

Trial by Fire

By Author, Norah McClintock

Reviewed by: Tanya, 14

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Riley moved into the small town along with her Aunt Ginny, expecting to live a boring, laid back lifestyle for a while. Boy, was she wrong. One day, as Riley comes downstairs to get a drink of water, she sees that her neighbor's property was on fire! After frantically dialing 9-1-1, she raced over to his barn to try to help out, hearing his screams coming from inside. As she is trying to help, the barn explodes, and she flies halfway backwards across his property, her head landing mere inches away from a cement block. After weeks of recovery, she finds out that the barn didn't catch fire by accident, it was done on purpose, it was arson. Numerous questions start popping up in her head; who did it, why, when? As she starts asking around, she finds that this mystery is even more muddled than she thought it was, with a grudge that lasted for generations upon generations. Can she figure out who started the fire?

One thing I liked about this book was that it started fast, with the fire hitting the reader within the first few pages. That really got me interested and made me want to continue reading. I also liked how there was such a large, complicated web of characters, making it really fun to try to guess the true culprit. Many of the scenes were very relatable for me, which is something I usually look for in good books. The characters and backgrounds were so interesting that I actually had to close the book a few times to think about the new factors to consider!

I would recommend this book to middle schoolers because it is more of a lighter mystery. It also has some humor mixed in that will definitely make you smile as you read! If you like lighter mystery books, this is definitely for you. There aren't many violent aspects of this book, other than a few minor fights between teenagers, and a brawl that was just briefly skimmed over. Overall, I thought that this was a good mystery novel that hooked my interest from start to finish!

Recommended Titles:

From Above by Norah McClintock

Out of Tune by Norah McClintock

The Parker Inheritance by Varian Johnson

Three Times Lucky by Sheila Turnage