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Summerland



Synopsis

Ethan Feld is bad at baseball. Hopeless, even. But when his father mysteriously disappears, Ethan is recruited to save him and the world by traveling the baseball-obsessed Summerlands to stop Coyote, the trickster, from unmaking existence. With help from a ragtag group of friends he meets along the way, Ethan must not only find his father and stop Coyote, but also master his position on the field. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Michael Chabon has created a distinctly American fantasy experience with baseball at its heart.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In *Summerland*, his first novel for young readers, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Michael Chabon attempts an American Narnia. Inspired by Lewis and Tolkien, he's created his own magical landscape on which to paint a sweeping fantasy quest, but mixes the same ingredients--folklore and new inventions--in a distinctively American way. The plot is simple and pure, but takes a long time to tell. The setting is Clam Island, Washington, specifically the area on the western tip of the island known as the Summerlands, which enjoys zero rainfall and yearlong fine weather. Ethan Feld, a self-described really bad ball player, is recruited by a 100-year-old scout called Mr. Chiron "Ringfinger" Brown. Ethan is needed to help the ferishers, essentially fairies, to save their world from eradication. On the great infinite tree of worlds, Summerland is on the boundary between two such worlds, and a particularly destructive fairy called Coyote and his band of warriors are nearby and threatening to destroy everything. Heroes are desperately needed to counter this threat, and their

journey involves a lot of baseball, but also encounters with giants, bat-winged goblins, sea monsters, and assorted cunning magic. The novel features an ensemble cast of equal parts that shine and fade in turn, and yet the undoubtedly fine writing fails to mask the enormity and complexities of the world in which they travel, and the bad guys getting their comeuppance always seems so far away. Readers need to savor every word in Summerland to extract the best flavors from it. (Ages 10 and older.) --John McLay, .co.uk --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In his debut novel for young readers, Pulitzer Prize winner Chabon (*The Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*) hits a high-flying home run, creating a vivid fantasy where baseball is king. Following the death of his mother, 11-year-old Ethan Feld and his father, a designer of lighter-than-air-dirigibles move to Clam Island, Wash. The island is known for its almost constant rain, save for an area on its westernmost tip called Summerland by the locals which "knew a June, July and August that were perfectly dry and sunshiny." In Summerland, Ethan struggles to play baseball for the Ruth's Fluff and Fold Roosters, with dismal results. But here, too, a mystical baseball scout recruits Ethan and escorts him through a gateway to a series of interconnected worlds that are home to magical creatures called ferishers and an evil, shape-changing overlord called Coyote. Ethan and two of his fellow teammates soon accept a mission to save these other worlds (plus the one they live in) from ultimate destruction at Coyote's hand. When his father's well-being is also threatened, Ethan's quest becomes all the more urgent. To succeed, Ethan and his friends must find a way to beat giants, ferishers and others in a series of games where striking out truly has apocalyptic implications. Chabon unspools an elaborate yarn in a style that frequently crackles with color and surprise. He occasionally addresses readers directly, imbuing his tale with the aura of something that has been passed down through the ages. Impressively, the author takes a contemporary smalltown setting and weaves in baseball history, folklore and environmental themes, to both challenge and entertain readers. Images of the icy Winterlands and beasts like the werefox and Taffy the motherly Sasquatch recall C.S. Lewis's *Narnia* and some of Philip Pullman's creations in *His Dark Materials*. Devotees of the genre and of America's pastime will find much to cheer here. All ages. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Very different from other Chabon novels, it is nonetheless excellent because of his writing is superb.

Just didn't catch my imagination as I thought it would.

I would give this wonderful book 10 stars if I could. Just beautiful.

Terrific story by a writer who clearly loves baseball and mythology. My eight-year-old daughter loves it. If you are very unfamiliar with baseball and don't want to have it as part of the story then this might not be the book for you. Otherwise, it's a fun, very well written book with themes and characters that go well beyond baseball or anything else.

There were two factors that I thought would make this book good: Michael Chabon is a great writer, and baseball was a big part of the plot. Even though the book was billed as a young adults book, I thought it would be entertaining. I was wrong. Summerland is too long and just too unimaginative to entertain an adult.

I loved Chabon's "Kavalier & Clay" and was really excited when I read he was writing a book for young adults. I felt really mixed about the result. First off, I think it's unfair to make the immediate comparison to the young wizard at Hogwarts. Those books are just in a different and unstoppable class of their own. That said I think Chabon's fantasy of a boy named Ethan Feld who has to save the world through baseball has moments of charm and imagination. The alternative world that Ethan travels to is inhabited by all kinds of mythical creatures such as werewolves, giants, and even a Sasquatch. But for me I didn't find the story all that compelling. Yes, there's a villain who's more or less the devil, but we barely see him or his nasty deeds so he never is quite as ominous as he should be. Plus there's never a real concern that Ethan and his friends won't complete their various tasks, and at the end of the day everything will be fine. On another note, since the book relies so much on the playing of baseball, if you're not a fan you may find that element a turn off. It's a fine young adult book. But beyond Potter I'd try Phillip Pullman's world for a richer and deeply imagined world.

What a fun book! Even more fun since I am pretty well versed in the fables and Norse mythology that it is based on. Quite an engaging tale, even for an adult. I had a lot of fun reading this :-)

I wanted to read a nice book about baseball, since I'm writing something that has a bit of baseball in it. The fantasy aspect of the book was a surprise, but it was fun.

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