



# The Sword of Kuromori

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Kenny is high above the Pacific Ocean on a flight from Seattle to Tokyo when he is handed a letter. It is a letter from his grandfather and it ends very strangely - make a copy of the letter, do not blow this whistle except in emergency and eat the letter. Kenny obeys two of the commands - but blows the whistle. From then on life becomes dangerous. Kenny discovers that, as Kuromori, his Japanese name, he has supernatural power, and it is up to him to save the world from certain destruction; destruction being engineered by the twisted Akamatsu through the earth dragon, Namazu. On the way he must face dreadful oni, tricky kappa and the terrifying God of War, Hachiman. Luckily he has the help of the feisty Kiyomi and the racoon-dog, Poyo.

This is lively adventure very much aimed at confident KS2 readers. The world of Greek and Norse mythology has been mined very effectively for children's books. Here, the author, turns to Japanese mythology and folk legend for his characters. Young readers familiar with Riordan and Julia Golding will have no problem with a world where the young hero discovers special powers and mythological beings impinge on everyday events. The action moves swiftly helped by plenty of dialogue. Though characterisation is light, and the usual tropes of family tensions - dead mother, absent father - create the necessary background, Kenny is likeable, ensuring sympathy from the reader. There are clever touches - Japanese numerals for the chapters, and the judicious use of Japanese words in the text emphasising the world that is Kenny's new home.

Kenny's mission is successful - but I am sure that another crisis will see him return. A useful addition to this particular genre.

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