

The Spell of Undoing (Quentaris: quest of the lost city)

by Paul Collins

ISBN: 9781876462536

RRP: \$15.95

War rages between the two neighbouring cities of Quentaris and Tolrush, but orphan Tab Vidler has other problems to worry about. Not only does she have to spend her whole day scrubbing toilets, washing dishes and shoveling animal dung to earn her keep at the orphanage, but no-one has even remembered that it's her birthday!

When the surly Mrs Figgins throws her out of the orphanage and onto the streets, she thinks that things couldn't possibly get any worse – until she becomes caught up in a catastrophic chain of events, after which life on Quentaris will never be the same again.



The Future of the Internet and How to Stop it

by Jonathan Zittrain

Allen Lane

ISBN: 1846140145

\$59.95

Q: What do Marcel Proust, Stephen Hawking and Jonathan Zittrain have in common?

A: They all wrote unfinished books with catchy titles. When I say "unfinished" I don't mean to say that they didn't finish writing the book; rather it is we the readers who, for the most part, couldn't manage to finish reading them.

Zittrain is a lawyer, a professor of Internet Governance and Regulation at Oxford and formerly of Harvard Law School. His book isn't long (certainly not as long as Proust's) but my goodness it's dense. He admits that it started as a paper, became a law review article and finally a 246 page book – and it shows.

At the heart of his argument is that the Internet has been built not on closed systems but on generative technology (indeed the Net itself is the prime example of such a system)

The Spell of Undoing is the first book in the Quentaris series, written by a collection of award-winning authors. The Quentaris series also links to a companion website <http://www.quentaris.com> where curious readers can find bonus background stories for their favourite characters and read extracts for the other books in the series.



Young readers will greatly enjoy the fast-paced, action-packed story and larger-than-life characters – the brave, but hot-headed hero Tab who longs to become a magician, the vain and sneaky Fontagu Wizroth and the mysterious Torby. The lively dialogue would also make it an enjoyable story for parents to read aloud to younger children.

Cheney Brew
cheney.brew@alia.org.au

and this has enabled a whole raft of new technologies to be developed and adopted, but it has also led to unexpected problems. He gives a comprehensive description of the generative pattern, leading from creation in a backwater, through its release before all bugs have been ironed out, to widespread adoption, overuse, exploitation and finally enclosure of the system to address the problems identified in its operation.

His solution is that people of goodwill should continue what they've been doing for years – developing open source applications (and enlightened proprietary systems that fit the generative mould) and participating widely and responsibly in social networking applications like Wikipedia and Facebook. But more than this, he also calls for the decision-makers and the "sovereigns" and major stakeholders to embrace the generative pattern wherever they can.

And my score with the 'unfinished' books? Well, not to mince words, two out of three ain't bad.

Kerry Webb
kwebb@alianet.alia.org.au



Stinky Ferret and the JJs (Aussie chomps)

by Candice Lemon-Scott

Puffin, ISBN: 987 0 14 330397 8

How many of you have had to deal with the incessant plea for a pet? A ferret, I am told, can make a perfect companion. But that is not what Adrian thinks. He hates ferrets and is most unimpressed when it is his turn to take Ferret, the classroom pet, home for the weekend. Written in first person, Adrian's character is bold and feisty. The writing is clear and the action fast. While it is an uncomplicated tale that is predictable in its ending, the story would be a fun read for the upper primary school reader.



Sami's Genies (Aussie nibbles)

by Kathryn England

Illustrated by Craig Smith

Puffin, ISBN: 987 0 14 330354 1

And for the slightly younger age group, grab this Aussie nibble! Sami is an orphan who lives with his grandfather and helps out on the family farm; even though his greatest wish is to go to school. Things become a little busy after Sami finds four lamps, inside which are genies.

Not your typical 'genie in a lamp story', and peppered with illustrations, this tale is bound to entertain.

Fiona Edwards
fiona.edwards@alia.org.au

Wardragon
Paul Collins

A sorceress
A swordsman
A thieving larrikin
...and their deadliest foe,
the omnipotent Wardragon

RRP \$23.95

Distributed by Macmillan Distribution Services

MACMILLAN

FORD ST

www.fordstreetpublishing.com