



The Amulet of Samarkand: A Bartimaeus Novel, Book 1

By Jonathan Stroud

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Nathaniel is a magician's apprentice, taking his first lessons in the arts of magic. But when a devious hot-shot wizard named Simon Lovelace ruthlessly humiliates Nathaniel in front of his elders, Nathaniel decides to kick up his education a few notches and show Lovelace who's boss. With revenge on his mind, he summons the powerful djinni, Bartimaeus. But summoning Bartimaeus and controlling him are two different things entirely, and when Nathaniel sends the djinni out to steal Lovelace's greatest treasure, the Amulet of Samarkand, he finds himself caught up in a whirlwind of magical espionage, murder, and rebellion.

Includes a preview chapter from *The Golem's Eye*, the second book in the series!

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Nathaniel is a boy magician-in-training, sold to the government by his birth parents at the age of five and sent to live as an apprentice to a master. Powerful magicians rule Britain, and its empire, and Nathaniel is told his is the "ultimate sacrifice" for a "noble destiny." If leaving his parents and erasing his past life isn't tough enough, Nathaniel's master, Arthur Underwood, is a cold, condescending, and cruel middle-ranking magician in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The boy's only saving grace is the master's wife, Martha Underwood, who shows him genuine affection that he rewards with fierce devotion. Nathaniel gets along tolerably well over the years in the Underwood household until the summer before his eleventh birthday. Everything changes when he is publicly humiliated by the ruthless magician Simon Lovelace and betrayed by his cowardly master who does not defend him.

Nathaniel vows revenge. In a Faustian fever, he devours magical texts and hones his magic skills, all the while trying to appear subservient to his master. When he musters the strength to summon the 5,000-year-old djinni Bartimaeus to avenge Lovelace by stealing the powerful Amulet of Samarkand, the boy magician plunges into a situation more dangerous and deadly than anything he could ever imagine. In British author Jonathan Stroud's excellent novel, the first of *The Bartimaeus Trilogy*, the story switches back and forth from Bartimaeus's first-person point of view to third-person narrative about Nathaniel. Here's the best part: Bartimaeus is absolutely hilarious, with a wit that snaps, crackles, and pops. His dryly sarcastic, irreverent asides spill out into copious footnotes that no one in his or her right mind would skip over. A sophisticated, suspenseful, brilliantly crafted, dead-funny book that will leave readers anxious for more. (Ages 11 to adult)
--*Karin Snelson*

From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 6-12. Picture an alternative London where the Parliament, composed of powerful magicians, rules the British empire. When five-year-old Nathaniel's parents sell him to the government to become a magician's apprentice, the boy is stripped of his past and is given over for training to a grim, mid-level magician from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Over the next seven years, Nathaniel studies the lessons given by his cold master, but in secret he delves into advanced magic books, gaining skill beyond his years: he summons a djinn to steal the powerful amulet of Samarkand. Inspired by a desire for revenge, this bold act leads to danger and death. Nathaniel's third-person narrative alternates with the first-person telling of Bartimaeus the djinn, a memorable and highly entertaining character. Rude, flippant, and cocky, his voice reflects the injustice of his millennia of service to powerful magicians who have summoned him to do their capricious bidding. His informative and sometimes humorous asides appear in footnotes, an unusual device in fiction, but one that serves a useful purpose here. Stroud creates a convincingly detailed secondary world with echoes of actual history and folklore. The strong narrative thrust of the adventure will keep readers involved, but the trouble that is afoot in London extends beyond the exploits here. The unresolved mysteries will be more fully explored in the next two volumes of the trilogy. One of the liveliest and most inventive fantasies of recent years. *Carolyn Phelan*

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Review

"Harry Potter has a new challenger...if you haven't heard of him yet, you will." -- *The New York Post*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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