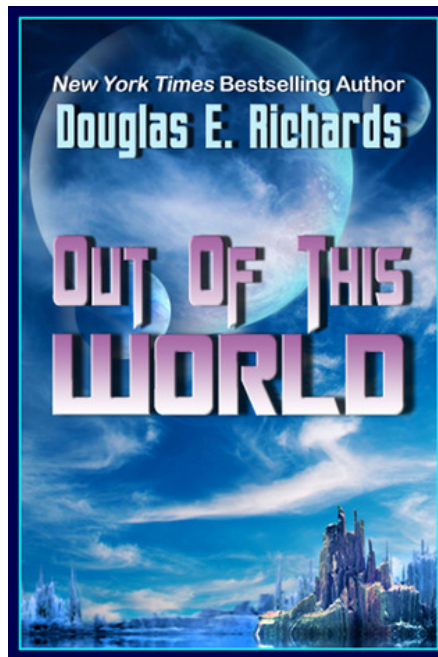




Out of This World

Douglas E. Richards

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The latest from New York Times bestselling author, Douglas E. Richards, *Out of This World* is a wildly entertaining science fiction/fantasy adventure for kids and adults alike.

Ages 9 to adult

To save their parents they will have to travel to unknown worlds. Too bad the natives on each world all seem to want them dead . . .

Zachary and Jenna Lane are a brother and sister pair who would much rather tease and trick each other than work together. But when their parents vanish before their eyes through a mysterious shimmering portal, the two kids join forces and adventure through a series of fantastic worlds in an effort to rescue them.

But each world is more treacherous than the last, and staying alive for even a day will prove to be the ultimate test of their wits, courage, and determination. And when they finally puzzle out what is happening to them and why, the impossible happens: things get even worse. Because far more is at stake than just their lives. And the odds against them could not be any greater . . .

Out of This World is a fast-paced adventure sure to delight young and old alike, packed with breakneck action, brilliant escapes, thrilling cliffhangers, and plenty of heart.

For a simple list of all novels by Douglas E. Richards, see "About the Author" below.

Out of This World Details

Date : Published May 24th 2012 by Paragon Press

ISBN :

Author : Douglas E. Richards

Format : ebook 250 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Science Fiction, Childrens, Science Fiction Fantasy, Fiction

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From Reader Review Out of This World for online ebook

Ginifer says

I don't typically read middle grade books, but I am so glad I read this one. Just. Wow. *Out of This World* is incredible! It's chock-full of adventure, creatures, different worlds, portals, teleportation, action, and, best of all, two children learning life's lessons along the way.

The positive messages in this book are very well-written, without being after-school-special-ish. Not only do Zachary and Jenna learn not to judge based on appearances or assumptions, but they also learn to appreciate each other, their parents, the miracle of life and living things, and really just everything people typically take for granted. Zack and Jenna also realize their flaws and work to overcome them. I adore Zack and Jenna. It's so sweet that Zack helps his little sister overcome her self-doubt.

The descriptions and world-building are wonderful; I was able to "see" the creatures and surroundings as though I were there with them. The siblings visit several different worlds, but my absolute favorite was the pitch-black cave. The trees there are described as having "white branches with delicate, perfectly formed transparent leaves, outlined in silver along their edges." And the leaves glow from within and are shaped like butterfly wings. Sounds gorgeous, right? I think so. :)

And here is my daughter, Anna, giving an 11 yr old's opinion...

"This book was great because there were many life lessons to be learned. There were also many adventures and brave feats accomplished along the way. One of my favorite ones was when Jenna and Zachary answered the riddles to save their lives. My ABSOLUTE favorite world was Tular's world. My favorite characters were: Zachary, Jenna, Wyland, Tular, and Lisgar. Oh, and the cover is AWESOME! This is a book for young readers [especially 11 year olds] ;). But my mom loved it, too, and it's definitely a book I will reread throughout my life."

She knows awesome is misspelled, but it's a kid thing. Anyway, she actually rated it 6 out of 5 stars and devoured it in less than 24 hours. She had my iPod in one hand while loading the dishwasher with the other!

We both love this book and highly recommend it!!!

*The author provided me with this ebook in exchange for a fair and honest review. My rating of this book was not influenced in any way by receiving the review copy. I did not receive, nor did the author offer, any incentive for a favorable review.

This review is a shorter version of the original on my blog. To see the full review, click [HERE](#).

Cordenne says

Out of This World is an awesome book. Zachary and Jenna are both bright kids who after witnessing their parents fall into a giant hole in the middle of their kitchen, decide to go in after them. Trying to find their parents, Zachary and Jenna go through portals exploring many diverse worlds all varying significantly in some way. They learn to work together to help themselves in any danger that appears. Towards the end of their journey Zachary sees an important lesson and helps Jenna realize it for herself. Simultaneously, Zachary makes an important discovery about where they are and why. This lively book includes lovely riddles, thoughtful tricks, wonderful metaphors, terrific palindromes, and other grand

puzzles.[return][return]The author, Douglas E. Richards, has created other literary works both for children and adults alike. And I'm positive- considering I found this book so excellent- that his other books are just as fun and entertaining and I hope to read them all!

Emil Girardin says

What a fun book! Suspense, thrills, and 10 riddles (as well as countless other clever solutions to "out of this world" problems) are in store for you when you pick up and read this gem by Douglas E. Richards. My 11-year old son and I both thought this book was great fun for both adults and kids. Similar to The Prometheus Project, Book 1: Trapped and the rest of the Prometheus Project series, the two main characters face alien technology and problems in this off-world adventure.

Silver says

This is a perfect read for someone who appreciates witty humor and wants a quick, fun read. This book is suited for 9 year olds and adults (so not totally restricted to young adults).

The Good:

-I liked the sibling rivalry between Zachary and Jenna. At their age, there is no way you have siblings that don't fight or at least tease each other. I fight with my sis and bros everyday (in good fun of course). The teasing and rivalry made this book more realistic, more grounded.

-They have a brain! I am sick and tired of main characters who just can't grasp common sense. Example plot: 25% of a book will be them making the mistake and the other 75% will be them regretting their mistake and not doing anything about it until the last 10 pages of the book!! Not only do these two kids understand the simplest things, they even solve ridiculously twisted riddles (I have new riddles to tell people now >:D). It was entertaining to see how this duo solved all the obstacles in this story.

-I also applaud Richards for his plot twists. They definitely surprised me and kept me on my toes.

Me while going through intergalactic portals with Zachary and Jenna:

The Bad:

-It's normal for arrogant main characters to be cocky and regret their decisions, but the way Zachary's remorse over his actions seemed so forced. A normal kid his age wouldn't really contemplate that deeply over his actions especially all the wrong-doings he's ever done to Jenna. His thoughts vs his actions really confused me. Like a 13 going on 40 year old. Parents would LOVE their kids to self-reflect the way Zachary does (not gonna happen moms and dads).

-The chapter formula became redundant. Except for the last part of the story, it seemed that the end of every chapter introduced a new (apparently) life-changing crisis for Zachary and Jenna. They would solve that problem in the beginning/middle of the next chapter. What annoyed me was that Zachary and Jenna treated each problem in the beginning as an obstacle they could never overcome. Introducing Drama Prince Zach

and Drama Princess Jenna. The formula goes: problem, [next chapter] drama moment (hopelessness), revelation, solution (happiness), problem [next chapter]. Over and over again, in every new planet/world they went to, this endless cycle continued to bore me.

Overview: If you have some time on a Sunday Afternoon (my favorite time), I would recommend reading this light and humorous book. All ages will enjoy it. Lots of creative ideas and new world to explore!

This review is also on my blog: Hidden Adventures of a Teenage Reader

(book given free in exchange for an honest review)

Guy says

What a story!

This is REQUIRED reading for every family!

I can't wait to read it with my Grandkids. It presents the ABSOLUTE definition of a family. Please join me in spreading the word. It is worth its weight in gold!

Susan says

juvenile sci fi age 9 and up.

Terry McMullen says

Love the author this story was just too adolescent for me.

Gary Davis says

It's a scanner

Not my type of sci-fi. I hope the next book of his I read is one of those where he shows me his research.

Shannon says

Out of This World follows the tradition of young adult classics such as "A Wrinkle in Time" and "The Chronicles of Narnia." While not as laden with symbolism or complex narrative structure as these well-loved gems, "Out of This World" evokes the same wonderment of worlds familiar and far, and of characters for whom it is who are easy to cheer and with whom it is easy to sympathize. The pacing of the story encourages the reader to continue on into the next chapter and leaves one waiting for the next novel anxiously.[return][return]The action engages as its main characters, Zachary and Jenna, jump from world to

world and from one civilization to the next with only a few pages in between. However, the true compulsion of the novel derives from its narrative themes. Zachary and Jenna begin the story in competition with each other and with the rest of the world. As the story progresses, they continually are forced to choose: will they be adversaries or teammates? This challenge heightens in each new world. Should they assume each new being they meet is friend or foe? And, how does one tell the difference? Is it possible to ignore one's instincts? The dilemma of how to recognize friends from enemies is one with which each of us struggles each day. During the age group at which this novel is targeted, this issue becomes urgent and identity-defining. As we use art to help us understand the questions we face, a novel which both reassures and coaxes an emerging adult into becoming a fair, kind, and just person is not only important, but pivotal.

The novel's other central theme revolves around the question of how one learns to trust and value one's self, despite or perhaps because of each person's different gifts and weaknesses. Far from celebrating uniformity, *Out of This World* embraces the disparate abilities between people and cultures, demonstrating how these differences create texture and strength, and even more importantly, how we can choose to allow these unique characteristics to destroy us - or to fortify us.

Finally, the novel is fun. It is pure pleasure to watch Zachary and Jenna mature, solve riddles and puzzles, overcome obstacles, and explore each other and themselves. In our culture where books are often assigned and dissected by schoolwork, rendering them tedious and uninspiring, a good read keeping kids on the edge of their seats and gasping in surprise is a lovely gateway into a lifetime of reading, just for the fun of it.

Rachelle says

This book was amazing! I'm not usually a fan of science fiction, but I won a copy of this book as an author giveaway over at LibraryThing and thought I'd give it a go.

First, the author has an incredible imagination and gift of being able to show the reader exactly what he's seeing. Every chapter had a twist or turn, and I could picture in my mind everything from the landscape to the new life forms as the plot progressed. Second, the ending was totally unpredictable, at least for someone who isn't familiar with the sci fi genre. The book is middle-grade but I am confident that adults will enjoy it as well.

Anya says

Out of This World is a middle-grade adventure story about a brother and sister who must travel to other worlds to save their parents. In order to succeed they must be clever, kind and brave, and perhaps figure out why all of this is happening in the first place!

I received *Out of This World* for review and didn't actually realize it was a middle-grade novel before starting it. It became fairly obvious as I read through, but it's definitely one of those books that you have to keep pushing through to the end because it all makes much more sense and reaches a whole new level of awesome!

Goodreads

Title: *Out of This World*

Author: Douglas E. Richards

Pages: 215 (ebook)

Genre-ish: Middle-grade alien-worlds adventure!

Rating: ★★★★★ - Fun characters, typical beginning and middle, awesome ending!

Setting: Out of This World starts on Earth as we know it, but proceeds to take place on a variety of alien worlds with everything from transparent mammals to giant wasps to kangaroo-legged owl-men. All of these worlds have portals that semi-randomly appear, which are what connect the worlds ;-).

Premise: Out of This World focuses on the adventures of two kids: Zachary and Jenna. After dinner one night a strange portal appears underneath their parents, sucking them into another world. Zach and Jenna realize that they must go in and try to find their parents. What they end up finding is adventure after adventure as well as finding out a lot more about themselves along the way!

Strengths:

Out of This World tells a great story about brother and sister. I am an only child and I found myself really appreciating the bond that Richards was able to build between the two main characters.

Jenna starts off with very low self-esteem, but finds a whole lot of self-confidence as the book progresses and is a great role-model for girls who don't think they are smart enough.

Quick pacing and constant adventure make Out of This World a fast and fun read.

Middle-grade language and peril also contribute to the light and fun feel.

Weaknesses:

While the end strongly makes up for it, the middle chunk of this book is pretty typical for a middle-grade story, making it less compelling for adult readers until the last third.

There are times when the characters feel the need to explain words or plot points to the reader, which is obviously to help newer readers, but this probably could have been done more subtly; show not tell and all ;-).

I really wish Richards had brought all his awesome creativity into the book earlier. While the worlds he comes up with are interesting, the adventures play out like those weekly TV shows and are just a little too predictable, even though this gets explained later. Just push through! It's worth it!

Summary:

I'm not the kind of person that reads middle-grade novels for fun, but after reading Out of This World by Douglas E. Richards I do understand their appeal to readers of all ages. Out of This World is fun and light, if a bit typical for the first two-thirds, but more than makes up for that with the ending! If you are up for skipping over some info-dumps and plot-explanations, Out of This World is great book for easy reading.

Tona says

I won this book through a Librarything giveaway.

I loved this book. I read it in a day. I think my 9 yr old nephew is going to love it too. I can't wait for him to read it. It made me chuckle a few times and it brought back memories of my brother and I. Great book with great lessons.

D.L. Morrese says

Zachary & Jenna are having breakfast when suddenly there is a shimmering in the air and their parents disappear. What are two bright middle school kids to do but jump through after them? Well....

It's certainly noble but they are just kids, so they don't even pack a lunch, a change of clothes, a flashlight, or even a toothbrush (which made me wonder how bright they really were).

They find themselves transported to another world and almost run over by a pair of transparent (literally) people who seemingly don't welcome their presence and encourage them to leave through another shimmering portal. Thus, their adventure begins, jumping through portals in search of their parents, and finding themselves in different worlds populated with strange and often dangerous creatures.

Each encounter provides a simple, ethical lesson about cooperation, overcoming prejudice, positive thinking, intelligence, loyalty, caring, responsibility, or understanding. These aren't quite 'bang you over the head' morality tales, but they are definitely geared toward younger readers. Still, they are endearing and entertaining to even older readers.

So far, so good. The characters are simple but believable, the settings are well constructed, the plot flows smoothly and logically... for about 80% of the way through.

If you don't want a spoiler, stop reading this review now.

Still with me? You sure? I'm going to reveal the ending. I don't often do this, but this one rather bugged me.

If you don't want to know, stop reading this.

Okay. You can't say I didn't warn you.

It's all 'magic.' The beings that abducted their parents used 'magic,' and they don't know how it (or much of anything else) works. That's about all the explanation we get. It's not quite as bad as saying it was all a dream, but it's close. There is nothing about parallel worlds, multiple dimensions, or holes in space-time. All we get for an explanation for how all this happened is that it was 'magic.' Humans can do magic too, but the Earth has an anti-magic field around it that makes it almost impossible. Oh, and the San Andreas fault is not really a geological fault line between continental plates, it's a magically sensitive area that will rupture if the aliens prevent portals from opening between their world and ours.

After the first 80% of the book in which our two heroes act with bravery, reason out problems, and demonstrate a considerable amount of highly ethical behavior, to have this all trumped by 'magic' was something of a letdown and, at least to me, seemed to nullify the moral lessons in the book. Yes, learning, reasoning, and ethical behavior are fine, but magic is easier and so much more convenient. If you have magic, you don't need all that other stuff. That's how the aliens live, in any case, and humans can be just like them.

I found the first part of this book engaging and well done for a middle grade book. The ending, I felt, was something of a cop out.

This is, of course, my personal opinion, and I do tend to be a bit tough when it comes to fantasy novels.

Robert says

Fast, easy and exciting reading

Great 'youth' reading. My youth is 50 years ago. But this quality story is what I'd prefer to read as opposed to the last three books I deleted off my Kindle without completing them. In truth, I almost cancelled my Kindle Unlimited subscription. Glad I found Mr. Richard's works.

Douglas Richards says

Hi, this really isn't a review, it's just me alerting anyone who is following me that I have a new book out (there is probably a better way to do this, but I'm pretty clueless when it comes to this stuff).

Anyway, the book is called Out of This World, and I'd like to think both kids and adults will really get a kick out of it.

Doug
