

Editorial Reviews

VOYA, April 2015 (Vol. 38, No. 1) - *Valerie Burleigh*

— THE —
BROTHERHOOD
AND THE
SHIELD
— THE THREE THORNS —

The first in *The Three Thorns* fantasy series, *The Brotherhood And The Shield* takes readers into the world of Abasin and the fate of three male children abandoned at birth. Each child is delivered to his new guardians with a cloth that imparts his true heritage, one that will not be discovered until many years later. The brothers, Tommy, Benjamin, and Sebastian, have no idea that they are the true heirs and the last hope to save the kingdom of Abasin by destroying the false king. Being raised separately in harsh conditions keeps the boys wary of whom they can trust, and they seek to escape and find a place where they can belong. As the boys travel toward their destiny, they are targeted by shape-shifting assassins and accompanied by many sorts of mythical creatures.

It is clear that Gibney was influenced by both W. B. Yeats and C. S. Lewis, as his writing is rich with details that draw the reader in from page one. Much of this book is spent with the boys growing up in less than ideal conditions, without love or close companionship. The world they live in is one of despair, yet each boy, at times, feels and uses a power that he cannot explain. Readers will be intrigued by the possibility of what will happen once each boy comes into his power, as well as when the boys will realize they are siblings tasked to save the kingdom. The story's time line flows and builds suspense until the boys finally enter Abasin, running for their lives. One of the highlights of this story is the mythical creatures Gibney includes, which are fascinating and varied. Readers of both genders will be drawn to this fantasy story. Recommend this title to middle grades and up, as upper-grade fantasy lovers will not be deterred by the book's intended audience of middle grade.

Reviewer: *Valerie Burleigh*; Ages 11 to 18. ★★★★★