



The Vanishing Sculptor

Donita K. Paul

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Before DragonSpell, on a different continent and a different time, a young emerlindian's desperate decision threatens to disrupt the foundation of the world. Tipper has been caring for her family's estate for years now, ever since her father disappeared, making a living by selling off his famous artwork. Then she learns that three statues she sold were carved from an ancient foundation stone, and the fabric of her reality is crumbling. She must free her father and save the world. But she can't do it alone. Her ragtag band of adventurers includes Beccaroon, a giant parrot; Bealomondore, an aristocratic young artist; a handsome dragonkeeper prince; the Wizard Fenworth; and the tumanhofer librarian Librettowit. Together they travel through valleys and kingdoms and consort with purveyors of good and agents of evil to find and reunite the missing statues. Will they learn to rely on Wulder's grace and guidance along the way?

The Vanishing Sculptor Details

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From Reader Review The Vanishing Sculptor for online ebook

Mary says

What really bothered me about this book were the characters. Each one is self-righteous, except Tipper, who just comes off as the bullied/stupid character.

Tipper

In the beginning of the book, we're introduced to Tipper and her half-mad mother, Lady Peg, and we see how horrible their life is because of her father disappearing. Tipper cries about it often, but when her father actually does come back, she welcomes him like it was no big deal that he disappeared leaving her and her mother to fend for themselves. It is revealed later that he disappeared because of something he couldn't control, but Tipper didn't know that when she first saw him again. She's not angry at all. Any normal person would blame their father if he disappeared out of the blue like that.

She's always being ridiculed for being 'excitable' by Wizard Fenworth when she's acting how any normal person would. When Tipper's father gets kidnapped, of course she is going to be worried but they just call her stupid for not keeping a level head. Why didn't they try to calm her down before figuring out their rescue mission? Later on in the books, Paul tries to backtrack Fenworth's rude treatment of Tipper by Fenworth suddenly starting to say that she's tender-hearted.

And throughout the whole book, Tipper actually doesn't do *anything*. She's just the pair eyes the reader looks through. She could be taken out of the book and nothing really would change. Fenworth solves all of the problems.

Prince Jayrus

When we are first introduced to him, he's showing off his riding skills on his dragons, which is the perfect intro to him considering that he's very arrogant. A few times when he is talking to Tipper about how he'll ride one of the dragons to help with the rescue mission, he uses his hands to demonstrate the simple concept like she can't understand otherwise. And later, when the tumanhofers and Beccaroon are leaving, they bow to Tipper but Jayrus automatically assumes that they are bowing to him. It's only a few days later that he becomes the Paladin and is told by other characters that he is not as arrogant anymore, but we aren't *shown* that.

I also hated that towards the end, Paul started calling him Paladin instead of Jayrus. He was first introduced as Jayrus, he should stay that way. And if you've read the original series, it can be very confusing because then I started imagining the Paladin from that series as Jayrus.

Tipper's and Jayrus's relationship is horrible. He acts very condescending to her, like everyone else. Tipper goes from being infatuated with him one second to not liking him the next. If your love interest makes you feel confused and then infatuated within the span of five seconds, then you should probably give up on him.

Wizard Fenworth

Fenworth, Fenworth, Fenworth, how I do not like you. I don't remember you being this condescending in the original series, but I think that was because I wasn't really paying attention. You are the most self-righteous

one of them all.

He hardly explains complicated concepts and ridicules people who don't immediately get them or haven't heard of such things at all. Immediately when he gets to Chiril, he calls them all heathens and insults their way of life just because it's different than Amara's. And this is the person that's suppose to find the Paladin and help spread Wulder's laws. He's very rude; he falls asleep while people are talking to him, insults others, and struts around like he's the best thing since sliced bread. Maybe you should work on your people skills, Fenworth, instead of insulting Tipper on hers.

Here's a really frustrating example of why you should not like him either : When their party is being charged at by large sheep, he pulls Tipper out of the way but leaves Bealomondore to hold onto one of the sheep unless he wants to get trampled. Tipper yells at Fenworth to help Bealomondore but he refuses though it is completely in his power to save him. And he has the audacity to call Tipper excitable and stupid for her behavior! Bealomondore was in trouble and she was genuinely worried for him, as she should be.

Beccaroon

He is a very smart parrot, though the mystery of where these talking parrots come from is never explained. But he does seem to be pompous when instructing Tipper on proper etiquette when her social skills seem to be fine. And once, he is very rude, skipping the proper etiquette, and Tipper calls him out on it.

Beccaroon is humbled a bit from loosing his tail. He asks Jayrus to let him ride with him on his dragon for some of the time but doesn't want the others know.

Bealomondore

He's really not bad. In the first part of the book he comes off a bit arrogant and tries to exaggerate his finery. Tipper does wrong him, and he has the right to be mad at her later on. As the plot continues, he acts normal.

Verrin Schope

The proclaimed genius of this world. He's the only one that gains praise from Fenworth. I don't have any real problems with him that I can remember off the top of my head.

Other Points I Didn't Like About This Book

Runan and Mushand, when they have the party held prisoner, treat them too nicely. They only need Lady Peg, why not kill everyone else? Mushand is only in on their scheme so he can have the most wonderful art in the world. *What in the world!?* I know that there are some serious art fanatics out there, but I just can't understand that.

Evil and good are always black and white in this book, but in the real world it's not that simple. Of course God/Wulder knows what is right and what is wrong but we as humans don't always know for sure.

The climax didn't help the book at all. It was the normal battle of wizards that Paul likes to include at the end of her books where the protagonist is merely there to watch it. Being the eyes of the third party isn't that fun or suspenseful.

I did not get the thing at the end about the doll, Lady Peg, and her mother. None of that really made sense to

me. And why Lady Peg was banished from the castle was never explained, which it should have been because it proved to be a very important part of the story.

It is also interesting to note that Tipper is the only female in her company and she is the worst treated. Paul may not have meant for that, but it's there. The men are always trying to convince to stay behind because she's not experienced enough; neither is Bealomondore, but he can go. And all of the women seem to be somehow stupid or inferior. Orphelia was overpowered by her husband, Lady Peg was half-mad, Madam Markezze is described as contrite, and so on. There's not many female characters anyway.

This book is very similar and just as bad as the DragonKeeper Chronicles.

Cheryl Olson says

This was my first adventure reading Donita K Paul with her Christian Fantasy Book The Dragons of Chiril: A Novel and I doubt it will be my last. This book was chock full of great characters, interesting storylines and adventurous settings to keep the imagination of the reader stirred for sure. I think readers of all ages would really enjoy this fantasy tale.

Our main character Tipper is a girl whose father has disappeared unexplained many years ago. Her mother Lady Peg Schope is seemingly mentally incompetent claiming to always be talking to her absent husband. This leaves Tipper to have to fend for their household to keep things running. As a result, Tipper has sold many pieces of her Father's artwork in order to make ends meet as her father; Verrin Schope was a well known artist. Unfortunately, three of Verrin Schope's sculptures (all sold) hold the key to his disappearance in the form of a portal and with their separation a necessary journey to reunite these sculptures becomes most necessary to help save Tipper's father as well as the world.

Every great fantasy novel always has a noble quest to save the world and this one is no different. My favorite part of this novel is truly the characters, the rag-tag band of travelers that unite to conquer this problem. Assembled in this group are Tipper of course, her always disappearing father Verrin Schope (you'll have to read the book to see why), Beccaroon, grand parrot and guardian left to watch over Tipper, Bealomondore, a local artist, Wizard Fenworth (who appears fairly bumbling, but is smarter than meets the eye) and sidekick librarian Librettowit (well named as he is very witty), and of course a handsome prince- love those guys. Together they are in a race against time to save Verrin Schope as well as repair the portal which is starting to crumble things around the countryside- not good. Of course there are dragons in this book which help the travelers out in many ways- transportation for one, as well as the minor dragons have special gifts and talents such as healing, and mood lifting, etc.

I like the way this story moved along, yes there were the good guys and the bad guys and the epic struggle that always takes place with that, but I loved other aspects to the storyline as well, such as the family dynamics that come into play at the end of the novel- which I don't want to spoil, but I really appreciated that nuance to the story, sometimes the biggest battles that need to be overcome are with our own family. Also important to note is the character of "Wulder" which is the great creator. Much of his wisdom is woven into the story as a guiding force. This is not done in a hit you over the head with it overly preachy kind of way, but naturally done in the fabric of the story.

This book did have a "prequel" feeling to it for me as a first time reader and I can't help but feel that I will gain more and get a broader feel for these characters if I continue on in this series and read the next book.

(Ah, but I'm sure that's the whole point.) It's always fun for me to read a "new-author-to me" and I'll put Donita K. Paul in as a great new fantasy writer.

Disclosure- A free review copy was graciously provided to me through the publisher in exchange for an honest review. All opinions expressed are my own.

The Dragons of Chiril: A Novel

Child_of_Aslan says

Sometimes Fenworth definitely gets it right, despite his contrariness and odd ways. ;)

"Young man, you have listened to Librettowit for too long. Problems are not problems before they occur. After a problem has sprouted, it is indeed proper and prudent to address the problem. But to attend to a problem before it has manifested as a problem is foolhardy. Kindly refrain from attempting to present problems that are, at the moment, nonexistent."

Ever stop and think about why you're worrying about something? Why you're stressing out over something that hasn't even happened, and may never happen?

That's one of the things I like about the DragonKeeper Chronicles and the others like them. They aren't just fantasy, but Christian fantasy - like The Chronicles of Narnia. There's the general story, but also something that makes you stop and think and ponder your faith and how you live your life.

True, some of Donita K. Paul's stories can be a bit too much on the romantic side ('Dragons of the Watch' would probably have some guys gagging - like my BiL), but other ones, like 'DragonKnight' or 'DragonLight'? I feel like there should be more of these type stories on the children's shelves.

Certainly not Twilight. :P Seriously, the Young Adult section of the library is depressing.

Yucky-yuck-yuck.

But back to our regularly scheduled program.....

I am currently going through 'The Dragons of Chiril' for the first time (I have to admit, I read the second book first and the third book second), and while some of the writing is not as smoothly done as I would like, I am enjoying the story. Donita K. Paul does a good job on her world-building, and her characters are loveable. Reepicheep-the-Mouse loveable.

Plus, I love dragons. ;) Don't get me started on the Eragon books. ;D

Donita K. Paul is a good writer, and she doesn't just write Children's Fantasy. Go check out her 'Two Tickets to the Christmas Ball' book. It's good. :D

Just sayin'....

Brenda says

Donita K. Paul is one of my very favorite authors. The Vanishing Sculptor takes us back into the world we first discovered in the Dragonkeeper series. I loved being back. This book wasn't particularly fast paced until the end, but I really enjoyed it. I read it slowly because I didn't want it to be over. I really hope this is the start of a new series.

Madeline J. Rose says

[I feel so b

Barb says

I found the pace of the plot a bit slow. While the world was okay, there are a lot of made up words that only distracted me from the story.

Amydeanne says

The witty banter just tickles me. I mean I can vividly picture these conversations going on.

You still have to have your own imagination going on with the dragons flying over head and the wizards about, but really this is a fun and enjoyable book for all. You feel like you know the characters intimately and you'll be looking forward to reading the next book!

Paul offers something that I haven't found in a lot of fantasy books. She captures the genre with a fresh and delightful take. I literally could picture the tiny dragon Tipper's father brought home. I could not just picture the wizards, but could see them vividly in my mind.

I think most people will enjoy this book, even if you're not into "sci-fi". I think it is imaginative and creative and couldn't help but enjoy it.

Cloud says

Not nearly as good as Dragonspell or DragonQuest. I had to drag myself through the beginning chapters. The prose was awkward and didn't flow well, so much so that I was continually pulled away from the story. I'm glad I stuck with the book though, as it improved dramatically towards the end. And I will confess that I squealed like a seven year old when I first heard Fenworth say "Tut tut, oh dear". :) The twist with Jayrus was surprising, but acceptable.

Fred Warren says

Tipper is at her wit's end. She's been struggling to manage her family's estate since her father, the famous sculptor Verrin Schope, disappeared several years ago. To make ends meet, she's had to discharge most of the workers and sell off her celebrated father's most cherished works. Her dotty mother's extravagant spending habits don't help, and the wise old Grand Parrot Beccaroon, despite providing invaluable moral support, isn't much of a manager, either.

And things are getting worse. Tipper begins having ghostly visions of her father. Is he dead, or has Tipper fallen into her mother's bizarre fantasy that Verrin Shope makes nightly visits home? She learns from a pair of strange visitors that her father is trapped in a hole between dimensions, and it's slowly dissolving him. The problem extends to the fabric of reality itself, which is beginning to unravel and threatens the entire world. It seems a matched set of Verrin's sculptures formed the anchor of one end of a dimensional portal, and when Tipper sold the three pieces to different buyers, the portal was disrupted, starting all the mischief.

To save her father and her world, Tipper must recover the missing sculptures, and there's no time to lose. Is this sheltered country girl up to the challenge? She's going to need a lot of help. Fortunately, there are friends closer at hand than Tipper realizes, and something wonderful is astir that will change Tipper's world forever.

Donita K. Paul's *The Vanishing Sculptor* is a charming fantasy tale of adventure and discovery that promises to appeal to all ages. It's a prequel of sorts to her *DragonKeeper Chronicles*, but familiarity with those stories isn't a prerequisite to enjoyment of this one.

At first glance, *The Vanishing Sculptor* is a straightforward adventure-quest story, with a lot of familiar elements. There's a lost treasure to recover, a journey to undertake, villains to vanquish, and a world-shattering threat hanging over the whole enterprise that must be neutralized. The heroine, Tipper, is a winsome young lady with a lot to learn about the world and herself. She has an assortment of friends to help with her quest—a wizard, a warrior, an artist, a scholar, and a wise advisor. There are also dragons, which are much more than the sluggish housepets they initially appear to be.

That last point is one element of a major theme that characterized the story for me: *Appearances Are Deceiving*. Just about everybody and everything in this story has some hidden depths or talents that nobody suspects, and sometimes even the individual in question isn't aware of the full extent of their abilities. Little sculptures hold the fabric of the world together. The absent-minded wizard isn't quite as random as he appears. The young dragonkeeper is much more than the custodian of an isolated castle. Tipper's seemingly senile mother has method to her madness, and even Tipper herself has a power she never imagined.

In the course of learning to not take anything at face value, Tipper and her friends, and, incidentally, the reader, begin to see that there are real, powerful, unseen forces that shape their world. Tipper's people have a kind of agnostic acknowledgment of a supreme being, but it quickly becomes clear that this quest has been orchestrated by a very real Deity, Wulder, who wants to reveal a revolutionary, liberating truth to the entire world. It's a huge paradigm shift for Tipper and her skeptical adviser, Beccaroon, and they don't fully embrace it at the end of the book, but the path ahead is clear.

There were a couple of things about the story that didn't quite connect with me. Ms. Paul has an affinity for long names, and I acknowledge that there's a lot of preexisting worldbuilding for this universe, and things need to be consistent, but every time I confronted a tongue-twisting name, even one I'd seen before, it

interrupted the flow of the story. I felt a bit like Charlie Brown, who, when asked how he handled the Russian names in *The Brothers Karamazov*, replied that he simply “beeped” over them.

The other thing that tripped me up a little was how characters began stressing how important honesty was to Wulder, even going out of their way to reveal information about their quest to potential enemies because it would be wrong to deceive them, yet when grilled by a town sheriff about a fight in an enemy’s house that resulted in the death of said enemy, they spun a story that sidestepped what actually happened, placing implied blame for the incident on the enemy’s thugs. This yielded a “wink, wink, nudge, nudge” resolution in which the sheriff tacitly acknowledged they’d done him a favor by taking out the bad guy.

Ethically speaking, I’ve got a lot more difficulty with lying to an officer of the law than withholding information from someone who intends to do me harm and may pose a threat to the entire world. Not a huge point, perhaps, but I think it’s important to be consistent about these things.

The WaterBrook Press paperback I purchased has beautiful cover art and nice black and white sketches of the three pivotal sculptures inside. Ms. Paul includes a helpful glossary of important people, places, and things, as well as a map of the land of Chiril, where the story is set. A subtitle on the cover declares it “A Fantastic Journey of Discovery for All Ages,” and I think that’s truth in advertising. I enjoyed this story and expect it will appeal to just about anyone who likes fantasy.

Laura says

Tipper is a young emerlindian who’s responsible for the upkeep of her family’s estate during her sculptor father’s absence. Tipper soon discovers that her actions have unbalanced the whole foundation of her world, and she must act quickly to undo the calamitous threat. But how can she save her father and her world on her own?

The task is too huge for one person, so she gathers the help of some unlikely companions--including the nearly five-foot tall parrot Beccaroon--and eventually witnesses the loving care and miraculous resources of Wulder. Through Tipper’s breathtaking story, readers will discover the beauty of knowing and serving God. I am not a big fantasy fan. I generally try to avoid giving reviews for these types of books, but I have been kicking myself now for avoiding them! Author Donita K. Paul has converted me. I loved this book and I can see why young people are enthralled with anything written by Ms. Paul. I am so taken with *The Vanishing Sculptor* that I am now going to go back and read the books that have made her famous - *The Dragon Keeper Chronicles*.

I was delighted with the characters. From wizards, to tumanhofers, to Grand Talking Parrots the journey into the world of Chiril kept me enthralled from the first page! Why I have denied myself fantasy novels boggles the mind!

The subtle message of our need for a Saviour was not lost on me and I’m sure will not be lost on anyone who reads this book. Ms. Paul has done a marvellous job of using fantasy to show her readers, both young and old how precious the love of God is toward His children.

Sky Destrian says

I loved this book. Period. While it was way different than the Dragon Keeper Chronicles, Donita K. Paul's first fantasy series, I found it easy to relate to the characters and slip back into the new yet familiar world that she recreated in this book. If you are a fantasy fan, I'd definitely recommend this for you.

A. G. says

The Dragons of Chiril is a very cute story. It is the first in a trilogy of prequels to Donita K. Paul's DragonKeeper series, and as such, some old favorites make their way into the book. There are also wonderful new characters, such as Tipper, a young emerlindian anxious for adventure, and Sir Beccaroon, her slightly stuffy guardian. The magic system from the DragonKeeper series also appears here; the characters still use their talents in a unique way to glorify Wulder.

The story itself is very good, full of adventure and startling plot twists. But parts of it are a bit odd. A few characters practically disappear from the story, even though it seemed like there would be more of them later. The ending was also rather strange; I felt like there should have been more to it. But it's hard to complain too much. This book is entertaining, amusing, and all around delightful, one that families will enjoy to read.

Jill Williamson says

Tipper, a young emerlindian woman, has been scrounging to take care of her family estate since her father went missing. Since her father was a renowned sculptor, Tipper had no choice but to sell off his work to pay the bills. But her father returns suddenly, then vanishes again. Then he reappears, then vanishes, then reappears. It seems that Tipper's father is being affected by a portal between two sides of the world. Long ago, he had crafted three sculptures out of a special chunk of stone that happened to be the portal that held their world together. Now he must put the sculptures back to restore balance to the land and his own body. The only problem is that Tipper sold all three pieces. Tipper and her father set off with an unlikely group of friends to find the missing sculptures and restore balance.

This story inhabits the same world as Donita's DragonKeeper Chronicles and includes a few characters from the original series that we've all come to love. Donita K. Paul writes beautifully. I love her storyworld and the personalities she creates. She is truly gifted. I thought this story had an interesting premise. It was a fun read with a long quest (which I always love) and interesting obstacles that crop up to waylay our heroes. I didn't get as hooked into the tale as I'd hoped. I think that was because there were a lot of characters to follow. They were interesting, wonderful characters, but they often took the spotlight away from Tipper. Fans of Donita's work will love to see some old characters take part in the story. I'm not sure if this is meant to be the first book in a series or not. A few doors were left open to a sequel, so I'm interested to see what might happen in a second book. Recommended.

Naomi Brignola-van calster says

The story was quite slow, and I didn't feel like the world was sufficiently fleshed out. It was mainly a few made up animals and foods that was supposed to illustrate the fact that this story is set in a different world. It is possible that if I read all the books the author wrote in this world, I 'get it' more, but ideally you are 'in' after only one book.

I don't feel like I am being entirely fair, as I read this not long after reading The Lord of the Rings, and that comparison is hardly fair at all.

I enjoyed reading it but it's not the kind of book I will be reading again. Once you've read it you got everything there is to get, and I don't feel like there are hidden treasures or additional value to be gotten from reading it again. The story line is a bit too boring to want to read it for the story's sake alone.

Candace Cisman says

Ms Paul always writes a captivating book and this is no exception.
