

The Call to Shakabaz

Amy Wachspress

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Reviewed by Brianne Plach (age 9) for Reader Views (6/07)

Do you want to read a good adventure book with a great storyline and no violence? If you do, you will want to check out this one. "The Call to Shakabaz" by Amy Wachspress follows four recently-orphaned Goodacre children on a mission to do something for their mother who died two months ago.

The Goodacre children named Doshmisi, Denzel, Maia and Sonjay, are living with Aunt Alice and aren't too happy about it. They were raised in the city with malls, computers, televisions and video games. Aunt Alice has none of that in her farmhouse on Manzanita Ranch. They wish they had some adventure. Be careful what you wish for, you might just find out that you have more danger than the boring countryside. The four children take along Bayard Rustin, a talking parrot who doesn't make much sense but has a mind of his own.

One midsummer day, they meet Amethyst who is the gatekeeper of Faracadar. They are armed with their amulets that were given them by Uncle Martin, Uncle Bobby and Aunt Alice. They are told to wear these amulets well and with ingenuity, creativity, compassion, courage and hunger for the truth. The amulets must never leave the neck of the children because no one can take them from them unless they would lose their life. Doshmisi is also given a healing book called Herbal which will magically open to the page of the recipe of something to heal the person.

I really enjoyed traveling with the kids to meet all the different people on their trip. There were parts of this book which were funny. Having a powder which will change you into a different color to hide you would be very fun to have sometimes. Of course, your true colors will come out anyway. There is only so much hiding a person can do. Amy Wachspress has a great imagination. I will definitely read this book again! I liked how there weren't violent scenes in the book like a lot of books out there. This book is terrific reading for ages 9-14. It is fun to see that kids our age can do something important too, even if it is a fantasy book. I could see teachers making this a part of their reading class. There is a study guide at the back of this book too. Answer "The Call to Shakabaz" and enjoy the adventure!

Note from Brianne's mother: This book is a terrific fantasy book for kids. With the popularity of the Narnia series, "The Call to Shakabaz" could easily become a favorite for students and teachers. It kept Brianne very enthused about reading and she couldn't wait to finish reading it.