



The Extinction Gambit

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All Kingsley wants is to begin his career as an escapologist and conjurer . . . but it seems that it's not only his fiendishly difficult-to-control wolfishness that could put a spanner in the works.

There's also the Immortals, a triumvirate of thousand-year-old magicians who want to rule the world through mind control - and destroying Kingsley is integral to their plans. And if they don't kill him, then there are the last surviving Neanderthals, who want to exterminate all homo sapiens.

Luckily Kingsley can enlist the help of Evadne, a beautiful albino heroine with an agenda of her own, and the famous author Rudyard Kipling - who is both fascinated and terrified that Kingsley could be the real life inspiration for the wolf child Mowgli, the hero of The Jungle Book.

Surviving to tell this tale will require braving the challenges of the Demimonde - the dangerous and exhilarating underground world of magic, conspiracies and the most outlandish of those on the fringes of our society.

The Extinction Gambit Details

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From Reader Review The Extinction Gambit for online ebook

Jess says

[This review was originally posted on my blog: <http://turnherintoliterature.tumblr.com/>]

This is a strange confession for me to make, but here goes. I love steampunk. It's a brilliant world, the mix of the period costumes and a certain inventiveness that we lack in the real world.

Gail Carriger is by far my favourite steampunk author, but Michael Pryor could be moving up the list (though not necessarily supplanting her) with his Extraordinaires series.

Take one werewolf magician, one albino inventor, Rudyard Kipling (he of 'The Jungle Book' fame), and add in a multitude of people trying to kill them, fabulous inventions, and a whole host of cunning plans, and you have 'The Extinction Gambit' in a nutshell.

To say more than that would be to give too much away, so if you like a mad caper (even if you've never delved into steampunk before), this is a highly enjoyable read, and I'm looking forward to the rest of the series, simply to see what Pryor can do next.

Yvonne says

Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls, Children of ALLLLLLL Ages; prepare to be amazed and amused, entertained and educated!!!

This was my first excursion into the entertaining world of Michael Pryor's imagination but most definitely will not be my last. I received this book last fall in response to a giveaway promotion that ran in a SLJ Teen e-newsletter and upon receiving the book placed it in the TBR stack. I guiltily moved it to the top of the stack when I received an email a couple of weeks ago inquiring about my thoughts on the book. All I can say is "Thank you for your email, Jen."

Now, all of the other books languishing in the TBR stack will have to be patient for a little while longer because The Extraordinaires: The Subterranean Stratagem (Book 2 in the series) is calling my name.

Katherine says

The story was easy to read and the action moved at a compelling pace.

A YA novel for young young adult readers I think.

Also I seem to keep picking up YA novels at the library. Perhaps because I never get to wander far from the children's section.

Kingsley and Evadne both have secrets and in each other find a friend/partner that they admire, respect and

trust. They travel between the real world and the Demimonde a half world which is accessible from ours but where anything can happen, populated by steampunk creatures, murderous Neanderthals and evil magicians. With the help of their friend Rudyard Kipling and an army of rat spies they overcome the bad guys, although we the reader know they escape to cause havoc another day(or novel).

Don't rush out and buy it but if you want something easy and fast to read and you like a bit of magical realism you probably won't stab yourself in the face if you read this.

K. says

Plot summary: On the brink of the 1908 Olympics, Kingsley wants nothing more than to launch his career as a conjurer and escapologist. But Kingsley has a secret wild side that he sometimes can't contain, and besides - there's a group of immortal magicians who want his brain. And if the immortal magicians aren't bad enough, a group of Neanderthals want him (and all homo sapiens) dead too. With the help of Evadne, a mysterious albino girl, and Rudyard Kipling, Kingsley is about to have the adventure of his life.

Thoughts: I think I would have liked this more than I did if it hadn't been so blatantly the set up for a new series. There was a lot of world building to do, and the action suffered as a result. Kingsley's a fascinating character - I loved his backstory, and it'll be interesting to see how it develops in the following books. Evadne is a total badass, with all kinds of gadgets and gizmos up her sleeve. The Demimonde was fascinating, and much better executed than China Mieville's UnLundun. The Neanderthals were great too. Oh, and bonus points for including time travel.

But despite liking all of the elements, the overall story didn't particularly grab me at this stage. I'm not sure if there was too much left unanswered or if I missed some key part of the story, but I never felt like the story gelled for me. Still, it was an enjoyable read and I'll probably keep an eye out for future additions to the series.

Kate Forsyth says

Take one young man, raised by wolves and trying to break into showbiz as a magician.

Take one young woman, white-haired and pink-eyed, with a passion for creating gadgets.

Add Rudyard Kipling, writer and creator of Mowgli, the wolf-raised boy of The Jungle Book.

Add an assortment of angry Neanderthals, a profit-obsessed businessman in a bowler hat, and creepy immortal creatures who inhabit the bodies of stolen children.

Throw in a gruesomely murdered housekeeper and a collection of robotic rats.

Set it in the foggy streets of London in 1908, with a quick dash back to the Great Fire of 1666.
Mix together violently.

The result: a fantastical, surprising, adventure-packed steampunk novel, *The Extinction Gambit*, Book 1 *The Extraordinaires*, by Michael Pryor.

I loved this book! It was funny, fast-paced, packed full of twists and turns and stomach-dropping lurches sideways and downwards. The dialogue is witty, the clothes rather dashing. And I loved the albino heroine with her ever-changing array of spectacles. I also loved the unexpected time travel back to the Great Fire of 1666. There was an awful lot crammed into this one book – it could easily have been three!

As I said introducing my interview with Michael Pryor last week, ‘it’s the sort of roller-coaster ride where all you can do is hang on to your hat and see what amazing and surprising places the story will take you. This would be a fantastic book to give a teenage boy who loves gadgets, magic tricks, and high adventure - which is most teenage boys I know.’

April says

After a slow start - the action seemed to be too distant and there was a lack of urgency felt by this reader - the story warmed up and our two heroes were awesome.

Neanderthalls, cyborg rats, the wild boy and the ever present slimy snake oil salesman make for a fun and interesting read.

Through the first slow part, what kept me reading? Clever and witty dialogue with a sense of whimsy. Absolutely the best part of the book was that interaction between the two mains. Now, they were quite a bit accomplished - almost enough to be in Mary Sue (and what IS the male equivalent or is there one?) territory but they squeaked back into reality just enough to keep me interested. I'll definitely be reading the next book.

Yvonne Boag says

"So the Olympic Games are being jeopardised by a band of evil sorcerers who want my brain, Kingsley said , while I try to find my foster father who may have been abducted by creatures from the dawn of time." This quote nicely sums up what this novel is about and if you have a puzzled frown on your face and saying "What?" you aren't the only one. Kingsley Ward is an escape artist and just when he is about to make a career for himself his adoptive father goes missing. Along with Evadne, a juggler with many, many talents Kingsley goes looking for him and finds out there is another world out there called the Demimonde. Kingsley has to evade the groups that are after him, rescue his dad and of course, save the world.

Michael Pryor has great imagination and talent. His characters are intriguing and his dialogue superb. The novel is very witty and I can not wait to read the next book in the series.

Fantasy Literature says

3.5 stars

Michael Pryor's *The Extinction Gambit*, book one of the EXTRAORDINAIRES series, is not the best book

I've read this year. But it does have the best pithy plot summary uttered by a character:

"So the Olympic Games are being jeopardized by a band of evil sorcerers who want my brain," Kingsley said, "while I try to find my foster father who may have been abducted by creatures from the dawn of time."

That's Kingsley Ward, young stage magician-to-be, talking at lunch with Evadne Stephens — the young albino genius inventor/master juggler/elite weaponsmaker who has already rescued him once from said sorcerers and creatures — and famed writer Rudyard Kipling, who, based on his experience in India writing *The Jungle Book*, has taken an abiding interest in Kingsley.... Read More:
<http://www.fantasyliterature.com/revi...>

Christine Bongers says

Four-and-a-half stars for this entertaining romp through a richly re-imagined 1908 London, where magic flourishes, an enclave of Neanderthals survives in hiding, and a wolfish young man and a beautiful albino are all that stand between a trio of Immortal magicians and their plans for world domination. Wry and witty, and destined to appeal to those who love their steam punk.

Maria Shuffit says

I felt that this book was bogged down with the author trying to have entirely too many things going on at once. Immortal child-snatchers, magicians, police hunting the protagonist, a famous author, a character who is known as a common fiction character in the real world, time-travel, Neandrethals, a kidnapped foster-father, an Albino, a centuries-old feud, secret underground lairs, dual worlds coexisting, magic and machinery... it was really overburdened. There wasn't a whole lot of interest in the main protagonist, either - having just finished the book ten minutes ago, I could not tell you a single physical feature of his, but I could describe the female lead flawlessly. I also felt like the dialogue was often very pretentious - this read like a kids fiction book, but the vocabulary was beyond what I would expect younger readers to know, and it felt forced, like the author was just trying to test and see how many dictionary words he could cram into it. Overall, I found this book just made me go "meh" and plan to keep it in the car for the next time I pass a Little Free Library. Really can't recommend it.

Pete Aldin says

I wish I could give this book 4.5 stars because it really was pitch perfect. I reserve 5 stars for books that remain favourites.

This was pitched in Australia as "teen fiction" but as an adult, I loved every page. It's pacy, erudite, witty...and interesting! Brilliant melding of concepts, sharp characters. The Neanderthal "voice" was drawn slightly differently from *Homo sapiens* and Pryor pulled it off masterfully.

Brilliant book.

Magpie says

Kerry 2017

Jen says

First of a new steam punk series, set in the early days of the 1900's. Kingsley Ward is a magician about to make his debut, when his stage act ends in disaster and his wild hidden nature emerges. He is helped to escape by one of the other performers, the mysterious albino, Evadne, who introduces him to the world of the demimonde, which exists along side the city of London. Kingsley learns that forces from the Demimonde are behind the abduction of his foster father and are also battling for control of humanity. Kingsley and Evadne must fight both the Immortals, who are stealing children to provide them with bodies, and the Neanderthals who wish to destroy all humankind. This is a ripping yarn based on themes from Kipling and Indian mythology, with a dash of steam punk for good measure. A very enjoyable romp.

Anne Hamilton says

I've got to admit I was taken aback by two clauses with subjunctive tense in the first three sentences of this book. Although they were grammatically correct, they certainly gave an awkward feel to the opening.

But once past this, the book is a real romp. It's been described as witty but I'm not sure whether the fast-clip banter actually qualifies as (from dictionary.com) 'clever, droll, sparkling, original, brilliant.' It's got flashes of each of those but mostly it's more like two sharpshooters taking constant verbal potshots at each other. A lot of fun - but witty? Not really.

Kingsley is a very different individual. Raised by wolves, adopted by Dr Ward, he is - according to Rudyard Kipling who makes several significant appearances in this story - the perfect incarnation of Mowgli from *The Jungle Book*. But Kingsley is his own person: his ambition is to appear on stage as a magician. He's got numerous sleight-of-hand tricks down pat; his escapologist routine has been honed with the reluctant help of Dr Ward's butler - all that stands in his way is his own wolfish nature which unfortunately comes to the fore when the pranks played by the stagehands on all novice performers get out of hand.

Kingsley comes to the notice of Evadne Stephens, a young member of the demi-monde on a crusade - well, as she notes, a trail of vengeance is probably more like it - against a trio of Immortals sacrificing children to maintain their existence. If the sinister and unconquerable Immortals weren't enough of a foe, a tribe of Neanderthals hidden below the streets of London have decided enough is enough. The Invaders - their term for ordinary humanity - need to be extinguished once and for all. The best way to accomplish is, according to their leader, Damona, is via time machine. Kill them off before they come to dominate the past.

The bizarre plot can be summed up in Kingsley's own words: *'So the Olympic Games are being jeopardized by a band of evil sorcerers who want my brain,' Kingsley said, 'while I try to find my foster father who may have been abducted by creatures from the dawn of time.'*

Hugely fun. Looking forward to the next book in the series.

Tarran says

What can I say...

I really enjoyed Michael Pryor's latest book. He takes inspiration from Jungle Book and the Olympics. The story is set in London 1908 and main character is a young man called Kingsley Ward. Kingsley is a magician (like Houdini) After learning his foster father has been kidnapped he embarks on a adventure to stop the end of the world.

A very good start to a new series, Kingsley is a likeable fellow and his companion Evadne is just as well written. Highly recommended to anyone who likes the Cassandra Clare series.

High five to Michael!
