

The Trials of Apollo: The Burning Maze

Rick Riordan

Reviewed by: Joshua Wahl, 16

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Apollo was a glorious god but has been cast down to earth by Zeus as nothing but a normal, mortal teenager named Lester Papadopoulos. Apollo must restore five Oracles in order to earn his return to his godly form. This begins with Lester and his demigod master, Meg and their satyr guide, Grover traveling through the labyrinth in order to reach California quickly to free the next oracle. Once they reach California, they discover it is engulfed in wildfires and the surrounding plant life is being destroyed. Grover leads them to shelter with a group of dryads, which happens to be the remains of Meg's original childhood home. She lived there with her botanist father until he was killed in New York, her house was burnt to the ground and she was taken in by Nero. Lester figures out the identity of the third emperor, Caligula. They meet with Piper McLean and investigate a section of the labyrinth, where the heat and fire seem to be emanating from. In the labyrinth they figure out that Medea is working with Caligula to try to make him the new sun god. Then they meet with Jason, another demigod, who helps them find Caligula's fleet of 100 yachts. They battle Caligula where one-character sacrifices himself so his friends can escape with the tools needed to find the oracle. Lester and Meg reenter the labyrinth and complete their mission.

I have read the entire Trials of Apollo series and I thought this was the best book in the series. There is a lot of fast paced adventure, which really holds the reader's attention. I enjoyed the battle scenes, and the theme of grief was very well done. It felt like the book was going back and forth a lot to different locations and it sometimes felt like the characters were going in circles. But I found this book to be one of Rick Riordan's best works.

The book does have some violence and a main character is tragically killed, so I think this book would be appropriate for any teenager, but not pre-teens or young children. There are themes of violence and sacrifice. Lester graphically stabs himself in the chest in an attempt to buy more time for his friends, so I would not suggest this book as a read for very young readers. But this book would make a great gift for teen fans of mythology.

Recommended Titles:

The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle by Rick Riordan

The Trials of Apollo: The Dark Prophecy by Rick Riordan

The Trials of Apollo: The Tyrant's Toom by Rick Riordan

The Trials of Apollo: The Tower of Nero by Rick Riordan