

The Amulet of Samarkand by Jonathan Stroud

Subjects: Magic—Fiction; Wizards—Fiction; Apprentices—Fiction; Genies—Fiction; London (England)—Fiction

Awards: Boston Globe–Horn Book Honor Book, Ten Best Books for Young Adults

Book Lists: Europe, Gifted, Grade 6

Props: Genie hat



(Wear genie hat) Ok, I admit it, I wanted to scare him; the floating yellow eyes, bulging doors, and invisible footsteps, black shadows writhing and roiling. Hey, it was his first time. He deserved a good scare. I mean the nerve of the kid. Imagine trying to summon me, a 5,000-year-old djinni on your first try. Really, summoning me, I am Bartimaeus! I have rebuilt the walls of Karnak, and Prague. I have spoken with Solomon. I have run with the buffalo fathers of the plains. I recognize no master, certainly not a boy, 11-years-old if he's a day. I did scare him. The dark-haired little boy was pale as a corpse, shaking like a dead leaf in a high wind. His teeth rattled in his shivering jaw. But so what? He's just a kid—wide-eyed, hollow-cheeked. Really, there's not that much satisfaction to be had from scaring the pants off a scrawny kid. Although, not every djinni agrees with me on this, some find it delightful sport. They refine countless ways of tormenting their summoners by means of subtly hideous apparitions. But that can back fire on you. The kid will grow up and then he'll try to get revenge. I just don't need the grief. And I must admit, this kid seemed to know what he was doing. His pentacle seal was drawn well enough and it had no spelling mistakes anywhere, unfortunately. I was stuck in the pentacle, so I floated and waited. At last the urchin plucked up the courage to speak—finally.

“By the constraints of the circle, the points on the pentacle, I am your master! You will obey my will. I charge you to retrieve the Amulet of Samarkand.”

Unbelievable, did this twerp know what he was asking? The Amulet of Samarkand is not a trinket, it possesses great magical power. I mean I know where it is, I know who has it, I can get it. But why would I? It is in the possession of one Simon Lovelace; a very unpleasant,

ruthless and ambitious magician. No doubt he has humiliated or in some way insulted this poor kid, that's his style, and the kid wants revenge. But seriously, the Amulet of Samarkand? Stolen from Simon Lovelace? I starred at him dumbfounded. He sputtered out a threat, “I am not afraid of you. I have given you a charge and I demand you go!”

Well, the rules say when I'm in this circle, I have to obey him. But later I'm going to find out who he is, look for weaknesses of character, things in his past I could exploit. They've all got them. You've all got them, I should say.

My bowels (ow) felt as if they were being passed over by a steamroller, I sensed my form waver, flicker. There was power in this child, though he was very young. I had to hand it to him. He was determined, and very stupid. His hand moved. I heard the first syllable of the Systemic Vise. He was about to inflict pain. I went. Fine, I'll steal his little amulet. Let him deal with Lovelace. Not my problem. *(Take off hat)*

Nathaniel is the sputtering young magician or actually magician's apprentice, learning the traditional arts of magic. Lovelace did humiliate him publicly and severely. So, he mastered one of the toughest spells of all and summoned Bartimaeus to extract his revenge. But stealing Lovelace's greatest treasure will land him in a whirlwind of magical trouble. Between Nathaniel, Lovelace, and Bartimaeus, who do you think is the more clever, who is the more devious, who commands the most magic? Read *(Hold up book)* *The Amulet of Samarkand*, Book One of the Bartimaeus Trilogy, by Jonathan Stroud.