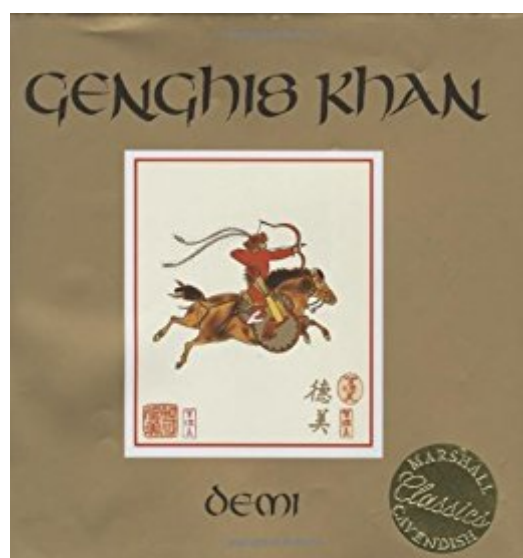


The book was found

Genghis Khan



Synopsis

As a boy, Genghis Khan inherited the role of leader after his father's death. As a man, he earned it by fiercely protecting his people, no matter the cost, and being demanding of total loyalty from those he led. His is a story of courage and survival, sacrifice and death. The boy who became the great Genghis Khan would take his people from the brink of survival to near-world domination and lead the largest empire ever created in the lifetime of one man. Based on both history and legend, Demi's classic story takes readers into a world of battle and victory and shows why Genghis Khan has gone down in history as the greatest conqueror of all time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The drawings in this book were really good and I loved how it was laid out. The colors in the book are beautiful -- a shiny gold color is on almost every page reminding you of the splendor that was Genghis Khan. The story is where I get a little annoyed, granted, the author is probably trying to add some mystical meaning to his life. I'd rather have books a little more factual than fiction when presenting people of history to my kids, so this part of the book annoyed me, "When he was buried, the sky lit up with whirling lights that rose and fell and leapt like flames against the stars. They sky

gods were dancing at the gate of the Heaven and as the spirit of Genghis entered, the earth trembled." Uh, no it didn't. He died just like every other mortal man. Sorry to burst your mystical bubble. But, I'm not downplaying creative writing here. This book is a good example of word pictures and creative writing skills. But just note that if you don't like books with a lot of spiritual hoopla, you might not like some of this book. For the most part, the rest of the book seems to tell a good story about his life. And the pictures alone are great conversation points with kids.

How does one write a children's book about one of the bloodthirstiest men in history? Cuddly Genghis who loves dogs and is a vegetarian? Leader of his oppressed people who were dealt a bad hand? Poor boy rises to the top by hard work and leadership skill? Well, in this book, none of those options were chosen. Instead, we got a fairly straightforward, if sanitized, version of the rise and fall of this frightening leader whose name still inspires terror nearly 1000 years after his demise. But as I was reading this to my 6 year old grandson, who found the illustrations too busy (though I thought them wonderful) he kept asking "Why?" Why did this boy want to rule the world? Why did he want to unite the tribes and then conquer China? Why? What to say? In this world, it was either conquer or be conquered? That peace was more likely when a strong ruler kept things under control? While possibly true, these were way over the head of a 21st Century American kid for whom violence is no longer a part of daily life. And the author did nothing to try to remedy this. I was left with the same confused "What makes someone want to conquer the world?" feeling as he had. So despite the sometimes astonishing illustrations, the tale left me uninvolved. And the anti-climactic finale, "He was hunting, died, and soon his empire collapsed" was just way too weak.

This is the first of Demi's books that I have not loved. She concentrated on Genghis Khan's conquests without mentioning the many negative and positive results. I think it is an interesting fact that he tried to establish trade with the Persian empire, and attacked them in retaliation for their attack on the two groups he had sent as trade delegations. I think it is also interesting and significant that he established unity in large areas that had never had unity and had been torn by constant wars. He improved the economy of the area by stabilizing the Silk Road. These accomplishments mostly survived about a century and a half. It is particularly notable that he fostered freedom of religion and gender equality. That being said, he also justly earned his fearsome reputation because he was implacable toward those he saw as treacherous. When he did conquer Persia, it was brutal beyond the usual Mongolian brutality. Demi says a little bit about the brutality of conquest, but mentions none of the other things I outlined above. Therefore, she gives a

very skewed picture of who Genghis Khan was and what his influence was. With such well known descendants/successors as Kublai Khan and Tamerlane and with modern-day monuments to him, it cannot be said that Mongol power vanished without a trace, as she did in the last lines of this book.

Genghis Khan is a problematic figure when teaching history to young children. Beyond a doubt, he is an important historical figure and children need to know something about him. Yet, Genghis Khan's legacy is one of brutal conquest and destruction. It is hard to make an argument that he did anything to advance civilization. The author/illustrator Demi does a very good job of reducing Genghis Khan's story to its key ingredients. While details are important, Demi does not overwhelm his young readers with too much information. My eight year old does not know enough of world history to really understand the magnitude of Genghis Khan's conquests. Demi's condensed and almost poetic narrative is beautifully matched with his illustrations. Demi's detailed but ethereal images remind me of the Central Asian style miniature painting. The images are fascinating and both parent and child will enjoy them. I am so impressed with this book that I am going out and purchasing additional Demi books. Highly recommended.

I'm not sure why, but every word with "fl" or "fi" is missing those letters. Also, although the pictures seem nice, they are very small, and you can't enlarge them. So, not a very good Kindle book. Maybe the hard back is better. The story and picture are nice, just not suitable for ebook.

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