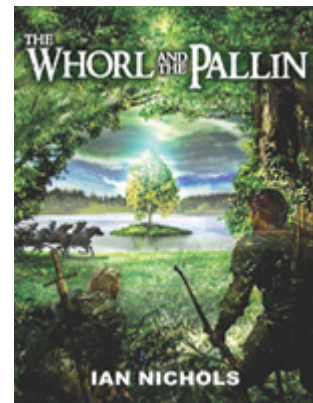




The Whorl and the Pallin

Author: Ian Nichols
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Review by Jonathan Dean:

The Whorl and the Pallin is an interesting read, in that it is officially classed as a Young Adult book, but there are elements in it that are brutal and violent, and contains some concepts that most teenagers won't be familiar with in detail. Definitely a challenging read, but worthwhile to complete. This is the author's first full novel, and it does fit the generic pattern of hero is discovered, goes on quest with others, resolves the situation, saves the world for goodness and light, but there is more in the work than you expect. The gods are real, or at least their magic and illusions are. When people get old enough, they are bound and sealed to a god, enabling them to see the magic cast, but there are a few people who are unsealed, and they can't see magic or illusions at all. Imagine being blind to the wonders of magic, which is all around you, even as your neighbours gasp in awe and wonder.

Tom, the main character, is on the street, stealing food to survive, when he is almost caught, and whilst running away, is pressed into the army to serve the Empire. After training, he and his mates are sent to stop an invasion, but in the process they are nearly all wiped out. After they hold the invaders long enough they are saved by reinforcements and Tom is declared to be a hero. Sent to the Capital for reward, he spots an assassin trying to kill the Emperor, and stops him, even after he realises that he is the only one who can actually see the killer. It is at this point when Tom realises that being immune to illusion can possibly be helpful, not a cause to be spurned by others, as has happened to him during his whole life. Deciding to make use of this power, the Emperor sends him on a quest to prevent the source of magic being tainted and corrupted by the Whorl.

Set in a medieval style world, where rival powers are using politics, force and magic to achieve their aims and goals, this is a well written book, intriguing in the concepts it puts forward, detailed in description, and well written, in that makes a whole world come to life in a believable manner. It also raises some interesting questions, including ones of where people can fit into their society, and what you may have to do to achieve a goal in life, not to mention the costs.