



2015

Witherwood Reform School

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Book Review

Title: Witherwood Reform School

Author: Obert Skye

Illustrator: Keith Thompson

Reviewer: Aylea Stephens

Publisher: Henry Holt and Co.

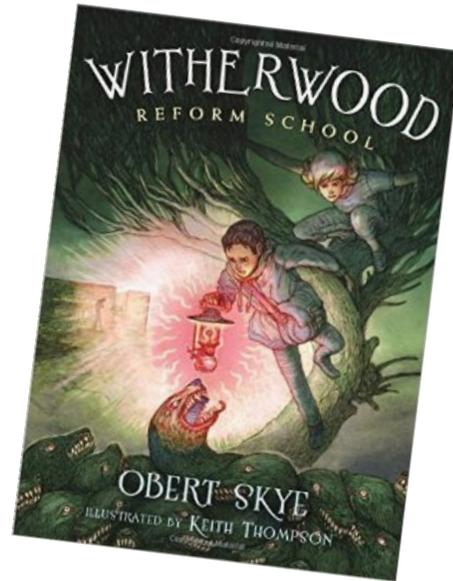
Publication Year: 2015

ISBN: 9780805098792

Number of Pages: 240

Interest Level: Intermediate

Rating: Significant Shortcomings



Review

When Tobias and Charlotte Egger play one too many pranks on their terrible governess, their father takes them to a place that he hopes will scare them into good behavior. He only means to leave them there for a short time, but a car accident leaves him with amnesia and unable to come get them. Tobias and Charlotte find themselves stuck in Witherwood Reform School, locked in their room with more questions than they have answers. When they sneak around looking for answers, their memories are taken from them. They get their memories back and try to escape, but they find that escaping from this place and being reunited with the father is not going to be easy.

Although the idea of a reform school with mysterious magic is interesting, the execution of the idea fell flat. It has a similar feeling of Snicket's Unfortunate Events series with the siblings in trouble, weird situations and creepiness, and false hope scenarios, but it is not as effective as Snicket's work. The characters were uninteresting and difficult to tell apart. The book ends with no resolution or answering any of the questions about what Witherwood Reform School is supposed to be doing and why it is such a weird place. Without any relief from the constant conflict or even enough of a resolution to make the book feel complete, the charm it could have had from its quirkiness is lost. Although the ideas were intriguing, it was a disappointing start to a series.