

School Library Association review of 'The Leopard in the Golden Cage' and 'Saving the Unicorn's Horn'

17 February 2016

Appears under 'Review Bonus' on SLA website

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Edwards, Julia. *The Leopard in the Golden Cage (The Scar Gatherer)* Laverstock Publishing, 2015, pp220, £7.99. 978 0 9928443 0 1. *Saving the Unicorn's Horn*. 978 0 9928443 2 5

One measure of a good read is the pleasure felt on discovering that there is a sequel, and these stories meet that criterion.

In the first, while visiting Fishbourne Roman Palace, Joe Hopkins finds himself transported back in time, where he meets Lucy who shows him what life is like in Roman Britain. In the second he travels back to Viking Jorvik, where he finds a reincarnation of Lucy and her family.

These novels are described as “consciously educational” and a further five are planned, covering historical periods in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum, but they are not overtly didactic. We find out about daily life in the past as it is experienced by Joe. There is also danger and in the course of helping Lucy’s family and thwarting the villains Joe collects a wound which leads to the series title – *The Scar Gatherer*.

The central characters are likeable, and the tricky logistics of time-travel are managed adroitly enough for us to suspend disbelief. This is not by any means an original idea but it is well handled and could be a popular addition to the genre.

Kathryn Tyson