

WAY OF THE SWORD, THE (YOUNG SAMURAI, BOOK 2) BY CHRIS BRADFORD



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From School Library Journal

Grade 6-9 Bradford raises the stakes for his blond samurai student in this second installment in the series. Previously shipwrecked after his father was murdered by the ninja leader Dragon Eye, Jack is continuing his training as a samurai at his foster father's school for young warriors. Dedicated to keeping his father's navigational log from Dragon Eye, who has tried to steal it before, Jack hides the book at the castle of the daimyo, where he feels it will be safer. In the meantime, he must train to participate in the Circle of Three, a trial that would allow him to learn a double-sword-fighting technique, one he feels he needs to defend himself against the ninja's treachery. To add to his worries, his friend Akiko is acting strangely, disappearing in the night, and Jack suspects she may be training as a ninja. Bradford combines the structure of a British school story with the flavor of 17th-century Japan, and his descriptions of both swordplay and hand-to-hand martial arts reveal his extensive knowledge of the subject. Young martial artists will be eager to try out sticky-hands drills in their own dojos. Though the secondary cast is often too large to keep track of and only a few of the characters are fully developed, the ongoing struggle between honorable samurai and dastardly ninja will draw both reluctant readers and enthusiasts of Japanese history. Alana Joli Abbott, James Blackstone Memorial Library, Branford, CT

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About the Author

Chris Bradford has trained in karate, kickboxing and samurai swordsmanship. He earned his black belt in Zen Kyo Shin Taijutsu, the secret fighting art of the ninja. Before writing the Young Samurai series, he was a professional musician and songwriter and has performed for HRH Queen Elizabeth II. You can learn more about Chris Bradford and his books at www.youngsamurai.com.

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After being shipwrecked in Japan, adopted, and taught the Way of the Warrior at samurai school, Jack is ready to embark on the next chapter of his training: the Way of the Sword. His lessons involve fighting blindfolded, using a b-o staff, and finding messages in origami—all while withstanding the constant pressure of being a foreigner. The stakes are raised even higher when the school holds a contest. The winners will learn the great samurai Masamoto-sama's secret martial arts technique.

- Sales Rank: #345141 in eBooks
- Published on: 2010-03-28
- Released on: 2010-03-28
- Format: Kindle eBook

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a professional musician and songwriter and has performed for HRH Queen Elizabeth II. You can learn more about Chris Bradford and his books at www.youngsamurai.com.

Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Couldn't put it down

By Ashley Carter

I know this is a teen novel and I am going on 30, but this really sucked me in. LOL. Perhaps it is because I am a martial artist and have a thing for martial art related novels, but I found this to be well written. The plot, though fairly simple, has side plots, which I find quite nice. The main character faces many trials and tribulations in this book, a bit of bullying and typical teen angst. Oh, and of course, there is his arch-nemesis "Dragon Eye" who wants him dead (and he also wants to take something valuable Jack has)! I also like that it is an easy read so I can sort of zonk out and not have to really "focus" on what I am reading. I'd say it's worth a read if you are looking for a fantasy teen novel.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Exciting Japanese Adventure

By K. Quinlan

I teach high school and purchased this series for my classroom library. Since then, I've had to acquire another set of the books because they are so popular! My guys - including ESOL guys! - are tearing through this series awfully fast. The action in the books is fast-paced, the characters sympathetic, the lessons supplied in koans. I find the series highly entertaining myself (I've read them all as well), and broadly historically accurate. The author runs an accompanying website where fans can do puzzles and games related to the books. The series is quite violent, but not graphically so.

Would recommend for any classroom library.

Would recommend for active boys or girls, 12+

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

good action/adventure story set in samurai days

By M. Tanenbaum

British author Chris Bradford continues his action-packed saga of samurai and ninja in the second installment of The Young Samurai series: The Way of the Sword. Jack Fletcher, shipwrecked, orphaned by ninja pirates, and then adopted by a samurai in 17th century Japan, has completed his first year of samurai school. His problems are not over, however; his classmates still taunt him as a "gaijin" (barbarian foreigner), anti-Christian sentiment is spreading, and worse yet, the evil ninja Dragon Eye is still after Jack and his father's rutter, which contains the secret routes to navigate the world's oceans.

Once every three years, the samurai students have a chance to compete in the ancient ritual of the Circle of Three, testing their mind, body, and spirit. Those who pass this test will be allowed to learn Two Heavens, a secret martial art technique. Selection trials are held, and only the top five students progress to the Circle. Readers will not be surprised that Jack is among this elite group, as is his female friend, Akiko, and Kazuki, his arch-enemy at school. But will Jack be able to survive the competition?

I would not advise reading these books out of order; readers might be confused without the background from the first book in the series.

Highly recommended and fun action-packed story, great for fans of Japanese culture.

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