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The Jewel of Peru is a magical adventure through time, taking young Captain Christopher and his loyal crew of orphaned stowaways on a perilous quest in search of Christopher's missing parents.

After his father's ship is found abandoned at sea, Christopher makes an unexpected discovery on board—The Ultimate Treasure Chest! Inside is a message that beckons him to set sail after the treasure and his parents. When a savage pirate and a corrupt businessman join forces to steal the treasure for themselves, the gang gets caught up in pirate chases, time travel, and an underground network of spies. Will Christopher find the Jewel and his parents, or will all be lost for ever?

The Ultimate Treasure Quest I: The Jewel of Peru Details

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Author : Sharon Skretting

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Emmy says

The main characters aren't strong and yet dozens of more characters are introduced. We don't get to really know and connect with the children. I find it hard to believe this tight knit group of friends don't interact more or are more excited about this strange new world. So most of their nonchalant attitudes seem under-described.

I'm still puzzled why they are referred to as stowaways. I thought a stowaway was someone who snuck on a ship for passage without paying?

Christopher is given a monumental task, yet has no concept of what he is doing.

The boulders he multiplied and created as walls ... is he mathematically advanced to figure it out without asking for help or advice?

And the gold bars: The standard gold bar held and traded internationally by central banks and bullion dealers is the Good Delivery bar with a 400 oz (troy-ounce) (12.4 kg or 438.9 ounces) nominal weight. When I checked the price per oz at 4:56pm EST gold was trading at \$1266.90. So $400 \times \$1266 = \$506,400$ per gold brick.

So wasn't the amount he gave them extravagant, if not obscene?

He multiplied the anchovies by one hundred thousand. Without an concept of the current environment or if that many could survive under the current conditions and ecological system.

I liked the concept. I liked learning about the cultures. But it became ridiculous with the story line.

Sara Marschand says

Jewel of Peru took me on an adventure from page one. Sharon Skretting has captured Peru and deftly woven elements of the culture and geography into a fast-paced treasure hunt. It was well written, entertaining and introduced me to new ideas. I loved making little discoveries along the way about the people and places. I found some of the features of Peru so interesting, I looked them up the Internet and was delighted to find things just as she described. Fact and fantasy blend seamlessly in this delightful tale.

The whole family can enjoy reading this story. As an adult, I loved it. I recommend it as a multiple night bedtime read by parents to young readers, or for chapter book (and beyond) readers on their own.

Mary Beth Blaylock says

Great book. Wonderful blend of action, adventure, and informational. My kids enjoyed it as well. The were

constantly enthralled.

Lindsay says

I just finished reading this novel to my grade 3/4 class. They absolutely loved every second of it! As a teacher, it was refreshing to see them so excited about building connections with the curriculum. There were so many references to Alberta learning outcomes, especially in regards to Social & Science, that students could really apply what they had been learning to the story. My students found themselves easily caught up in the cliffhanger chapter endings, and always begged me to read more. They were also quite vocal about making predictions, and often laughed aloud (especially at the character of Desi). The only thing that left them unsatisfied was the ending because they wanted to know where Christopher ended up (although they definitely have a few theories)! I look forward to seeing what adventures Sharon Skretting comes up with for these loveable characters next!

Krista says

Great concept, not fully developed

This story follows young Christopher and his orphaned friends gathered from all over the world on a magical quest from 18th century England to modern day Peru. They are chased by pirates and hunted by a corrupt businessman as they follow the clues from the Ultimate Treasure chest to find the Ultimate Treasure and reunite Christopher with his parents.

The misfit group travels through the three climates of Peru, all the while learning from local masters about the region and communities they encounter. They use their talents collectively and individually as they follow the map to their destination. The book is studded with educational information about the economic, environmental, and sociological issues faced by the country today.

The story concept was great. What kid doesn't like to read about pirates and a magical treasure hunt through time? The problem was in the delivery.

My two boys 8 and 10 lost interest after the first few chapters and I had a hard time keeping focused as I read the story. The chapters are short and in my opinion underdeveloped. There is very little information on the characters, and with the exception of Desi, I didn't really connect with any of them. Much of the dialogue is stereotypical and I had a hard time believing several of the scenes.

I think this book would do well in a classroom/discussion setting where you stop and talk about what you learn as you go.

If you are looking for free time book, I would consider another selection. It was worth reading but I wouldn't read it again.

*I received my copy of this book for free in exchange for my review. The opinions and comments expressed are my own.

Renee says

I am a big fan of stories that feature time travel. In most cases, time traveling in children's books involves either traveling back in time to a specific time period giving the opportunity to teach children about past historical events or traveling to the future opening children's minds to the possibilities of what we may encounter on Earth or elsewhere many years from now. In *The Jewel of Peru*, the characters travel from the past to present-day Peru. In this way, the author tackles modern-day themes by taking the position of having to explain our society's current issues (environmental in particular) to someone who lived a long time ago. I really appreciated this twist on the time-travel theme.

More and more I'm seeing, in middle grade books, cast ensembles that bring together diverse characters each with unique strengths and perspectives that factor into how the plot develops. Sharon Skretting has assembled a cast of young protagonists from varied backgrounds demonstrating how they can overlook their differences and draw on each other strengths in achieving the overall goal. Aside from the young Captain Christopher and his crew, there were a number of secondary characters each of whom play an important role in the main character's journey. In this story, the secondary characters for the most part provide key pieces of information and are largely under-developed otherwise. This worked for the overall purpose of the book.

The Jewel of Peru is first and foremost an adventure, but woven within the chase scenes, treasure hunting, and riddle-solving are educational tidbits about Peru including information about the climate and geographical regions of Peru, the famous Incan ruins of Machu Picchu, the local fauna such as alpacas, and so much more. The riddles the children must solve as part of their journey center around not only around these points, but also around some of the ecological, environmental, and industrial issues faced by the people of Peru. The educational value of the book is immense and it just so happens that the author has also developed teacher support materials to go along with the book (see below).

That being said, I do have to comment that I sometimes felt that the use of the riddles to highlight the educational components were a bit too obvious. Some of the interesting tidbits about Peru were woven very well into the story so that children would not necessarily perceive that they are actually learning something from reading the book. On the one hand, the use of the riddles provides natural discussion points for a classroom and along with the resources available to teachers, *The Jewel of Peru* would make an excellent choice for deeper study in a school or homeschool setting. The flipside is that outside of the classroom, children may feel that the educational components are burdensome. Sometimes children just want to read and get lost in the fantasy.

My Bottom Line:

The Jewel of Peru is the first book in a new time-travel adventure series featuring a young Captain, his ship *The Discovery*, and his motley crew of young seafarers who join him on a quest to find his missing parents and the "Ultimate Treasure". The story is filled with intrigue, suspense, and danger and has tremendous educational value, as they travel from the past to present-day Peru where they learn about the ecological and environmental issues faced by this nation. I highly recommend this book to be used in conjunction with the teacher support resources, as part of a school or homeschool curriculum. Ages 8+. A solid 4.5 Stars

** I received a copy of this book free-of-charge from the author in exchange for my honest opinion. All opinions expressed are my own.*

Julia Smith says

From the book's blurb: "The Jewel of Peru is a magical adventure through time, taking young Captain Christopher and his loyal crew of orphaned stowaways on a perilous quest in search of Christopher's missing parents.

After his father's ship is found abandoned at sea, Christopher makes an unexpected discovery on board—The Ultimate Treasure Chest! Inside is a message that beckons him to set sail after the treasure and his parents. When a savage pirate and a corrupt businessman join forces to steal the treasure for themselves, the gang gets caught up in pirate chases, time travel, and an underground network of spies. Will Christopher find the Jewel and his parents, or will all be lost for ever?"

The Jewel of Peru is exciting fiction written for the mid-to-upper elementary student. Most of the characters are of the same age as the elementary age students for whom the book is written. As I read I could picture fourth graders reading and responding to the story, the characters, and the author's use of words. So many of them were say aloud, repeat often words, usually noise or action words, that would grab a youngster's imagination and allow him or her to be a part of the story.

While the story is fiction, it is so very educational without weighing the reader down with fact after fact. The reader will learn about Peru, certainly, but also about life of different cultures, life at sea, geography, and working together as a team.

Throughout the story there is the mystery to solve and the young cast of characters, as diverse as any classroom, must solve riddles in order to solve the mystery. I know readers will try to figure out the meaning of the riddle before one of the characters does so.

Throughout the story, a kindly old sea captain, a friend of Christopher's family, is the adult guiding force. This is the first in a series. I look forward to the other books as I am sure students will. For teachers and parents, this is a great series to introduce to your students, especially your reluctant readers. I believe it will engage their imagination and leave them wanting to read more. The book was a gift to me. I will now pass it own to my fourth grade grandson and his classmates.

Lorry Vanden says

Sharon writes a fun, exciting novel about a young boy, recently orphaned, who bravely continues in his father's footsteps as captain of a ship. Captain Christopher finds himself in a mystery full of unanswered questions, problems to solve and meeting many new people from around the world - some trustworthy and some not! Christopher must find out what happened to his parents, and along the way discovers he is more like his father than he ever knew!

Tammy Reiling says

As a teacher, it is a wonderful curriculum resource that both excites and motivates students. As a parent, it is great to see my child build fluency and improve her comprehension as she reads to me. This book has sparked my daughter to enjoy reading as she is on her fourth read of it! As a reader, it is a great read and keeps you wanting more at the end of each chapter! A difficult book to put down!

Carol Jones says

Teachers are always looking for ways to 'hook' their students on reading. Here it is-adventure, danger and intrigue wrapped into one super book!

This book was specifically written to integrate subject matter for grade 4, but could be used from grades 4-6. Multi-grade classrooms could also effectively use this novel.

I hope this book is the first in a series.

K.A. Meng says

Do you like pirates? Adventure? Treasure hunting? If you said yes to all of this then read this book. The chapters end with cliff hangers which will make you want to read more.

As a parent, you will love this book because your children will learn and not know they are. Sharon Skretting captured Peru in such great detail. It will be like you were there. She has backed up her elements of culture and geography with actual facts for you to look up. Do you know how rare that is?

The ending does end with a cliff hanger. I for one can't wait to read what happens next. This definitely is a series to read.

Susan Day says

Wow! This book has it all and it's a fun read too. Not only has the author incorporated history, culture and fantasy into her story, she has given her readers a wonderful all-encompassing adventure.

Our hero is Captain Christopher: A young boy who is on a quest to find her lost parents. He is joined on his ship by a loyal band of orphaned stowaways. However, Christopher finds something else on board, The Ultimate Treasure Chest – and his real adventures begin.

The author uses descriptive passages and dialogue to bring her story to life. They are realistic and vibrant and demonstrate the author's talent as a writer.

I was given a copy in exchange for an honest review and I was quickly enthralled in this story as I'm sure you will be too. It is a must for children who are reading middle grade novels. Do yourself a favour and grab a copy today.

Kate Martyn says

This is a fantasy adventure in which Christopher Faramund undertakes a dangerous voyage on his father's ship, on a quest to find the Jewel of Peru and thus locate his missing parents. Guided only by mysterious messages from the Ultimate Treasure Chest, Christopher, his guardian Alistair, and a motley crew of orphans contend with assorted villains attempting to thwart them in their quest, including pirates both ancient and modern. Along the way they learn much about the world, the environment and human nature.

Designed to enhance the curriculum for middle grade students, I could certainly see this book doing so. It has much educational content and would be a great basis, chapter by chapter, for classroom investigations or for structuring homeschooling lessons.

As a fun aid to an educational programme it works really well. My only minor quibble might be that a young reader reading only for enjoyment might get bogged down a little from time to time in the wealth of educational information. But I may possibly be underestimating the younger generation!

The story is great fun, the characters are charming and the message worthwhile. There are nice touches of leavening humour throughout, and some great slapstick provided by the pirates, and all round it makes a rollicking good, clean read for pre-teens.

Starr Waddell says

This is a great book for middle grade age children. I wish my kids were old enough to read it.

Tara says

Ready for non-stop adventure? Christopher's parents have gone missing, but they left behind a mysterious treasure chest, which launches a journey that will change his life forever. A cryptic message, a ship and a band of orphans set the stage for this fun romp readers will certainly enjoy. Geared toward middle schoolers', The Jewel of Peru is a treasure all its own. Both boys and girls will enjoy the cast of characters, which have something to offer everyone. I loved the strong message of stewardship over the earth.

"We are the Keepers, the protectors of Earth's treasures."

Engaging and meaningful, the author does an excellent job crafting this story. I don't usually read middle school novels but made an exception for this one and will be passing it on to all the children in my life.

"The things you have written are just a start of how each person plays a part, In using nature to meet their needs. But they must take care, they must take heed, or all will lie in ruin because of greed."
