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The Wall and the Wing

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Reviewer: Gillian Streeter  
Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult  
Rating: Outstanding
Genre: Fantasy fiction;  
Subject: Orphans--Juvenile fiction; Flight--Juvenile fiction; Gangsters--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Gurl has always faded into the background. She doesn't like to be noticed, and at Hope House for the Homeless and Hopeless, it would be nearly impossible to be noticed anyway. Unlike most of the other people in the city, the orphans of Hope House can hardly fly at all. Gurl herself is a lead foot, totally incapable of flight. But one night she escapes after lights out into the city. Gurl finds a very rare animal, a cat, and a previously unrecognized ability: Gurl can literally fade. Oddly enough, her invisibility draws the attention of the thieving orphanage director, a famous gangster, a boy named Bug, and many other inhabitants of the city.

Set in New York City's future, readers might expect *The Wall and the Wing* to be more of a science fiction novel. While there are a few advances in technology, the story is obviously a fantasy tale: people can fly, cats are mysteriously rare animals that choose their own humans, and once every hundred years or so a being, usually a girl, is born with the ability to disappear. Ruby creates a varied and unconventional world of danger and wonder all wrapped together. Contrary to what the reader may think, not everything is neatly tied up at the end, as evidenced by the final chapter, "Chapter after the Last." The whimsical characters, unusual settings, and reasonable villains in *The Wall and the Wing* are a pleasure to explore.