



Readers' Favorite[®]

Book Reviews and Award Contest

Book Review Mini-Critique

Below you will find ratings (scale of 1-5) with general descriptions for the major parts of your book followed by your Readers' Favorite review. Although this is just a Mini-Critique, we hope it will give you an insight into how readers may view the different components of your book.

These are the opinions of your reviewer, and although they are not a literary professional, they are an avid reader of books just like yours.

Title: Alora Factor
Subtitle: Invasion of the Realm Jumpers
Author: D.L. Williams
Genre: Young Adult - Fantasy - Urban

- Appearance:** The appearance of a book can make a significant impact on the experience of a reader, whose enjoyment is often enhanced by an enticing cover, an intriguing table of contents, interesting chapter headings, and when possible, eye-catching illustrations.
- 4**
- Plot:** The characters of a book should be well defined with strengths and flaws, and while they do not have to be likable, the reader does have to be able to form a connection with them. The tone should be consistent, the theme should be clear, and the plot should be original or told from a unique perspective. For informative books -- those without plot and characters--this rating refers primarily to your concept and how well you presented it.
- 3**
- Development:** Development refers to how effectively you told your story or discussed your topic. The dialogue should be realistic, the descriptions should be vivid, and the material should be concise and coherent. Organization is also a key factor, especially for informative books -- those without plot and characters. The order in which you tell your story or explain your topic and how smoothly it flows can have a huge impact on the reader's understanding and enjoyment of the material.
- 3**
- Formatting:** Formatting is the single most overlooked area by authors. The way in which you describe scenes, display dialogue, and shift point of view can make or break your story. In addition, excessive grammatical errors and typos can give your book an amateurish feel and even put off readers completely.
- 5**
- Marketability:** Marketability refers to how effectively you wrote your book for your target audience. Authors may include content that is above or below the understanding of their target reader, or include concepts, opinions or language that can accidentally confuse or alienate some readers. Although by its nature this rating is very subjective, a very low rating here and poor reviews may indicate an issue with your book in this area.
- 3**
- Overall Opinion:** The overall starred rating takes into account all these elements and describes the overall reading experience of your reviewer. This is the official Readers' Favorite review rating for your book.
- 3**

Review:

Reviewed by Delene Vrey for Readers' Favorite

D. L Williams has a unique skill of paying attention to the smallest detail in describing the scenes in their novel. The prologue is fast-paced and exciting and plays on the reader's sympathy toward the black and brown people who struggle to afford a residence in their own city. What promised to be a great fantasy read quickly disappeared, however, and although Alora Factor has great promise, some things force me to give a 3.

I understand the idea behind the book, but it is simply an overload of correctness. What makes a fantasy relatable and believable is the areas they touch in the reader's life that are real. So Let's look at the story objectively. The story's introduction and the premise are good and catch the reader's attention; the blurb drew me. YA fantasy is the magical world where awkward teenagers can conquer their world and save the rest. However, as you read the next chapter, the first thing that I find problematic is the they/them pronouns. Although we live in a time of significant change around gender and how we speak about those who see themselves as different than what others do, it is a very abstract concept, and although the way that it is treated makes sense from an adult point of view, it has the potential to confuse typical thirteen-year-olds who may just be looking for a nice fantasy to escape from the stress of real life.

In the same way, too many ideas are thrown together in the book so that these overwhelm the story and here the author must decide: WHAT IS THE AIM of the book? If it is to educate others about accepting everyone and standing up for what is right, then I would suggest a different approach.

Each idea should be treated cursorily in Alora Factor and say the main focus is placed on the injustice done to minority groups of color. As it is introduced in the prologue to stop rich, influential people from victimizing and killing people for their land or homes, this theme could be developed around Alora's birthday and the supernatural gifts she receives. It is a bit unreal that a bunch of thirteen-year-olds will have what it takes to battle hormones and wield earth-shattering superpowers, and in real life, thirteen is still young for the type of training described. That is why most YA books tend to revolve around 16-year-olds. The younger your main characters, the simpler the story and offshoots ought to be.

So if everything in Alora Factor is packed side by side and each theme is taken separately, they can be dealt with in another book where the character, like Drea, can be the main character in a book that focuses on her struggle of living as a transgender girl and how even her best friends cannot always understand.

The same with Andrew; how he views his culture and the idea of becoming one with the western lifestyle and forgetting their roots so far away from their homeland can be another central theme for a book.

To sum up, too much information is thrown at the reader at once and on a level that does not correspond with the target audience. If the story is simplified and expanded over an arc of six to seven books, where each book's primary focus is a different character and their social issues with the main arc of the story (Alora the Triad and the Aliens) filling the gaps, it can be more palatable and make for a great fantasy.

- Some caveats: be careful not to go into too much detail - like the type of hair products used. Instead, describe them from the start as brown, black, and so forth, with small mentions about their hair, etc.
- If your characters demand to be respected for their beliefs and choices, that should include everyone, even the Baptist father and divorced mother.
- Be careful not to misrepresent your book. If social issues are the driving force behind the book(s), then it should be noted on the cover or the blurb. As it is, the book seems a fine read, but as soon as the prologue is done, the assault of ideas is so much that some mothers or parents would want their children to be introduced to these differently. Always be truthful about the content and intent of your story.
- A warning that the book is written with gender-correct pronouns and a pro-transgender angle would be a good idea to add.
- If the overly correct gender references (it becomes confusing) and Alora's attitude towards her mother (children should still respect their parents even if they do not understand the circumstances) are toned down, it could be more acceptable. In any good and loving home, understanding has to be for all. Even the mother who left (no one wants to say why) as well as the Baptist father who left when he found his wife sacrificing a chicken with their transgender daughter need to be respected and understood.

This book could be a great asset to marginalized communities and provide an inclusive reading experience, but it should be handled with great care and accountability