



Gideon's Spear

Darby Karchut

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For Finn MacCullen, it's time to Irish up.

With a shout, Finn held the spear aloft. "Come along, ye manky beasties," he yelled, throwing every bit of Gideon-ness he could into his voice. "I've a wee point to share with ye!" Gripping the end of the shaft in both hands, he swung it around and around over his head, creating a whistling sound. "Faugh a ballagh!" "The Spear!" Goblin voices screeched in panic. "The Spear of the Tuatha De Danaan!"

"Yeah, you got that right!" Finn yelled back.

When a power-crazed sorceress and the neighborhood pack of beast-like goblins team up and threaten both his master and his friends, thirteen-year-old Finn (not Finnegan) MacCullen does the only thing an apprentice monster hunter can do: he takes the fight to the enemy. And woe to the foe he meets along the way.

Gideon's Spear Details

Date : Published February 4th 2014 by Spencer Hill Press (first published February 1st 2014)

ISBN : 9781937053949

Author : Darby Karchut

Format : Paperback 212 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Science Fiction Fantasy, Adventure

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From Reader Review Gideon's Spear for online ebook

Kathy Martin says

GIDEON'S SPEAR was an excellent sequel to FINN FINNEGAN. Finn is still getting used to the idea that he is really Gideon Lir's apprentice and that he has found a home where he is loved and valued. Finn is having a bit of trouble getting used to the idea that he is the legendary Spear that can defeat the Amandan. He is also having some issues with the parents of his friends Rafe and Savannah. Their father is convinced that Finn is being abused by Gideon because he frequently has bruises and cuts. He has called Social Services and set a caseworker on them both.

Rafe and Savannah are African-Americans and come from a warrior tradition themselves. Their African grandfather has given Rafe an assengai and taught him how to use it. Being thirteen-year-old boys they find great humor in saying assengai. Rafe and Savannah have had first hand experience fighting the Amandan and know that they are real. But Gideon has forbidden Finn to tell Rafe and Savannah's parents about what is really going on.

The main conflict in this story comes from a witch - though she prefers "enchantress" - named Iona of the Hills who wants to control Gideon's Spear. She has made an agreement with the Amandan and is working with them. Gideon has a long history with Iona. He is convinced that she is the one who caused his son to take foolish risks and lose his life. He has been trying to get retribution for hundreds of years.

The story is filled with action. Between fights with the Amandan and car wrecks, both Gideon and Finn are in lots of danger. I love the relationship between the two of them. Gideon isn't the gushy kind but Finn's confidence that he will be there for him is growing. I loved Finn. Despite being smart-mouthed, disobedient and given to Celtic rages, he is brave, resourceful, and fiercely loyal to those he loves.

I can't wait to read THE HOUND AT THE GATE to learn more about Finn and Gideon.

Beverly McClure says

Being a thirteen-year-old boy is tough enough. Being the thirteen-year-old Spear of the Tuatha De Danaan and apprentice to a Knight, with monsters and a witch after you is challenging to even the bravest young teen.

Author Darby Karchut has written another winner. After reading FINN FINNEGAN, BOOK ONE OF THE ADVENTURES OF FINN MACCULLEN, I didn't think the series could get any better. I was wrong. GIDEON'S SPEAR, the second book in the series, continues the story of Finn MacCullen and Gideon Lir, the awesome duo I met in book one. Sometimes Finn is just a boy. He makes mistakes. He tests his Knight's patience. He gets into trouble. Other times he fights a witch and the Amandan creatures, alongside his master, Gideon, with bravery and amazing skills for so young a warrior. What I love most about these novels is the relationship between Finn and Gideon. It's more than a mentor, apprentice relationship. In addition to teaching Finn the skills of a brave warrior, Gideon also shows Finn the need for good manners and respect of others, the way a father guides his son. Finn reacts the way any teen boy would react: sometimes with anger or resentment, still knowing Gideon is right.

In GIDEON'S SPEAR, secrets are revealed. Neighbors are not always what they seem. And life is never dull for Finn and those around him. Darby Karchut has given each character his/her distinct personality. Mac Roth, Gideon's oldest friend, is the kind of friend everyone should have, and one of my favorite characters.

Each scene is written with such detail it makes the reader feel like you're there, fighting the monsters with Finn and Gideon, or at the house while they're training, or with the neighbor twins and their family. Author's notes at the end of the story explain the source of many of the names and terms used in the novel. The reader also gets a peek at the third book in the series, THE HOUND AT THE GATE. It looks like another winner. If only we didn't have to wait a year to read the whole story. Every middle school library and classroom should have copies of Gideon's Spear. The novel would also be popular in high schools, I think. So now we wait to see where Finn and Gideon take us next. A very nice novel, Ms. Karchut. Thank you.

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RoloPoloBookBlog says

Gideon's Spear by Darby Karchut

(Book #2: The Adventures of Finn MacCullen)

Source: Author

Rating: 4/5 stars

Sometimes the hardest part about being a book reviewer/blogger is being honest especially when that honesty may hurt an author that you consider a friend. But, just as the author stays true to their story and characters, I must stay true to my thoughts and feelings about the books I read and know that my dishonesty would be both disrespectful and unappreciated. So, for the first time ever I have rated a Darby Karchut book at a mere four stars and yes, I feel crappy about it ?

Overall, Gideon's Spear is NOT by any means a bad read and in fact, it is still a very good read BUT I found myself struggling with this read and feeling very frustrated and unsettled by the time I reached the end. As with all of Darby's books, Gideon's Spear is driven by its' characters and this is where the bulk of my frustration comes from. For the first time ever, I can't see where all of the characters fit into the grand scheme of things nor can I see what their purpose is as related to Gideon, Finn and, the discovery of the Spear. Here's the character roll call:

Finn: though certainly more experienced than he was in Finn Finnegan, Finn is still just a boy of thirteen and stubborn as all get out. Though he doesn't set out to defy Gideon, he often does and that creates a far longer list of chores for the young apprentice. His loyalty to Gideon and his friends is as commendable as his commitment to learning and training. But, the road to maturity and acceptance of his new role as Gideon's Spear is going to be very long and very painful.

Gideon: Still smooth and sexy and rockin' a fine accent! Gideon's devotion to and affection for Finn is growing with each passing day which makes his need to protect and prepare his charge even more critical. The stakes are even higher now that Gideon knows Finn is the mythical Spear and his need to protect Finn goes into overdrive. To be fair, Gideon begins to open up to Finn about his own past and why he is so crazed about protecting his apprentice.

Mac Roth: Still smooth and sexy and rockin' a fine accent! I need more of him and that is all!

Lochlan: Son of goat!! Another O'Neill!!! To be fair, Lochlan has, thus far presented himself in a far, far better light than his deceased cousin but, his role as something other than Mac Roth's apprentice has yet to be revealed. I find it hard to believe that Darby would sacrifice one character (Asher) and not give the replacement (Lochlan) - a family member no less! – such a minor role. For now, Lochlan remains a bit of a mystery.

Savannah and Rafe: I have absolutely no idea what role these two are to play in either Finn's life or the grand scheme of things. These kids have this amazing backstory with Zulu warriors and a very, very slight connection, through their grandfather (whom we need more of!) to the Tuatha De Danaan and the hunting of the Amandán but beyond being Finn's friends, I don't know why they are a part of the read ? I can only assume that Darby is keeping them around for some major purpose down the roadbut, we all know what assuming gets us, am I right?

Iona: Bugger all!! I am absolutely clueless where this one is concerned. She is absolutely tied to Gideon and his past (though I don't think she is tied in the way Gideon has always believed), she knows Finn is the Spear and, she is up to no good. As with many, many other things in this read, I can't imagine the amount of trouble she caused in this particular read and the relatively small plans she admits to Gideon are even a drop in the bucket compared to what she has planned. Iona is old and very powerful and I can't believe her ultimate goal for the mythical Spear would be the control of the Amandán. She's far too prissy to want those smelly bastards around for long.

The Bottom Line: Despite my high level of frustration, I still really liked this read and am, as I always will be, a devoted follower of Darby K.! Darby is an author I can depend on to produce high quality work that I want to return to time and time again and so, this new experience of frustration is confusing, to say the least. Honestly, this whole not knowing and not having a clue about the characters is a new ball game for me. Don't get me wrong, I don't have to know all the answers and I don't have to know what's coming but this not even having a smallish clue is a wholly unexpected event and not something I am at all used to with Darby's books. So, at the end of the day, I am still going to recommend this read to everyone I know with the assumption that Darby has something really spectacular up her sleeve for the future of Gideon and his Spear. After all, Darby K. has never let me down ?

Lynn says

The sequel is a satisfying follow on from the first book in the series. I have rated it 4 stars as the author has the tendency to over-explain certain situations.

I also found it rather difficult trying to accept the idea of Finn going to his friends' house to watch how mielie pap is made. Rather than the delicacy that the author seems to be attempting to portray, mielie pap (maize meal) actually forms the major part of the diets of the majority of indigent people here in South Africa. Simple to make (boiling salted water, maize meal and some fairly regular stirring) it can be eaten as a thin porridge or as an accompaniment to meat. It is fairly inexpensive, fills tummies but is unfortunately not very nutritious.

Darby Karchut says

I loved writing this second installment of Finn's adventures!

Starr says

Review Coming Soon

Wes Karchut says

Yes, this is my wife's book, but I really liked it, not because she wrote it, but because it's a fun, adventure-filled book. I think girls will like it as much as boys.

Meredith Mansfield says

Wow! Could Finn and Gideon get into any more trouble. I'm sure I'll find out in the next book. Fun read.

Tom says

Gideon's Spear is not one of those novels that pushes you along toward its conclusion. Rather, it reaches out from the last page, and pulls you through twists and turns, ups and downs, and everything else author Darby Karchut can throw at you, till finally you reach the end.

Gideon's Spear starts off shortly after the bruises have healed from Finn Finnegan, the first in "The Adventures of Finn MacCullen" series. Though he's still early in his apprenticeship, Finn has had to learn quickly how to fight--and how to stay alive. In this installment, Finn discovers that new friends he's made might have more to them than he'd originally thought, and he finds himself with another potential rival apprentice to torment him.

But he knows the secret of Gideon's Spear (the spear, not the title) and how it works.

This information doesn't save him from his usual chores and training under his Knight's tutelage. What happens, though, is that Knight and apprentice grow closer, better able to communicate with each other, both in normal-life situations, and when fighting their nemeses, the Amandan.

There's a new twist, though. An old rival of Gideon's has come to their Colorado town, and she is by no means there for a friendly visit. She quickly forges a pact with the Amandan, and the goblins' prize will be a tasty meal of Knight and apprentice.

Once again, Darby Karchut has worked her own magic (presumably, not centuries-old Celtic magic, though it wouldn't surprise me), and produced an excellent novel. In Gideon's Spear, she takes things she mentioned

casually in Finn Finnegan, and fleshes them out into hugely important plot points. I'd elaborate, but it would add spoilers to the review.

In Gideon's Spear, Ms. Karchut proves that she is immune to the "sophomore slump," the phenomenon wherein the second book in a series is nearly always flat compared to the first. Finn, Gideon, and the other characters are so wonderfully fleshed-out, we can imagine their voices, their thoughts, anticipate their actions. There's a seamless consistency in tone and story between Finn Finnegan and Gideon's Spear, a tribute to the author's skill.

Typically, I enjoy a novel, review it here, and move on to the next one.

I read Gideon's Spear in one sitting, and I feel like I've survived an Indiana Jones movie--battered, bloody, bruised, and beaten. It's okay, though, for it was--as Gideon might call it--a bleedin' fair ride.

Highly Recommended

(nb: I received a review copy from the publisher)

Kelly Hager says

Oh, you guys, this book.

I'll be honest---I am a huge fan of her first series, the one about Griffin. And I was incredibly skeptical about this one, both because it's marketed as middlegrade and because...well, it's not Griffin. And this series seems to have replaced Griffin. So there was a bit of "Pete Best Forever; Ringo Never!" coming from me. And then I read Finn Finnegan (the first book) and begrudgingly fell in love with it. And then I read this one---in just a few hours, because I couldn't put it down---and okay, fine, I love it.

I love that it's fantasy but that (even though they are not human), the characters have so much humanity. The relationships between the characters (specifically the father/son relationship between Gideon and his mentor, Finn---NOT FINNEGAN---but also the friendships that Finn has with Rafe and Savannah) are incredibly important to this novel---central, even---and Darby makes me love the characters so much that whenever they're in danger, I forget to breathe until said danger is resolved.

If you haven't read a book by Darby Karchut yet, fix it. Now. (Maybe start with my beloved Griffin and help me peer pressure her into a fourth book. But we do love Finn, too. Now we do.)

I can't wait to read the third book in this series...which, unfortunately, won't be out until JANUARY.

Highly, highly recommended.

Deb says

I love this series! Have you ever believed that you don't fit in? That you just can't get anything right? That you are letting someone you care about down? Then you will identify with Finn. He is apprenticed to Gideon, who is training him to be a knight in modern times. They are fighting the Amandán, goblin type creatures. Now throw in 2 neighbor kids, their grandfather in Africa & their parents, who are very concerned about what is going on with Finn. Next, let's add another knight & his new apprentice who does not know how to keep his mouth shut. And let's not forget the wicked witch, Iona. Mix these all together & you have an action packed, full of surprises adventure. The one thing that I am not happy with is that I have to wait 11 months for book 3. If you like Harry Potter or Charlie Bone, add Finn MacCullen to that list.

Robert Kent says

Honest and for true, I liked Gideon's Spear even better than Finn Finnegan, though newcomers to the series would be better off starting with that book. The origin and introduction of our characters out of the way, Karchut is able to spend book two deepening the characters and their relationships, thickening the plot, and raising the stakes. Also, there's even more action this time around, which makes the pages fly by in no time.

Karchut expertly reminds return readers and catches up new readers by giving us a casual conversation in chapter one between our heroes that works nicely as a "last time on Finn Finnegan" narration:

"But how can I learn anything if all I do is follow you around?"

Gideon's face darkened. "Arguing with me is as dangerous as hunting the Amandán."

"But I've fought them before." Finn's voice cracked in frustration. "I know—"

"You know less than you think. A few skirmishes with the goblins do not make you ready to hunt alone."

"Why won't you let me at least try?"

"Because you're not ready!" Finn scowled. "It's because of the whole Spear thing, isn't it?"

"Oh, aye, that's it," Gideon said, heavy on the sarcasm. "Discovering that my apprentice of less than two months is none other than the legendary Spear of the Tuatha De Danaan has made me decide to treat you differently from now on."

"It has?" Finn's heart sank. I'm sick of always being different. I just want to be a Knight. Like Gideon and Mac Roth.

"No, you dolt." Gideon reached out and cuffed him lightly on the side of the head.

What I like about that passage is not just the brevity of the exposition, but the way Karchut shows us the nature of Gideon and Finn's relationship (as well as explaining the title). Last time around, I compared Gideon to Hagrid from that other wonderful series of children's books you may have heard of. But that's not accurate. Gideon is a much more central figure than Hagrid and a large amount of this book is devoted to his and Finn's mentor/apprentice/surrogate father/son relationship and I think it's fair to say that relationship is the core of this series. Gideon even writes his own journal entries as does Finn, and Hagrid never got nearly this amount of screen time.

But lest we forget, our heroes are in the middle of an ongoing war, naturally. Karchut catches us up on that score early on by having the Amandán conveniently attack with more exposition than weapons. Note Gideon taking center stage with no Finn in sight:

"Too bad yer whelp turned tail and ran," spoke another one. "I likes me Fey young and fresh."

"I just likes mine dead," a deep voice growled. "The day will come when ye high and mighty—" it stopped to spit out the name "—Tuatha De Danaan will be nothing but a pile of leftovers. And Eire will be ours once

more.”

“Not that old grievance again,” Gideon said, tedium in his tone. “You think the death of all Tuatha De Danaan will return the Green Isle to the likes of you?” He raised his chin. “Ireland will never be yours again. The Goddess Danu gave it to us to hold.”

“We had it first,” the first goblin hissed. “We be the true heirs of Eire. Us the Bog-born, not the feeble offspring of some upstart goddess.”

Gideon curled his lip. “Yet here you are. In Colorado. Not Ireland.”

“We could say the same thing about ye Tuatha De Danaan—”

“Bah,” the second Amandán interrupted. “Too much talking, not enough killing. Let’s get him, mates.” The pack closed ranks.

As with Finn Finnegan, the language gets a little strong for younger readers, but is perfect for upper middle grade readers who will chuckle at “assengai” just as surely as his new African neighbors and Finn do. Comparisons to Harry Potter like the one I made are inevitable, but truth be told this book reminded me more of the Lord of the Rings and a little of Duck Tales.

There are goblin battles galore, but Gideon and Finn can’t just fight them all day. They’ve got to come up against a heavy hitter sooner or later. Enter Iona. She’s a witch, though she prefers the term “enchantress,” and she and Gideon have an interesting history that goes back centuries, as such feuds do when dealing with fantasy characters. Gideon has reason to believe Iona was indirectly responsible for the death of his son, which is a great touch. Iona wants to get her claws on Gideon’s new son, which is what editors mean when they tell us to “raise the stakes.” Gideon and Iona are gonna rumble and this time it’s personal, which is as it should be, or no one’s going to care enough to read book three.

Gideon’s Spear surpasses the original and it’s a great read to be enjoyed by younger readers and adults, especially teachers like Darby Karchut, who will surely get a kick out of allusions such as these:

“Finnegan, wake,” he said softly, smiling to himself at the old joke. He nudged the bed with a knee, giving it a shake.

If you like action, adventure, and fun, and if you don’t, you probably don’t like books, but if you do like those things, Gideon’s Spear is for you. This one comes highly recommended and with just one more book to go, now is the perfect time to join the series.

As always, I’ll leave you with some of my favorite passages from Gideon’s Spear:

He looked down at Finn’s bandaged hands. His eyebrows asked the question.

“And I’m assuming the O’Neills will be footing the bill for the festivities?” Mac Roth nodded in anticipation. “Ye know the O’Neills. They’re a proud family and enjoy sharing their wealth with the rest of us.” “You mean flaunting their wealth,” Gideon replied, then shrugged. “Well, I wouldn’t want to show disrespect by not partaking in their generosity.” “Forever thinking of others, Lir.” “Aye, that I do. Excessive kindness has always been a fault of mine.”

Something about Iona made Finn’s skin want to crawl off his skeleton. And hide.

A faint drumming accompanied the voice, the thump of a bodhran, its rhythm as ancient as the first heartbeat of the world.

Icy silence frosted the inside of the cab.

Tracy says

Darby...you have done it again. Gideon's Spear was a breathe of fresh air. I must say, from my perspective, this second installment was even more enjoyable than the first. Darby truly has a gift for character driven stories. And a top notch talent for mastering the faux father/son relationships.

I absolutely love Gideon and Finn together. These two feed off each other and well...'complete' each other so perfectly. And I have to admit...the more we get to know Gideon? The more I am in love with him. If Gideon is any indication of future characters coming our way in the form of a certain 'Adult' genre book...well, lets just say I am breathless awaiting the arrival of Bann...just sayin'.

Okay...and maybe it's just me...but while reading this one? I just kept picturing Stoick(Gerard Butler) and Gobber(Craig Ferguson) from How To Train Your Dragon as Gideon and MacRoth...the accents, the brotherly love...it just fits for me...:)

The Adventures of Finn MacCullen is a wonderful middle grade series. Again this is a true example of what character driven stories should be. This is a definite must for all middle grade adventure lovers...and even us adults too!

Well done Darby!

Peter says

I loved this book. I think I liked it even more than Finn Finnegan, which was also a really good. The characters were fleshed out even more in this book. The new characters added more to the book and the story. This was full of action and adventure. Overall it was a very fun read.

I received a free copy of this book as part of GoodReads First Reads program.
