

books

A mystical mystery at the legislature

By: Helen Norrie

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Find Sphinx, by Winnipeg author and architecture professor Rae Bridgman (Great Plains, 194 pages, \$15 softcover, is the third and most successful in her MiddleGate series, set in a mystical community somewhere within the city of Winnipeg.

Wil and Sophie, Bridgman's magical and adventurous young hero and heroine, set out to prevent a threatened attack on the Manitoba Legislative Building or, as they call it, the Palace of the Blazing Star.

With the help of a giant catfish who transforms into a mystical figure known as Catfysh and the Giant Sphinxes found on the legislature roof, they try to decipher the many symbols and statues found throughout the building.

Bridgman's use of Latin quotations and her knowledge of myth and allegory add a special depth to these stories. Her characters are attractive and their dialogue is realistic, but her plots still have weak points.

Who exactly threatened the Legislative Building? How does the Serpent's Chain feature into the story? Possibly, because Bridgman intends to carry on these adventures, she feels that we don't need to know all the answers in one book, but their omission is troubling.

Despite its obvious similarity to the setting of the Harry Potter books, this series is entertaining, especially with its many local references. Aimed at readers aged 10-12, it may spark new interest in tours to the legislature.

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