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Curiosity House #1: The Shrunk Head

Aylea Stephens

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Book Review

Title: Curiosity House #1: The Shrunken Head

Author: Lauren Oliver

Illustrator: H.C. Chester

Reviewer: Aylea Stephens

Publisher: HarperCollins

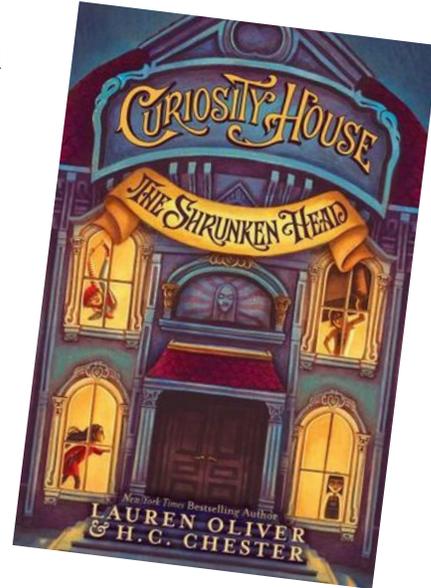
Publication Year: 2015

ISBN: 9780062270818

Number of Pages: 368

Interest Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent



Review

Philippa, Sam, and Thomas have grown up in Dumfrey's Dime Museum of Freaks, Oddities, and Wonders as some of the freaks. Philippa can read people's minds. Sam is unnaturally strong. Thomas can contort his body in ways that no one else can. Even though the museum isn't financially successful, they are happy there. One day, another child, Max, joins the group as a knife thrower, and life changes for all of them. The museum's Amazonian shrunken head is stolen, and people involved with the disappearance keep getting murdered. When their father figure, Mr. Dumfrey, is accused of the murders, Philippa, Sam, Thomas, and Max decide to solve the mystery themselves to save Mr. Dumfrey and the museum. The stakes increase when an attention-hungry reporter keeps writing newspaper articles that are not true and the children are attacked more than once. In the end, they find some answers to their own pasts when they solve the mystery.

One of the interesting parts of the story is that the main characters spend a lot of time fighting, as many children put together in similar situations with very different personalities and interests would, but they come together for the good of the people they care about. There are some parts of the story that deal with difficult topics, like murders, visiting a morgue, and so on, so parents of young readers or sensitive readers might want to find a different book. The book also discusses being different and how that can be difficult, but how differences are what make people strong. In the same sort of spirit of the *Series of Unfortunate Events*, this new middle grade series by the popular YA author Lauren Oliver will twinge spins and make readers laugh as they help to solve the mystery.