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The Marvels

Whitney Troxel

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Book Review

Title: The Marvels
Author: Brian Selznick
Reviewer: Whitney Troxel
Publisher: Scholastic Press
Publication Year: 2015
ISBN: 9780545448680
Number of Pages: 665
Interest Level: Intermediate
Rating: Dependable



Review

Joseph Jervis runs away from his boarding school hoping his Uncle Albert, who he's never actually met, will help him find his best friend, Blink. Blink's father took him away from school unexpectedly and left no forwarding address. Blink and Joseph always talked about running away to find Joseph's long lost uncle. But Blink's sudden disappearance finally gave Joseph the courage to try. He arrives on the doorstep of Uncle Albert's strange but beautiful house, soaking wet and freezing cold. Albert only intends to let Joseph stay for one night, but the two form a strong bond as Joseph discovers the true story behind the house and the Marvels who lived there. Joseph learns to help take care of the 18th century style house. When Albert dies, Joseph finds a way to maintain the house and its many memories.

Joseph's story is sandwiched between two series of full-page illustrations. The first series is nearly 400 pages depicting the story of the Marvels. The second series is under 50 pages and serves as a sort of epilogue showing a scene 17 years after the narrative ends. The illustrations are very detailed and are a brilliant story-telling device. The written part of the story, however, is somewhat lacking. Many of the conversations in the book feel unnatural and forced. Finding Blink starts out as Joseph's main motivation, but he quickly drops out of the narrative. In spite of its weaknesses, *The Marvels* tells an emotionally powerful story about the bond between Joseph and Albert. The main theme of the book is love. Albert's life is lacking love due to death, while Joseph is essentially neglected. Their relationship is what restores love and hope in both of their lives. It's a very inspiring story and a worthwhile read.

*Contains discussion of homosexual relationships.