



## The Copper Elephant

*Adam Rapp*

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In a nightmarish, post-apocalyptic world, most Undertwelves are sent down to the Pits to bust rocks, where they die of disease and exhaustion, or are killed by dogs, trying to escape. Whensday has been saved from this fate. She must live in hiding, but if she can dodge burning rain, avoid brutish soldiers, and keep from starving, perhaps she'll survive. She must bond together with other fugitives and refugees to form some kind of family -- and somehow save herself.

## **The Copper Elephant Details**

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Author : Adam Rapp

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## From Reader Review The Copper Elephant for online ebook

### **CJ Willis says**

Recommended for it's strong voice by carol berg.

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### **Cindywho says**

This post-apocalyptic tale was - naturally - relentlessly bleak. The character was well described just by the language she used. Her poisonous environment in which love survives is vivid. Unfortunately the ending was a little off, but I think it would have been hard to be believably hopeful. I looked into Rapp's other titles, but they also looked relentlessly bleak, without the post-apocalyptic angle, so I don't think I'll bite.

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### **Jason Kurtz says**

A pre-cursor to books like Feed and [Book: House of the Scorpion], horrendous covers may have contributed to this books lack of popularity.

The story is told from the perspective on an eleven year old girl, Whensday. She lives in a future ruled by a fascist regime that employs child slave labor. She is on the verge of starvation throughout most of the book, and the future is bleak. A gritty, simple story with complex themes.

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### **Eunmi says**

It was a very interesting book writing-wise. I appreciated the language esp. the made-up words. I also appreciated the structure of the book and how it was written almost like a play.

At the same time, I am really glad that I've read this before handing it over to my 13 yr old daughter because 1)she would not have handled the despairing bleakness very well 2) one particular thing that happens to the heroine in the middle of the book would have bothered her greatly.

Well, actually the awful things the characters are made to go through really grated on me, and I absolutely understand that the author had wanted for that to happen, but I could not have that distance between the story and I as a reader where I can read and appreciate the book as whole.

Maybe this was a wrong book at wrong time;it's been miserable and continuously snowing/raining last couple of weeks in New England. The RL weather worked with relentless acid rain in the book and made the reading quite depressing. Maybe I, having two young daughters of my own, over-emphasized with the heroine and her plight? So my enjoyment of the book was near zero and I am grading the book based solely on my emotional reaction.

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### **DeAnna Knippling says**

This had great voice and great characters. The dystopia was interesting.

However, it was like anything that has a really great technique to no point whatsoever:

Girl lives in a pointlessly horrible dystopia, probably a collection of the worst things the author can possibly think of. Are there aliens or aren't there? What the hell is going on? You never find out, but don't worry - things get worse, and that's all that's really necessary, in a dystopia. After being raped and knocked up and everyone she knows is dead except the little kid she loves but who is a complete and utter ass, she learns you have to appreciate the little things. The end.

Really? I mean, really?

"Things go from bad to worse and don't ever get better" is a tricky theme to pull off, and usually requires black humor a la Kafka or at least some kind of resolution where the main character dies but so does the person who was on his last nerve, a la Shakespeare.

I skimmed and skimmed after the first third. Please, just get this over with...but I had to find out the ending. I shouldn't have bothered.

Also: the elephant was made out of aluminum. Grrrr.

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### **Arminzerella says**

In a dystopian future where poisonous rain falls from the sky, people live in "life holes" and children under 12 are sent to work in the Pit. There's another part of the world where you can still see the sun and where a more privileged class of people live. Whensday is a Digit kid – an orphan who has been numbered and taken into one of the houses (Whensday Bluehouse). But instead of going into the Pit, Whensday is rescued from that fate by Tick Burrowman, an old man who builds bodyboxes (the coffins that hold the corpses of the Digit kids who die down in the Pit). He hides her in a bodybox and brings her back to his life hole where he feeds and cares for her, and she helps him make more bodyboxes. She learns, however, that Tick is planning to sell her to a woman from the upper crust, and she doesn't want to go. So she runs away. She doesn't get far before meeting Honeycut – an older and bigger, but mentally feeble guy (about 19 years old). He's been looking for his brother, Gil, who was taken from him and sent into the Pit. He's lonely and scared and Whensday decides she'll keep him company for awhile.

While she's out exploring, Whensday is raped by another person she knew – an officer who used to come by Tick Burrowman's life hole. Honeycut realizes she's being hurt and kills the man. Soon after this, Whensday meets another Digit kid, a younger one, by the name of Oakley Brownhouse, and she develops a crush on him.

Honeycut is soon captured by members of the Syndicate and accused of murdering the officer who raped Whensday. And Oakley disappears, so Whensday is all alone again. She meets up with yet another person

she remembers from her time with Tick. They plan to use a bodybox boat to try to get to the other side of the Red River. But the man is very sick and he dies mid-crossing. Whensday isn't strong enough to paddle to the other side of the river herself, and the current carries her back to the shore she came from.

She finds Oakley again, and starts vomiting constantly. Thinking she has caught some kind of fatal sickness, she gives Oakley her papers (the ones who identify her and her age), so that he can claim he's 12 and join the Syndicate (rather than be sent into the Pit). Then she wanders off. When she wakes up she's clean and among a clan of women, safe from the Syndicate, and safe from the poisonous atmosphere. It turns out she's pregnant, and that's why she's been ill. The women, called the Babymakers, keep her with them.

And then, abruptly, it all ends. There's this sense throughout the book that Whensday Bluehouse is someone very special. That she's going to do this great and worthy thing, but you don't know what it is...and then it's just that she's having a baby? I'm not sure that I understand it. Is she some kind of Madonna? And babies don't seem to be valued at all – all of those kids keep ending up in the Pit, so how are children important – except to those folks who live up where they can see the sun? It's all a bit ambiguous.

The world would be more interesting if we saw more of it. But there's precious little to see, what with the restrictions of the Syndicate and the poisonous rain. You can't really get anywhere. And Whensday and the others she meets don't really know much of anything. They know enough to pique your interest, but they can't tell you more about how and why and what next. The rain's turned into snow by the end, so perhaps that means that better things are on the way, that the world is healing itself, that the ugliness will eventually be washed away. I'm not sure.

There's a whole different kind of language/slang here that works really well. Definitely helps to bring the world to life for the reader. It's very free form in some ways, especially Whensday's speech.

Bad things happen and things that might be considered very adult for a 12 year old are mentioned casually and realistically and matter of factly. This is just how things are. The way it's written may actually cause younger, less mature readers to miss what's really happened.

I liked parts of this, like the style and the writing, but I don't feel like it went anywhere.

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### **Kristy Dallas says**

Another fascinating post-apocalyptic dystopian novel.

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### **Darryl says**

This is an amazing novel that immerses the reader in a bleak and disturbing world. Using a intimate first person perspective - the reader truly experiences the environment that has been created. I felt myself continually surprised at the direction the book would take, yet surprise turned into acceptance of the situation (I won't spoil details for you!). All of the characters are vivid and compelling. I only hope that there will be a sequel, for I want to be taken back to this world...

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### **Anina says**

This was his book for a younger audience and it still filled me with anxiety in a perfect way. The tiny heroine was very compelling and one of the more interesting female sci-fi characters I have read for kids or adults in a long time. The only thing that bothered me was the vernacular, I like that stuff but this came on a little strong.

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### **Tasha says**

The book leaves you with a lot of unanswered questions, this is a fact. I felt that was what made it such a great read. I don't understand those who need to have all their questions answered. Do you feel more complete when a book has an epilogue? Sometimes authors like to leave you, the reader, with a sense that you can finish the story and color in the gaps yourself.

It is a dark read, and has a looming sense of doom at all turns. I felt the dread of this story ending and not knowing what that ending was. That was what I liked; it evoked a feeling other than, "oh, it's over. Time to move on to the next book." The story stayed with me for days after I read it, as I wrestled with my mind over what happened and will happen.

As well, it is in the young adult section. Some of it may not appeal to a younger reader. I have never been restricted from reading material, so I think the idea that this story is inappropriate for a younger audience should be left up to individual parents and the maturity level of their children.

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### **Rebecca says**

I liked the premise of a young girl trying to survive in a bleak future but the book itself was just too freaking bleak and depressing. I understand it's set on a post-apocalyptic Earth but the main character is just a child and it's unbearably sad everything that happens to her. I think the ending was supposed to be "hopeful" but it honestly just made me feel even sadder for the main character - since I put in a spoiler note I'll say what really bothered me. She is only eleven years old and during the story is raped. She becomes pregnant and is rescued by some good people who will help her have the baby. It's supposed to be a hopeful thing I guess since there were so few healthy children in the world but it just made me feel sad for her that she had to have a baby so young after getting pregnant from such horrible circumstances.

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### **Trilobyte says**

Spicy mansmells

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