *THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS*. Two guinea pig Princlings set out to discover the source of their castle's energy drain. George is the inventor/engineer who is ahead of his times, and his brother is the philosopher who likes to Thing About Things. They discover a time tunnel, a smuggler, and a rather dubious diet drink of the future. Charming and humorous, this will make a wonderful bedtime read-aloud.

I do wish that Ms. Pett had given us more physical description of her Princlings throughout the story to remind us of their creature status; she often refers to her characters as "people," which had me confused for a bit of the story. I wondered if George and Harry were the guinea pigs living among people.

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## **Julie Grasso says**

We follow Fred and George, Fred who is the thinker or Philosopher and George who is the Engineer, but the totally unique and endearing thing about these two totally lovable characters is that they are in fact Guinea Pigs. But not just your average guinea pigs that eat lettuce and live in a cage, they are Princelings and they live in a castle, contribute to its fine tuning and banter with the humans.

Fred and George remind me of an English cartoon that is currently showing on Australian television called Country Mouse and City Mouse, which I recently realised is a retelling of Aesops Fable.

The two mice are intelligent adventurers who travel around, but they have different likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses which help them along in their adventures.

Similarly, Fred and George are brothers with very different talents and interests but they work together on their adventures, that's until they get separated and have to work apart to solve the mystery of the Energy Drain.

I enjoyed this book very much and I was intrigued the whole way, itching to find out the answer to mysterious energy drain. I won't spoil it but there may be some wobbly wobbly timey wimey shenanigans ( sorry that is a Dr Who quote which I realise if you aren't a super nerd like me, Yes I own a Tardis, you won't have a clue what I am talking about lol.) I loved the reference to Wozna Cola which sounded an awful lot like a certain dark coloured liquid that has taken the world by storm for about 4 decades

This was a clean read, with no violence at all which I think is such a credit to the author as I feel quite passionate about this very topic when considering if a book is for a Middle Grade audience. I would recommend this to 10+ plus due to the intricacy of the plot and there is quite a cast of characters to follow. I also feel that this story would be more appealing to boys than girls.

I like the cover, but I do wish that it had pictures of Fred and George as I think that would totally appeal to kids to help them visualise these completely adorable guinea pigs.

I am looking forward to reading the further adventures of Fred and George.

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