Review of *The Amulet of Samarkand* by Jonathan Stroud

By Isabella Song

Rating: 4 stars

I recently read The Amulet of Samarkand, and I loved it. It's the first book in the Bartimaeus Trilogy and sets the scene for the following books to come. The summary of the story is that Nathaniel, an eleven year old magician's apprentice, decides to get revenge after a magician named Simon Lovelace publicly humiliates him. The story follows him and the djinni, a spirit, he summons to help him exact his revenge. What makes the story really interesting to read is the shifting points of view between Nathaniel and Bartimaeus, the aforementioned djinni. While Nathaniel's is written in third-person objective, Bartimaeus' is written in first-person point of view with some corresponding footnotes that explain things in greater detail and betray his sarcastic wit. This is not a Harry Potter book where the main character is a great, good hero that proves that love surpasses all. In fact, all the magicians in this book, Nathaniel included, are arrogant and selfish, using spirits under their order for their own wants and needs. The djinni, Bartimaeus, is also a cold character, trying to find loopholes to get out of its orders and hopefully kill Nathaniel. This part is what I love the most about the book. It proves that not everyone has kind intentions and that evil does exist in the world. Besides the brilliant plot and interesting characters, the author Jonathan Stroud's writing is detailed, using plenty of figurative language. All these put together made this an intriguing book to read.