

The Marvellers

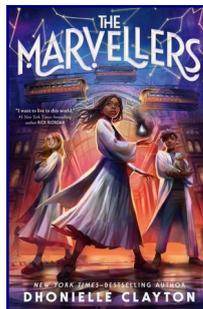
By Dhonielle Clayton
Publisher: Harper Collins
ISBN 9781460762882 SCIS: 5405327
\$17.99

Blurb:

Eleven-year-old Ella Durand is the first Conjuror to attend the Arcanum Training Institute, where Marvellers from all around the world come together to practice their cultural arts like brewing Indian spice elixirs, practicing Caribbean steel drum hypnosis, and bartering with fussy Irish faeries. Ella knows some people mistrust her Conjuror magic, often deemed "bad and unnatural," but she's eager to make a good impression - and, hopefully, some friends.

But Ella discovers that being the first isn't easy, and not all of the Marvellers are welcoming. Still, she connects with fellow misfits Brigit, a girl who hates magic, and Jason, who is never found without a magical creature or two. Just as Ella begins to find her way at the A.T.I., a notorious criminal escapes from prison, supposedly with Conjurors' help. Worse, her favorite teacher Masterji Thakur never returns from a research trip, and only Ella seems concerned about his disappearance.

As tensions grow in the Marvellian world, Ella finds herself the target of vicious rumors and growing suspicions. With the help of her new friends, Ella must find a way to clear her family's name and track down her beloved mentor Masterji Thakur . . . before she loses her place at the A.T.I. forever.



Lamont Review:

Ella and her family are Conjurors, and she is the first Conjuror selected to attend the famous Arcanum Training Institute.

Marvellers from all over the world send their children here to find out which element of marvel they belong to. But Ella's dreams are soon shattered when she realises most people don't trust her or her ability to conjure things. Luckily, she makes friends with Brigit and Jason, and her favourite teacher, Masterji Thakur, takes a special interest in her magical abilities.

When Masterji Thakur mysteriously disappears at the same time as dangerous criminals escape from prison, Ella and her friends decide its up to them to find him.

This is a wonderful story set in a world that I would love to live in! The fantasy world created in the Marvellers is exciting, interesting, full of intriguing characters, and has a wonderful sense of friendship and family woven through it.

It is a perfect fantasy story for middle grade readers in upper primary and lower secondary, and they will find it so hard to put down. I can only hope that there is a Book 2 not too far away!

Reviewed by Michelle

Stunt Kids

By Trent Roberts

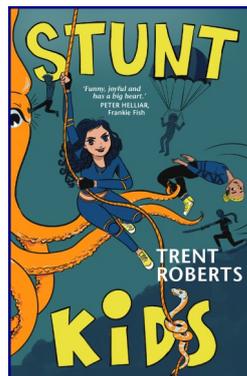
Publisher: Pan Australia Pan Macmillan Australia

ISBN 9781760787783 SCIS: 5405333

\$16.99

Blurb:

After 'The Accident', Gretel's parents wrapped her in cotton wool. (Not literally, that would be ridiculously itchy.) They wouldn't let her do anything slightly dangerous. No running. No jumping. No dancing. She wasn't even allowed to take out the rubbish in case she rolled the wheelie bin over her foot. So when she finds herself at a Stunt Camp where daredevil kids jump from great heights, engage in intense combat and flip, twist and tumble like it's the easiest thing in the world, Gretel wants to sink into the floor. No, deeper than that. She wants to sink into the Earth's core where the temperature is a balmy 6000 degrees. Her first step is to give herself a stunt name, Gypsy Flowers. Next step, face every one of her fears. Not just face them, headbutt them. Especially when she and her new friends are assigned a top secret, highly dangerous mission . . . The Stunt Kids must find action hero Tom Von Strongberg before he unleashes a hypnotic computer virus . . . a virus that will turn hundreds of millions of kids into mindless zombies.



Lamont Review:

Gretel Grey lives her life in a bubble. Ever since the accident, her parents have home schooled her and cocooned her from the world and its dangers.

When they win a holiday and get the date wrong, they believe they are sending her to a Sensible Totally Undangerous Never Thrilling camp. But no. Gretel is off to stunt camp for stunt kids.

But first terribly anxious Gretel must become Gypsy Flowers and learn to tackle all her fears. Then Gretel and four new friends are whisked away by a secret government agency to help save the world, and the Stunt Kids are born.

Full of humour and an action-packed story, and with themes of courage, friendship and teamwork, this is a terrific novel for all middle grade readers from 10 - 14.

Reviewed by Rob

When I See Blue

By Lily Bailey

Publisher: Orion Children's Books / Hachette

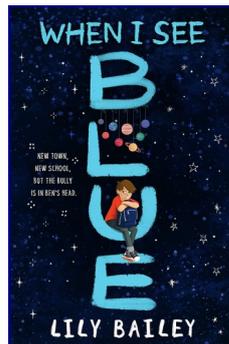
ISBN 9781510109803 SCIS: 5406193

\$16.99

Blurb:

New town, new school, but the bully is in Ben's head... There are 4 things you should know about Ben: 1. He's 12 years old 2. He's the new kid at school 3. His special number is 4 4. He has a bully in his brain

Sometimes Ben's brain makes him count to 4 to prevent bad things happening. Sometimes it makes him tap or blink in 4s. Mostly it makes the smallest things feel impossible. And with a new school, a moody big brother, an absent dad and a mum battling her own demons, Ben feels more out of control than ever. But then he meets April, and with his new friend, Ben might finally figure out how to stand up to the bully in his brain, once and for all. An authentic and affecting #ownvoices story about living life with OCD, from the inspiring author and mental health activist, Lily Bailey. Perfect for readers of *A Kind of Spark* and *The Goldfish Boy*.



Lamont Review:

Ben is 12 years old and he has just moved house and school to try to have a fresh start.

Living with an alcoholic mother and a workaholic father, life is difficult.

But the bully in his brain makes it even worse. Ben suffers from obsessive compulsive disorder and it has a huge impact on his everyday life.

When Ben is befriended by the new girl, April, we witness Ben starting to change, and he improves so much more when he begins counselling.

Ben may never be like everyone else, but can he slowly take control of the thoughts that make him act out?

I loved Ben and April, and found this to be an insightful story about the impact of OCD on a young person's life, as well as the measures that he takes to try to tackle these challenges.

It has themes of family struggles, the importance of friendship, the treatment of those who are different, and most importantly dealing with mental illness, that make this a wonderful book that is suitable for readers aged 10 - 16.

Reviewed by Rob