



# Firebrand

*Antony John*

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In this sequel to the dystopian fantasy-adventure ELEMENTAL, which James Dashner called "fantastic," the stakes are life-or-death and nothing is as it appears to be.

Thomas and his friends have rescued the Guardians and commandeered the pirates' ship, but the pirates still hold fast to Roanoke Island. Using his newly discovered element, Thomas hears a radio message calling for refugees to head to Fort Sumter. They sail south, but quickly discover that their elements wane as they leave Roanoke behind. There is something sinister going on in the refugee colony too. From the perilous food-gathering squads, to the constant threat of rat infestation, to dangerous secrets, Thomas and his colonists begin to realize that this promising new world may be even more terrifying than the one they left behind.

Fans of *The Maze Runner* and *Ship Breaker* will love the fast pace, high stakes, and touches of romance in this thrilling novel by an award-winning author.

## Firebrand Details

Date : Published November 14th 2013 by Dial Books

ISBN : 9780803736832

Author : Antony John

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## From Reader Review Firebrand for online ebook

### Elyse says

2.5 stars

Now free of the pirates, Thomas and his group are heading to Fort Sumter, where a refugee colony of the Plague are living. Their elements abilities are slowly fading away the further they are of Roanoke Island. The young boy doesn't mind and want to start having a "normal life", but the Guardians and Rose are not so happy about it. They are also not sure if they can trust Chief and the other survivors.

I am a little bit disappointed with this series so far. I found the characters are missing depth and now in the second volume, evolution. I still know squat about Elements & the mysterious solution, maybe this is being kept for the last book? Griffin seems like an interesting character but is completely put on the side and is barely present. The romance is also not much developed, and I do not really understand why Rose & Thomas are together, except for plot purposes.

I never feel any suspense and the threats were kinda boring: rats really? Things were also predictable. There was some death that should have a big impact on the story but somehow, I didn't know enough about those characters to care.

I still have the last book to read, but I do not have super high expectations. I not that bad, just flat. Maybe a younger reader would like it better?

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### Hope says

This book was awesome! Good Job to the writer Antony John for making an extraordinary sequel. I absolutely loved Elemental but this sequel knocked my socks off. I loved Thomas and Rose in this book, their relationship transformed a lot from the first book to the sequel. A LOT. They are so cute together and I loved all of their scenes. I was so intrigued in the beginning, that it actually picked up exactly where it left off from Elemental. They were sailing away from Roanoke away from the pirates. There was a lot of commotion and disaster aboard the boat, dealing with Eleanor and her father, and literally everyone was on edge worrying about heading to this new colony in South Carolina that Thomas told everyone about. The beginning definitely drew me in, all because it was so intriguing and interesting, the fact that Thomas's father was released by two people combining their elements was amazing. I loved the fact that, that was seen throughout the novel a lot, two people combining their elements. It was interesting to read and I loved every minute of it. The colony on Sumter was interesting but I knew from the very beginning something was off and Chief could not be trusted, just something about him being way too friendly threw me off. I loved Jerren and Alice and I hope their relationship will elope in the third novel. I loved how in the end there is still a recurring antagonist, Dare, Thomas's Uncle. It's so interesting because in the bend of Elemental after he moved onto the island, they managed to throw him overboard from his own boat that they eventually took. It all was one big trick and plan. I was surprised to see in the end, he still is not killed off and i am so excited to read the next book, hoping to tie up all the loose ends. Dare is such an interesting antagonist and this book unraveled a lot about their journey and what is to come. ICANNOTWAIT! WOOOHOOOO. Everyone start with Elemental and then read this book. It's riveting and mind-numbing !

## Kristen says

In a future post-apocalyptic world, Thomas and his friends have succeeded in saving their parents, the Guardians, from invading pirates. However, the pirates hold Roanoke Island. Thomas's group has commandeered the pirates' ship. When the use of his power allows him to hear a radio message calling for refugees to come to Fort Sumter, Thomas and the group decide to head there. Fort Sumter will reveal answers to the questions that have plagued Thomas and his friends. Such as what power do the pirates think Griffin possesses that would be worth enough to kill for? Are there other secrets that the Guardians kept from their young?

Firebrand is the second novel in the Elemental trilogy by Antony John. Sometimes beginning a trilogy/series in the middle only leads to confusion. However, this novel will catch you up quickly to what is going on and have readers wanting to go out and pick up the first book in order to see what s/he may have missed. The Lost Colony of Roanoke is a popular topic to write on and starts to feel played out. But, this trilogy provides a fun and mystical take that may not be altogether new but is engaging and worth delving into.

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## Wendy says

"Firebrand" is the fast-paced sequel to "Elemental" which unfolds at Fort Sumter where Thomas, his friends and the Guardians seek sanctuary after their escape from Roanoke Island. What they will find is disturbing as they grapple with lies, threats and a dangerous secret that could bring death to them all. This is a dystopian story filled with non-stop action, thrills and adventure with a dash of romance and mystery.

Using Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbour, South Carolina as a backdrop for the story is a fascinating bit of ingenuity. Being isolated and defensible in the first battle of the civil war makes it a perfect location for a colony of refugees seeking safety from an infestation of rats who carry the plague. Ironically not guns but a man's stupidity will undermine its security.

The plot is well-written, the characters realistic, their personalities developing as events unfold and the action heats up. Thomas, an innate leader develops with the story line. He's brave, considerate, and shrewd as he struggles to overcome the prejudice of Rose's mother, and to discern the truth or deception in the Chief's supposed friendship. Alice haunted by her father's violence is strong-willed, competitive, loyal, trustworthy, and finds a kindred spirit in Jerren. Nyla like Rose is determined and steadfast. Both are willing to sacrifice their safety to protect those they love. Even the antagonists are memorable, like Chief, the deceptive leader whose lies and cruelty outweigh any good intentions, and Kell, the tough, no-nonsense second-in-command with a killer instinct.

I enjoyed this young adult dystopian novel with its hint of mystery; the meaning behind the word CROATOAN and the Guardians history still to be resolved. Although, I thought the elemental abilities of the characters were underplayed as was the seriousness of the plague. But, I can't wait to see what Antony John has in-store for Thomas and his friends in the next book.

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## Bethany says

YAY! First review! :) Okay, since 1) I read the ARC of the book, and it most likely will change, and 2) I

don't want to spoil it for anyone, I'm going to keep it short and sweet! (well, try to keep it short, anyway)

I just finished Firebrand and let me tell you, I am *shaking* from the excitement! Wow! This book left me jumpy, and breathless. It's just so..... *exciting*!

Now, I usually don't enjoy sequels of books, but Firebrand was *perfect*. Right at the beginning, I was hooked to the excitement and action, and at the end, it left another cliff-hanger! Wow! And the middle is just... exhilarating!

Along with the awesome old characters, there are awesome new characters too!! I love the characters so much!

I love the setting of the book! I really admire how these are real places, and how the past affects the future! And I can't help but compare Thomas and his colony's trip to like how the Pilgrims settled in Plymouth. It probably has no resemblance, but that's just what I kept thinking while reading it ;)

Oh... and I am now terrified of rats... I'm going to have nightmares about rats.... just saying...

I feel so grateful to have read this, and let me say that readers, you will not regret reading this at all! November will come sooner than you know it, and when Firebrand is released, you will *love* it! I promise! This book is full of action, suspense, adventure, and a hint of romance. I *love* this book so much. If I could give a higher rating than 5 stars, I would. That's how awesome it is!

Okay! (Hopefully no spoilers accidentally sneaked in there somehow, but I'm pretty sure there's no accidental spoilers.) Firebrand is simply breathtaking! I hope everyone else loves it as much as I loved it! Thank you!

## **I. LOVE. THIS. BOOK!**

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### **Janita says**

The previous book in this series, *Elemental*, was the first book I reviewed on my blog. It's kind of ironic to think that *Firebrand* is the first physical ARC I've received from a publisher as well. Coincidence, I think not? Even though I had other books on the go, I couldn't stop myself from picking up this book and devouring it in one day. I don't know if it was because of the brevity of the novel or because of my pure excitement, but I flew through it, barely pausing my daily routine to read it all.

The book picks up directly where *Elemental* left off. I'll try to reduce the amount of spoilers for the first book as much as possible, because I know not a lot of people have read the first book. After their harrowing adventure on Roanoke Island, the survivors of the pirates' attack, led by Thomas, have to find a new sanctuary island, away from the rat and plague-infested shores of the mainland. Thomas finds himself in more of a leadership role when they come across a colony of survivors on another island in the Atlantic. They've set up camp in an old army fort and have learned to live through subsistence farming. However, they don't have any elements, or abilities like Thomas and his group has. We slowly pick up more pieces about why it is that only their small colony have these abilities and others don't. It's also explored as to why Thomas' abilities are different than the natural elements of the other survivors.

I enjoyed Thomas exploring some of his own weaknesses in this book. He has to make some personal decisions about whether his group should forget their past and their elements, which have grown weaker away from Roanoke, or if they should get to the bottom of the mystery behind the “solution,” a mysterious antidote to the plague that has ravaged North America (and perhaps the rest of the world). However, events on this new island forces him to make some choices about his future and the future of his friends and family as they encounter mysteries and betrayals, some from within their group, and some coming from the new colony that has taken them in.

While I was disappointed that their abilities (especially Thomas’) didn’t make as much of an appearance in this book since they had forced themselves to hide them from the other settlers, they did manage to learn more about them from the elders of their community. Antony John weaves mystery over mystery in Firebrand, some carried from the first book, other new ones cropping up. I never knew what was going to happen next, which I really enjoyed. The surprises and mysteries made sense after they played out, and it never seemed like aspects of the story were thrown in without previous planning. I also especially enjoyed how the two books’ plots were expertly tied together, even though they often seemed unrelated in the first two thirds of Firebrand.

The author also created fantastically chilling action scenes and the tension near the end of the novel had me flipping pages like a madman. I was on the edge of my seat, trying to decipher the mystery behind the “solution” and the strange settlers on this new island. Although this book isn’t fast-paced besides the ending, I still found myself totally engrossed with the story because of all the suspenseful elements.

While this book isn’t one of my all-time favourites, and had a few aspects that I wish had been given more attention (like the development of Thomas’ abilities from where they left off in the first book, and a little bit more worldbuilding for the plague world), I’m still in love with this story and how it differs from most dystopian/post-apocalyptic YA fiction out there. I can’t wait to see how Antony John continues with this series after yet another gut-wrenching cliffhanger.

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## **Ben Farmer says**

If I were to write a letter to this author about this novel, I would say.

Dear Mr. John

Before reading your book i had never read a book in this series but the cover look interesting which made me want to read it. After reading a description of what the book over, it had gain my interest . Although when i first started reading, it was very confusing as i did not know this book was part of a series and there was not much information about what happen previously at the start of the book. But as i kept reading I formed a general idea of what happen in the previous book, still I would like a summary of what happened in the first book and do you recommend i go back to read the previous book or would i be fine to go to the next one.

One complaint i would make about the article would be is not having a lot of backstory about how the world crumbled because of rats. Were told the rats carry the plague but beyond that, there not much else. Why didn’t we develop a cure and how did rats suddenly gain a plague that wipes out most of the human race when all the diseases rats carry can be cured. Another complaint would be how the rats were smart enough to flank the main characters and use strategy. I can understand the rats evolving and being more intelligent but the level of strategy the rats use is rather unbelievable considering the animal brain size.

My suggestion would be to add a scientist like character that can shine some light on how the plague wipe out the human race and how rats became so intelligent. A good time to introduce this character would be at fort sumter as one of chiefs men which would make sense because it would tie in with the chief trying to cure the plague. That the only problem i had with the novel, other than that i thought it was a really good book.

Sincerely,

Ben Farmer

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### **Lectus says**

OMG! as good as the first one! Thank you John for not dissapointing me.

You know how you read a book and then the next in the series is kind of just okay? Well, *Firebrand* wasn't okay, it was perfect.

This second book kept the same just-about-right pace of the first one.

I would have liked a cast of characters just so I could had remembered who was who, but John did a great job reminding us of who each character was in the previous book without being repetitive.

The action was paced as the first one: not too much as to make me roll my eyes (will they get a break?), but not to slow as to bore me.

I absolutely loved the second book in the series and I'm going to stalk the author (again) to find out when the third book is coming.

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### **Jaida Rossiter says**

Love the book, can't wait to read the next one!

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### **Kelli McClanahan says**

I read the first book and I really liked it. But this one... while it was still good, there were times when the pacing was slow and the action kind of dragged. I do plan on reading the final book of the trilogy (I want to see what happens with Thom and Dare).

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### **Christina Morales says**

Come on already. I need it now please.

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### **Kelsey Mitchell says**

Thomas and the rest of the Elementals are forced to leave Roanoke Island now that the pirates have it overrun. They sail to a new community, determined to make a new life. But they soon find that the further away they get from Skeleton Island, the less their powers work. That's the least of their problems though, when they realize that this town has some secrets. Powerful, dangerous secrets that really should've stayed hidden. I give this book 3/5 stars because I felt it just wasn't as good as the first book. This book was still very captivating, and engaging. And I completely adore Thomas, and his element, but it was missing a bit of the urgency that the first book had that made it so bewitching.

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### **Pages For Thoughts says**

Firebrand was a definite improvement from the first book. Their elements were taken to a whole new level, and they discovered more things to do with them, which I greatly liked. The characters were more emotional, and the book was not as fast, which gave more chances to connect with the characters. The writing was not the best. The author told a lot of things, but didn't really show them. Instead of the author picturing the story for me, I had to do it myself and make up the story in my head. It made Firebrand more challenging than I would have liked. I will still read the next book to finish the series, but if you have not read the series yet, I am not sure if you should. See this review and more at <http://pagesforthoughts.blogspot.com/...>

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### **Max Lau • Maxxesbooktopia says**

This book blew my mind off. It's better than the first one. [Spoilers removed] Can't wait to read the next one!

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### **Stephanie says**

So going in to this book, I was expecting more of a MG level novel – I'm not sure why exactly but somehow I was expecting more of a younger audience. I'm so glad I was wrong though because this book is definitely in the YG category and it is surprisingly good.

What I liked about this book:

Unique plot and setting – the fact that this was a dystopian society and somehow a small group of people with elemental powers have survived on an island while everyone else seemed to be trapped on boats and most do not have any powers. In a way, this trilogy definitely had a “us vs. them” mentality because of the power differences but was also set in a different environment. Most of the books out there are either one or the other so I liked how this author meshed these two aspects together. Another aspect was the fact that the Plague was brought on by rats so whoever has a fear of rats, probably should not read this novel especially

the third one because they became a large part of that third book. I always knew that rats were dirty but didn't think of them as the Plague-giver and I can't believe that rats forced humans to escape to either the water or nearby islands. Crazy. .

Characters grew a lot and matured – this story followed Thomas who grew up his entire life without having an element when everyone else in his society had a special power. He definitely felt inferior compared to the others but at the same time, he didn't let it stop him from stepping up and having his own place in the community. I liked how he was still optimistic and cheerful with a good personality. He definitely wasn't someone you would call a "Debbie Downer". It also helped that his peers treated him with respect especially after disaster hit and their troubles began. He was the one they relied on and listened to. The other main girl, Alice, was such a resourceful and bad-ass chick. She clearly thrived in danger and took it up on herself to keep everyone safe so with the two of them, they were able to keep everyone alive. I also appreciated how honest she was and to be perfectly honest, I thought Alice and Thomas would get together. One other character that I really thought matured a lot was Rose. In the beginning, she was this quiet and docile character who mainly used her ability to catch fish to help the community but after the whole disaster thing, she grew up and became a lot more realistic rather than simply living in that idealistic/fantasy world of hers. She started to stand up for what she believed in and wasn't afraid of speaking up.

The various plot twists – while there were a few areas where it was pretty obvious what was going to happen but there were also a lot that I did not see coming. I won't go into too much detail since some of these plot twists are major parts to the trilogy. However, I liked that Antony kept me guessing throughout the books which is something that doesn't usually happen.

Overall, great trilogy and great ending – the last book was a great wrap up to the novels. I highly recommend this book to those who enjoy fantasy, sci-fi or dystopian novels. This trilogy managed to wrap those three genres together in a pretty package. Plus, the covers aren't too bad to look at either.

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