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***Bloodtree Chronicles: Thatchthorpe* by Elizabeth Pulford, illustrated by Donovan Bixley**

Publisher: Scholastic NZ

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Thatchthorpe, book 3 of *The Bloodtree Chronicles*, is sure to delight both those who enjoyed *Sanspell* and *Bragonsthyme*, and those who pick this up and get drawn into the saga. *Thatchthorpe* works as a stand-alone fantasy, with sufficient references to the events of Books 1 and 2 for continuing readers who may have forgotten parts.

Abigail/Spindale is caught up in yet another battle against the intrigue of the nasty Rackenard, and the magic spells of his daughter Zizmena. Her friends Flint and Bramble are once again here to assist. Her Great-aunts, with their story-writing and story-telling responsibilities, do what they can, killing off the wordworm that threatens the life of the Bloodtree. Enticingly, their conversations hint at further stories yet to be added to this series, even though *Thatchthorpe* is described as a conclusion to the Bloodtree saga.

Abigail continues to worry about the bullies who plague her life at school, and about the whereabouts of her father, away at war. The despicable Rackenard causes Abigail/Spindale to become so angry that she shouts at him – and discovers how to treat bullies. The gentle puzzle-loving Thatchthorpe enlightens her in ways that assist her in her quest, and tells her about his father, his background, and upbringing.

A satisfying ending sees Abigail back in the real world, with both parents, with the bullies sent on their way and with another student wanting her to be his friend.

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Reviewed by Chris Wright

