



Keeper of the Grail (The Youngest Templar, Book 1)

By Michael Spradlin

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As an orphan, Tristan never dreamed he would travel the world or discover the truth about his past. But all that changes when the Knights Templar ride through the abbey on their way to battle. Suddenly, Tristan finds himself as a squire to one of the most respected knights. While exciting, it is also dangerous, as Tristan gets caught between rival knights desperate for power and entrusted with the most sacred relic?the Holy Grail. With the help of a young archer and a deadly warrior, can Tristan safely bring the Holy Grail back to England? Or will he succumb to the dangers of the evil men who follow in its wake?

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Keeper of the Grail (The Youngest Templar, Book 1) By Michael Spradlin Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #85623 in Books
- Brand: Puffin
- Model: FBA-318136
- Published on: 2009-09-17
- Released on: 2009-09-17
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.80" h x .70" w x 5.10" l, .48 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages



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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 5–9—Spradlin has reworked familiar elements into a fast-paced historical adventure with a touch of fantasy. Taken on as a squire by a well-regarded Templar knight, 14-year-old Tristan goes with King Richard's crusade to the Holy Land. A foundling, he gleans from others, especially from an enemy he makes among the Templars, that his origins are something special. Quickly acquiring sword skills, he participates in a battle at Acre, even coming to the aid of the King. Later on, he is entrusted with the Holy Grail and instructed to take it to Scotland. On his way home he is attacked and later befriended first by one of the King's archers, Robard Hode, and then by a Saracen assassin who turns out to be a maid, Maryam. While the events may test credulity, the first-person narrative carries readers along before dumping Tristan into the Mediterranean Sea for a rather abrupt ending. Although it seems obvious that all will survive, readers may want to wait until the second book is available, promised in fall 2009, before beginning this exciting journey.—*Kathleen Isaacs, Towson University, MD*

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From [Booklist](#)

Left as a baby at a monastery, Tristan has spent the last 14 years working with the gentle monks and pondering his identity. Facts surrounding his arrival there seem to indicate he is of noble birth. Yet even these suspicions in no way prepare him for what's in store with the arrival of Sir Thomas and a group of Knights Templar on their way to the Holy Land. In short order, Thomas makes Tristan his squire, Tristan makes an enemy of malevolent Sir Hugh, and the warriors, with Tristan now among their ranks, head to the Saracen stronghold of Acre. Let the fighting begin! And so it does, with much of the book's second half taken up with battles, skirmishes, and ambushes. The deadly action, uncompromising in many of its descriptions, may take center stage, but Spradlin smartly doesn't neglect story. Tristan is given an immense challenge and responsibility and meets new friends, whose names clever readers will find familiar.

The stirring saga ends with a true cliff-hanger, priming fans for the next installment. Grades 5–8. --Ilene Cooper

Review

Adventure quest at its best! Readers will be dying for the next installment. Meg Cabot, author of "Avalon High" and The Mediator series.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Celia Robertson:

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Kathleen Bonds:

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