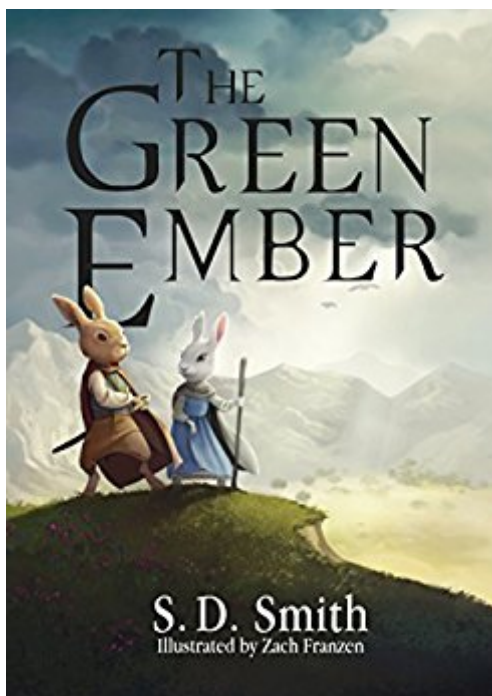


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The Green Ember (The Green Ember Series Book 1)



Synopsis

Heather and Picket are extraordinary rabbits with ordinary lives until calamitous events overtake them, spilling them into a cauldron of misadventures. They discover that their own story is bound up in the tumult threatening to overwhelm the wider world. Kings fall and kingdoms totter. Tyrants ascend and terrors threaten. Betrayal beckons, and loyalty is a broken road with peril around every bend. Where will Heather and Picket land? How will they make their stand?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A new story with an old soul. That's how this book has been described by others who have fallen in love with it and I could not agree more. I was surprised to find something that reminded me, powerfully, of Edith Nesbit, CS Lewis and George MacDonald - while being something completely different at the same time. A hero story, this is more Hobbit than Watership Down. More Narnia than Beatrix Potter. And it works. I was skeptical because I usually prefer my animal characters to be of the James Herriot kind - rather than the talking Beaver kind. But, this, like Lewis, somehow lets us

forget that Heather and Picket are animals and instead we relate to the heroes in these interesting characters. I had a hard time getting into the story. Because I had no idea what the intention was, I struggled in the first few chapters. They were almost too pastoral for me. Looking backwards, I understand now that they are in fact much like the beginning of *The Hobbit* - the innocence of the Shire (I mean Nick Hollow) must be acknowledged before the adventure can begin. Once Picket and Heather are on the run, the story comes alive. I have waited weeks to write this review because I want so badly to communicate the profound value of this humble and tender little story. Even two months later, words fail me. Heather and Picket are unwitting participants in an adventure that transforms them into the very best versions of themselves - in the old fashioned way. They suffer much. They struggle against themselves. They humble themselves. They confront their own worst attributes. And they do it with the help of incredible mentors and new friends who have their own complex histories. There is so much to love about this book. It feeds the imagination, nourishes the soul and fortifies the character of the reader. S.D. Smith is the creative force behind Story Warren - a website dedicated to being the horns of Rohan in our lives as we seek stories of truth, goodness and beauty that point our children to the Maker. There is a sincerity in S.D. Smith's writing that makes the reader feel like they too could be the heroes of their own stories. Like the greats that Smith loves (Tolkien, Lewis, etc.), he tells stories worth knowing. Stories which inform the moral imagination and continue to speak to the reader long after the book has been returned to the shelf. It is exactly as S.D. Smith says at Story Warren - they are on our side. They are allies in imagination. I have been asked about the intensity level of this book. I would put it at the same level as *The Last Battle*. My four year old had no problem with this book but he is not particularly sensitive. I think that it is fair to say that the intensity progresses as follows: *Narnia* *The Green Ember* *The Black Star of Kingston* *The Hobbit* *The Wingfeather Saga* *The Lord of the Rings*

"My place beside you, my blood for yours. Till the Green Ember rises or the end of the world!" So ends the prologue to *The Green Ember*. What a start! S.D. Smith's debut novel stands in stark contrast to most contemporary middle school fiction. Courage, loyalty, wisdom, and hope abound. Classic virtues are esteemed. It is moral without moralizing. It is dramatic without resorting to preteen angst. It is swashbuckling without glorifying violence. Good is good and evil is evil. Clearly Smith is influenced by Lewis' *Narnia*, but this isn't derivative fan fiction. Smith has created a new world that stands on its own inhabited by wonderful and sometimes terrifying characters. Heather and Picket are young rabbits who are dragged into world events much larger themselves. Their journey begins as their parents are visited by mysterious strangers, and their father hints that the

family history may be tinged with intrigue, betrayal, and great pain. Within the first few pages, Smith launches the reader along with Heather and Picket on a fast-paced flight away from their home and headlong toward something momentous. From labyrinths to hidden kingdoms, our heroes travel toward their destiny. Along the way they meet wonderful characters like the unexpectedly capable Smalls whose own path may be more dangerous than theirs. There is the dark and mysterious Helmer whose mastery of the arts of war draw Picket out from the prison of crippling self-indulgence and sets him on a trajectory of great danger and self-sacrifice. The wise Maggie O'Sage and Uncle Wilfred set hope firmly within their hearts. Despite living in a blighted world surrounded by foes and treachery, Heather, Picket, and their new friends hold firmly to that hope. Till the Green Ember rises or the End of the World! The Green Ember is at its core simply a good story. I recommend it as a read-aloud for younger children or a self-serve novel for middle schoolers. The reading level is comparable to the Chronicles of Narnia. My small kids love it. Rabbits with swords! What's not to love? [Disclosure: I am related by marriage to the author. This relationship has not affected my objectivity when observing my children beg, "Please just one more chapter!"]

Loved this book! After reading this, I knew that my 9 year old granddaughter would love it. She is a huge Narnia fan and a voracious reader. So I ordered a second book for her because I wanted to keep my copy. ~Smile~ My only complaint is that the author really should have the sequel ready for publication before selling this book. My anticipation level for the next "tale" is running high. Not really a true cliffhanger, but definitely left an appetite for more of this saga.

Okay, I'm a 42 year old father of 4. I have 3 daughters (16, 7, and 5) and one son (13). I saw this while browsing on and thought, "The cover looks cool. Hmm.. the reviews are good. I wonder if the kids would like to read this?" Well, I decided to take it for a test spin, so to speak, and, as it turns out, I loved it! I'm probably going to need to edit this review later after I read this out loud with my younger daughters and give their reaction but I thought S. D. Smith did a great job. There's an epic feeling here and the characters are just great. The illustrations are sure to pull your kids in--they're great. Anyway, I can't wait to read this with my kids and to continue the adventure with Picket, Heather, and the rest of the outstanding cast of characters. Check it out!

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