

*Middlegame* by Seanan McGuire is a novel about an alchemist named James Reed that will stop at nothing to control time and reality. He creates a set of twins and harnesses them with the Doctrine of Ethos, which will give the twins (and thus Reed) the power to alter reality itself. After Reed separates them at birth, the twins grow up apart and unaware that their destiny is already written for them.

This novel has an amazing concept, and despite my general dislike for science fiction, I immensely enjoyed this book. It is the sort of book that deserves your full attention, and is certainly not one you can read in one sitting. But despite this, it is extremely easy to get sucked into the story. It starts off with the incredible concept of two twins created to destroy and remake the world. The plot is not entirely linear, and jumps around quite a bit. As the novel progresses, it only gets more interesting, and I couldn't stop myself from becoming attached to the characters as well. Although, with the added scientific aspects of the novel, it left me confused at times. But, strangely, this only made me more intrigued. I found that my confusion added to the hectic mood and apocalyptic theme of the book and left me wanting to reread it immediately after finishing it so that I might understand it in different ways each time.

In my opinion, many adult authors have trouble writing about children and teens, and I was impressed at McGuire's ability to seamlessly transition from the perspectives of the twins as children, teens, and adults. Those who have read Seanan McGuire's other works might be hesitant to pick up a book so different from her previous novels, but despite the vastly different themes, she continues to be an expert at balancing the complicated plot of *Middlegame* with the development of the characters. I highly recommend this novel to anyone who is willing to sit down and put in the time to read and enjoy it.