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Tamora Pierce

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As the only female page in history to last beyond the first year of formal training to become a knight, 11-year-old Keladry of Mindelan has an uphill battle to fight. In addition to proving herself worthy of being a page, Kel spends her time defending first-year pages from bullies, staying on top of homework, conquering her paralyzing fear of heights, and keeping up with Lord Wyldon's grueling physical training schedule. Kel's detractors do everything in their power to thwart her progress, from tormenting her friends to sabotaging the Midwinter Festivities to kidnapping her maid and dog on the day of final examinations. The tide of resistance begins to turn slightly during the summer between Kel's second and third years, when she leads a team of pages in defensive maneuvers against renegade bandits--coincidentally on the same day that she gets her first period.

Page Details

Date : Published December 18th 2008 (first published May 23rd 2000)

ISBN :

Author : Tamora Pierce

Format : 290 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Fiction, Young Adult Fantasy

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Kogiopsis says

Here is another book that I love too much to really review, and since I'm trying to save all my reminiscing about how important this series has been to me for the third book, I'm going to keep this short, with just a few of the things I loved about this entry:

- Kel's friends, and particularly Neal. From page 13 of the trade paperback: "Neal had taught Kel to know the palace the year before, assisting her with classwork and cheering her worst moods with his tart humor. In return she tried to keep him out of trouble and made him eat his vegetables."
- Lalasa, Kel's maid and a new addition to the cast. From page 126: "To his cousins Owen said, 'That's Lalasa, Kel's maid. She sews, and she knows all kinds of ways to hurt you.'"
- The way Kel doesn't let anything slow her down, including puberty (which sucks enough when you're not undergoing rigorous physical training; I can hardly imagine how hard it would be to deal with in her situation.)
- How most of the cast are genuinely good people, even the ones who represent Kel's abstract antagonist.

And with that, this brief reflection must end lest I veer into reminiscing one book too early.

Lori S. says

I'm really enjoying rereading these.

Sakina (aforestofbooks) says

I don't even think I have words to describe how I am feeling right now. Kel was always my favourite, having been the first set of books I read by Tamora Pierce, but rereading this series for the 3rd time (I think?), I'm just in love with everything!

The characters, the writing, the plot...the funny banter between the pages and the squires. But most of all, Keladry. She's so strong, and resolute, intelligent and calm, and she has the makings of an incredible leader! I just want to read Lady Knight now cause I'm so excited for her leadership skills to fully show.

Neal kills me as always with his flowery long speeches about love. He's such a romantic and I love that about him cause it's totally the opposite of who Kel is (and who I am). Cleon definitely grew on me in this book and I absolutely love his terms of endearment hahaha

I spent so much of this book just laughing constantly, mostly because Tamora Pierce is amazing at adding lightness to a somewhat darker story. Owen is adorable! He's so cute and chubby and I just want to squeeze his cheeks and give him a hug!

The ending was something I had been waiting for since my reread of First Test and I wasn't disappointed. It

was horrifying and maddening – I seriously want to kill someone but I won't name him because of spoilers!

Also, Raoul made an appearance and so did Jon and I died a little inside seeing Jon being so caring and fatherly.

Lalasa's character arc was amazing! Her backstory is just so sad, but I'm so glad she's found a friend in Kel!

I think that's all I'm going to say cause I don't want to spoil anything!

Paranormal_Madness says

What I liked:

-Keladry. She grows on me with each book I read. She's just such a normal girl trying so hard to prove to everyone that she can be as good as any boy, and she'll stop at nothing until everyone sees it. She trains harder and longer than the others, and it really shows how dedicated she is to the life of a hero. And in this book, Kel shows that she really thinks those below her should be treated with respect.

-Lalasa. She begins the book as a timid little mouse, and she slowly begins to open up thanks to Kel and Kel's friends. She really grows, and that character growth doesn't seem fake or rushed—I really believed that Lalasa was becoming her own woman.

-Secondary characters. Neal is a personal favorite of mine, but I also like Merrick, Wyldon, and Daine when she makes her little appearances throughout the series. They add some humor to the series, and they all shape Kel and help her grow as a person. I also love Neal and Kel's relationship with one another—despite the age difference, they're like best friends, and it seemed only natural that Kel would develop feelings for him eventually.

-The ending. It was perfect. It showed that not everyone is being won over by Kel's perseverance and dedication and that there are still people who want her to fail. I knew that Kel would do the right thing, and I think her willingness to save Lalasa was the final thing that proved to Wyldon that Kel had earned her place at the palace.

What I disliked:

-Pace. There were chunks of this book where it seemed like not a lot happened, but I was pretty easy to overlook since there was always some interesting character interaction or training segments.

Overall, this was a pretty awesome book and I would definitely recommend it to anyone with a love of fantasy, magic, strong female heroines, and Tamora Pierce. It has action and character development and drama, and I've reread this series several times, and I'll probably reread it again. **4.5**

Kirsty (Amethyst Bookwurm) says

This and my other reviews can be found at <http://amethystbookwurm.blogspot.co.uk/>

In Page, Kelladry has passed her first year in probation and still has to complete 3 more years of page training to become a squire. She still has her friends, Jump the dog, and Crown and her flock of sparrows, along with Neal, Cleon, Roald and the rest. She has gained a new maid, Lalassa, who is a country girl new to the city. She also has to contend with the conservative squires, who wish her to leave.

I like how Kelladry has matured in this book. She looks at the world in a less black and white way, whilst not losing her view of seeing the bright side of everything. You also get to meet a few new characters, and older characters get developed, with Neal falling in love with everyone female.

Even though this is a good novel, I found that the pacing of this book was uneven, there were places where you were feeling rushed, and then places where the pace dragged. I would recommend Page to anyone who has enjoyed Eragon or Ella Enchanted.

Ashley says

My memory of reading this series the first time around is that I thought this book was not as good as the first and the third of the series, but this time I can't think why. It might be because the copy of this book I read as a teen had an incredibly awkward pose on the cover, and it infected my view of the book. At any rate, this time I continue to just adore Kel as she grows up and we can start identifying her talents (other than just being a brave badass). I also really appreciate her friendship with Lalasa. Lalasa's extreme fearfulness might border on the edge of frustrating for me as a reader (as it does for Kel), but who am I kidding, if I lived in fantasy land I would be just like her, minus the impressive sewing skills. And I really love the way that Kel's hatred of bullying manifests itself as a particular hatred of sexual harassment/assault - unfortunately it is a very timely theme. In particular, I like that Kel's strategy is to insist on teaching Lalasa to defend herself, rather than just swooping in to rescue her as needed (not that there isn't a fair amount of swooping as well).

Beth says

I need to take a moment to point out that Kel, at eleven, is five foot three - in other words, taller than I'll ever be. Anyway:

No stranger, looking at her, would have thought this disheveled girl was the sort to cause a storm of argument at court.

This is interesting, because Kel is sheltered from this stuff, at least through this book. Pierce drops this in, but doesn't go anywhere with it yet.

This book starts off with two projects for Kel, and on this reread, I thought that was - convenient. Very convenient. First Jump, then Lalasa, and obviously both have bearing on the final big conflict. Eh. Eventually they're woven into the fabric of the series (I really like Lalasa's arc), but here they're Chekhov's guns: there because they're necessary.

Quick commercial break to bring up a Neal comment, apropos of nothing:

"Neal, will the Wildmage take him?"

"Daine? Of course," he replied. "She's here - I saw her last night. Ask her after supper."

"Did you maybe want to go with me?" she offered gingerly...

"No," he told Kel nobly, and sighed. "It just tries my heart, to see her with that old man."

NEAL'S THE BEST. Also, do we think Pierce got some angry feedback on Daine and Numair?! She made a crack about the age difference in *First Test*, too.

Roald of Conte was a fourth-year page, quiet and contained, with his father's very blue eyes and black hair that could have come from either of his parents. He was so polite that he appeared stiff, and he made friends with difficulty, but when he spoke, he was listened to.

I'm not even going to comment on "when he spoke, he was listened to" - of course people listened, he's the prince. I'm guessing this was supposed to link him to Jonathan as a boy, and that authority Jon had even when Alanna first met him, but eh. (Oh, look, I ended up commenting on it.) What I really want to say, though, is that I love how two outspoken people like Jon and Thayet produced a very quiet son. In fact, I really like Roald, and I wish he'd been in Kel's books more. I know he couldn't have been, because Kel's story has to be different from Alanna's somehow (and it is!): STILL. There's a comment later, when the pages confront Joren and Co. for making life a misery at Midwinter, that says he's every bit as stubborn as his famous parents, and I just wish we'd gotten to see that more.

Side note: When Imrah of Legann chooses Roald to be his squire (breaking with tradition, blah blah - do we think Jon told Imrah he wanted to do things differently? How else did Imrah know to approach Roald?) - what does he call Roald?! Technically, Roald's in his service. And does Roald wear Legann colors?

(VERY IMPORTANT SIDE NOTE: Gary gives Kel a note to bring to the king atop Balor's Needle, even though it could wait until morning. ONLY GARY.)

Balor's Needle, though - I liked that plotline a lot, even though it's a bit of a Chekhov's gun, too. Somehow, Neal mentioning they can't be late to the exams and that a page once jumped off Balor's Needle doesn't feel as heavy-handed as Lalasa and Jump showing up within three pages of each other. And Kel's fear of heights is already established, and Gary casually makes her go up there - maybe it's just good writing, the way it's all intertwined.

The king gets Kel off the tower by taking her mind off what her body is doing: that's an interesting spell, and probably a powerful one (and one that we never see again, speaking of Chekhov's guns). It reminded me of the Imperius Curse, this time around.

Archery class followed weapons, then tilting. None of the pages ever expected anything new. In the fourth week of Kel's third year, however, Lord Wyldon turned creative.

(What does it say about me, that I read this thinking, "Hmmmm, not so conservative after all, huh?")

Time passes strangely in this book. The first book focused on a year; this goes through the remaining three years of Kel's page training, and it's only slightly longer than *First Test*.

But I like the description of the training. I like it a lot, even though there's a lot of "Kel is better than everyone her age." I especially like it when Wyldon finds out Kel's been using weighted training weapons and has no idea how to react. (That's some of the "Kel is better than everyone else" stuff that's actually earned. Joke's on you, Joren.)

(The archery master, in the middle of introducing their exciting new arrows, abruptly asks Quinden to name their three dangerous neighbors. I read *that* thinking about Legally Blonde and Emmett saying the professors

use the Socratic method. Random references abound in this review!)

On Joren: he tries to be friendlier - lol, Neal being "I myself have noticed my growing resemblance to a daffodil" - and yet he does so by assuring Kel that really she wants to get married, because all women do. I mean, obviously he's hopeless, and obviously we're supposed to take this as a sign he hasn't changed, because it's so stupidly sexist, but also: it's so stupidly sexist. I wish Joren was a *slightly* more nuanced character.

All these are miscellaneous points. I don't have any particular thoughts on the overarching plot, mostly because I think the plot is next-to-irrelevant and it's the character development that's important. That said, I do have one question on the plot: (view spoiler)

Anyway, despite sundry niggling concerns, I liked this a lot, because I like these people a lot. Cannot wait to reread *Squire*.

Andrea says

[WHY HAVEN'T ALANNA AND KELL MET? I NEEDE

Rachel E. Carter says

5 Perfect Stars Again!!!

Even more amazing follow up to the first in series. I've already fangirl'd really hard so if if you are interest in this series this is the review to read: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show....> I don't have the heart to do another GIF/quote-ladden review so just trust me, if you loved the first Kel book the second only gets better.

Connor says

It's no secret that Keladry of Mindelan is one of my all-time favorite fictional characters, nor is it a secret that I reread these books almost every year (sometimes more). All I can say is this: whenever I think I can pick a favorite book of this series, I am proved wrong when I start rereading; there is not a single chapter in this series that I dislike.

Page has long been a favorite, and remains so after this most recent re-read. I first read it in seventh grade (finished it during a boring Language Arts class by keeping it under my desk). I remember subtly (or maybe not so subtly; sorry, Mr. Hudson!) turning pages and trying not to cheer as I read the scene with the bandit fight in hill country; I remember being so engrossed I physically could NOT put the book down (thus the reading during class, which I had never previously done).

So, yes, I love this book. I have for over ten years. More than even that, though, this book reminds me WHY I can't pick a favorite Kel novel, and that's down to the characters. Every dynamic is thoughtfully created, and I always look forward to remembering why I love them--Kel's relationships with Neal, Owen, Lalasa, Wyldon, her mother... they're all carefully written and made, and each one fills this book with a certain joy

it's hard to find elsewhere.

ANYWAY TL;DR: DO YOURSELF A FAVOR AND READ TAMORA PIERCE'S PROTECTOR OF THE SMALL SERIES and then come talk to me about them because they are very near and dear to my heart.

Sophie says

WHYYYY isn't "Squire" waiting at the library for me yet? MUST READ NOW.

I continue to love this series. This one was the Puberty Book, in which Keladry grows breasts, gets her period, and starts attracting male attention. She's kind of oblivious to it, though, which is amusing. I hope she and Neal get to make out at some point.

Anyway, Kel gets a dog and a maid on the same day. The maid is Lalasa, a timid woman who slowly learns how to defend herself thanks to Kel's persistent teachings. The feminist threads woven through these books are a constant source of delight for me. (It might be cheesy, feel-good feminism, but I don't care. I love it.) Even Lord Wyldon, Kel's sexist training master, begins to respect her after she shows him several times that she's *awesome*.

The dog is Jump, and Kel rescues him from certain death by the butcher's axe after he's caught stealing sausages. She tries to give him to Daine, but Jump is having none of that and keeps coming back to her. Once again, it might be cheesy, but I can't get enough of the animals in these books, either. Pierce knows how to hit all my favorite buttons.

At the end, when (view spoiler)

There were a lot of great humorous moments in this book. Lalasa trying to figure out a tactful way to tell Keladry that she's grown breasts was hilarious. And I loved Owen introducing Lalasa later as someone who "is good at sewing and knows a lot of ways to hurt you."

I'm still convinced that Alanna is behind the anonymous gifts Kel continues to get, and I'm having a lot of fun imagining George's network of spies reporting back to him about how Kel is doing.

NEXT BOOK PLEASE.

Kayla Edwards says

Oh these books, every time I read them it's like visiting a best friend. I adore Kel today as much as I did when these books were first published; I will forever be grateful to Tamora Pierce for creating this fantastic heroine because "bless [her], [she is] real." Kel doesn't have the Gift or any wild magic to help her. She gets everything only through grimy, hard work and persistence just like the rest of us and I admire her so much for it. I reread these books ALL THE TIME because I need that. I need to know that I can crawl out of the mud and be my own hero - no magic required.

I. says

I really love Kel. Lalasa and Tianine should have been gay though tbh.

Nicole says

This one was even better! She has more friends, the challenges are different, she makes a female friend, she starts experiencing all kinds of ~lady~ things. Seriously, I love this series. I love that Kel's goal is to be a knight that defends the weak/small - she doesn't even just defend, she *teaches* others how to defend themselves. So good. Would recommend to all!

Lola says

Keladry is now a page. Although she is not on probation anymore, she still has to prove herself to her training master, teachers, peers and the king himself, seeing that unfortunately women do not become knights in Keladry's world, with the Lioness as the only exception so far.

But Keladry knows she can do it if she never loses sight of her goal and puts her mind and body to it. The training is rough, but she excels because she practices and perseveres. Sadly, her strength arouses jealousy in other classmates and her gender offends non-progressive men. These same men try everything in their power to ruin Keladry's chances at stepping up. Fortunately, she has friends by her side, one of them being her new maid, Lalasa.

While I enjoyed this one a little less than the first book, Tamora Pierce is so skilled with a pen (or keyboard?) that I simply found pleasure in reading about Keladry's new adventures and misadventures. In this sequel, she is growing not only mentally and physically but also in age. We follow her as she trains for almost three years. I liked that part, but surprisingly, in spite of the fact that the timeline was so long, I felt as though little of much importance happened. The storyline is filled with small events and only two or three main ones.

Even if this series is not a trilogy, I could compare PAGE with many second books, also known as middle books, that are part of a trilogy. It's still an essential sequel, seeing that Keladry learns what it means to be a girl and care for someone other than herself, but not one to which I could give the initial high rating I believed it would deserve.

Excited to learn what will occur in SQUIRE nonetheless. Keladry was made to be the heroine of this series and it shows.

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Anna says

'Page' is a worthy follow-up to First Test. The characters make it shine, and while Kel is a wonderful hero, it's the cast of secondary characters I'm especially fond of. I simply adore Neal, who is funny and quirky and just awesome. I love amiable and humorous Cleon and the way he uses flowery figures in his speech while talking with Kel. And I like Jump, the dog who is as much courageous and loyal as he is ugly. Most of all I love Lalasa. She isn't a warrior; she is shy, meek and soft-spoken maid who loves to sew, but she is still a great character, because you don't need to be a kick-ass fighter to be a good person.

I love Tortall books, and I love 'Protector of the Small' series, but there is a problem I'm having with them. So far, they are too similar to Alanna's series: there is a girl training to be a knight, facing challenging training and classwork and bullies. Even the very personalities of Kel and Alanna are somewhat alike. Yes, Kel is more patient while Alanna is impulsive, but they share the same determination and stubbornness. However, In the Hand of the Goddess, the second book of Alanna's series, had a war and a plot to overthrow the king, and 'Page' has no serious plot except for Kel proving herself again and again... what is something she had already done in 'The First Test'. As a point to Tamora Pierce, I should say that she came up with really creative training which doesn't feel like Alanna's. In Alanna's series pages and squires' training consisted mainly of swordwork, while here there are jousting, group exercises and classes on tactics and strategy. True, the fight with the bandits near the middle of the book was quite exciting, but only episodic, and the climax of the story was excellent, even if not action-filled... but I missed having the grand plot in the book.

Rachael (RedRchlReads) says

4 Stars!

Page picks up in the summer immediately after First Test. It moves a lot faster and covers the second and third years of Keladry's time as a Page. It continues with many of the same themes as the first book, but expands to touch on subjects outside of focusing solely the Pages' training.

Becoming a woman and being a woman in a man's world are issues not shied away from. I love how Keladry still insists on wearing her dresses to dinner so that the boys do not forget that a girl can do everything they can, as well as still be a lady. It does not have to be one or the other. We continue to see Keladry in a fighter and protector role, not only for herself, but for those who cannot fight as well. Here is where we really start to see why this series is the Protector of the Small quartet.

Keladry also continues to grow in her Page skills, learning strategy and facing down her fears as often as she can. Her friendships continue to grow and change, as well as her relationships with her teachers and even the animals. (Yay! More Peachblossom, sparrows, and Jump!)

Overall, another solid Tortall book that would be great for middle grade girls and boys alike.

Emma Larkins says

Everyone should read Tamora Pierce. Not just fantasy readers, not just young readers, but anyone who

enjoys a good tale. And who doesn't? If you've read Tamora Pierce, then you already know what I mean.

Tamora never tries to win an award for the most confuscated use of the English language. She never lets language get in the way of her story. She writes her books in a simple, honest way to hook her readers into a fascinating tale. And she succeeds brilliantly in doing so.

In *Page*, Tamora Pierce gets back to the very essence of storytelling - a young hero must prove herself in the face of seeming unbeatable odds to achieve her goal. In this case, the hero is a female page struggling to gain her knighthood. Tamora is not afraid to touch on difficult subjects such as discrimination, abuse, and death. She creates strong, unique female heroines who fight against oppression, and yet the appeal of her books is not limited to a female audience. Who among us has not felt held down by seemingly unbeatable odds? Who has not wished for the strength to pursue an impossible-seeming dream? Tamora's characters pursue their dreams with strength and grim determination, and in doing so, make us believe that we too can achieve our dreams if we stick by them.

I read Tamora's books as a child and found myself unable to put them down, and even a decade later I get the same thrill as her characters fall in love, escape from danger, or rush into battle. Rare is the author who can so completely captivate a reader's attention.

It's no wonder that Tamora's books have all recently been re-released. And to boot, Tamora is kind to fans and frequently appears at conferences, book-signings and conventions! If you're looking for a new author to love, look no further.

Jackie B. - *Death by Tsundoku* says

From the beginning, Pierce continues to show how different the experiences of Alanna and Kel are. While Kel matures she does reflect a few of Alanna's more obvious traits-- such as willing herself not to be a woman (but at least when Kel begins her "monthlies" she already knows all about them, unlike Alanna who thought she was dying) and being incredibly stubborn and headstrong. However, Kel is still obviously developing into her own woman. Constantly being presented with ethical dilemmas, we get inside Kel's head. She spends time considering all her options, and only occasionally acknowledges the fury and impulsive side of her. Her Yamani training is key to the calm at the center of who Kel is; she is shaping up to be a strong, compassionate woman.

Experiences as a page are also described very differently from those Alanna experienced. After the Immortals War, Lord Wyldon the training master changed a lot of how knight training is handled. I learned a lot more in this book about using a lance, riding horses, strategies, and more compared to *The Song of the Lioness* quartet. It's obvious that Pierce spent a lot of time and effort researching these training techniques. Plus, the story has changed a bit to focus more of the experience of being a page. Kel and her friends have study sessions and schedules, giving this a more formal school feeling than we experienced in the previous books.

The only thing I really felt limited the story for me was the pacing. As with many other books Pierce has written, three years pass within these pages. That feels a bit slow after the single year contained in *First Test*, but not abnormal. Yet, when I got to chapter twelve I about choked. *Vanishing Year*. What? Her entire third year is more or less passed over in a few short pages. It's like Pierce acknowledge that her pacing was wrong. Super strange.

I can't wait to see how Kel manages as a Squire. I have predictions on who will become her knight-master, and who her benefactor is, and I can't wait to find all this out! Bring on Squire.

Vickie says

I like the character better in this book, it's true. Kel grows on you, even if she is a portmanteau mashup hybrid thing of Daine and Alanna.

However, the structure in Page is abysmal. There's a chronological order to things, but while she goes through two years of her training, there's only enough plot for one. Summer break happens in the middle. She gets taller. Whoopee.

The climactic event comes out of nowhere because never is there any indication her aggressors are smart enough to pull anything like it off, and it isn't clearly resolved that the suspects are the perpetrators (well, the masterminds anyhow) in the first place. I suppose this means that will be formally settled in later books.

Also, the dramatic irony of Kel's rampant ignorance in even guessing that Alanna could be sending her gifts is thin and not at all a source of tension or even interest at this point. I wish there had been more on how Alanna is receiving information about Kel, rather than how expensive and beautiful her gifts are.

(Yes, I'm going through my and my roommates' bookshelves for things I haven't yet read and a lot of that is Young Adult fiction. My library's copies of my to-read list are checked out until after Christmas. Deal with it.)
