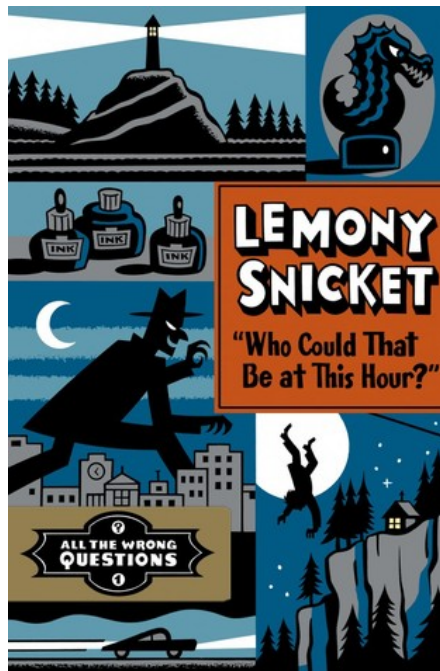




Who Could That Be at This Hour?

Lemony Snicket , Seth (Illustrator)

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The adventure began in a fading town. Far from anyone he knew or trusted, a young Lemony Snicket started an apprenticeship for a secret organization shrouded in mystery and secrecy. He asked questions that shouldn't have been on his mind. Now he has written an account that should not be published that shouldn't be read. Not even by you. Seriously, we recommend that you do NOT ask your parents for this, the first book in his new ALL THE WRONG QUESTIONS series.

Lemony Snicket, in case you don't already know, grew up to be the author of A Series of Unfortunate Events series.

Who Could That Be at This Hour? Details

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Author : Lemony Snicket , Seth (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Who Could That Be at This Hour? for online ebook

Cleo says

I read the Series of Unfortunate Events series maybe 5 years ago, and really enjoyed them, so I was excited to learn that Lemony Snicket had a new book coming out- about himself. The narrator of the book is the thirteen year old Lemony Snicket. He is now an "apprentice" to S. Theodora Markson. Don't even think about asking what the S. stands for. They arrive at the town of Stain'd-by-the-Sea, which manufactures ink, and is no longer by the sea. There are many mysterious characters and shady goings-on this weird town.

I was rather disappointed by this book. The writing isn't nearly as...well...Snickety. It's less intelligent, and was kind of annoying at times. I wish there were at least a few good adults; most of them are portrayed as foolish people. I can't really put my finger down on what made me dislike it so much; perhaps I no longer like Lemony Snicket. It has been five years after all.

The metaphors he used were really tacky too. Like "The machines looked like huge hypodermic needles, as if a doctor were planning on giving several shots to a giant." What a simile. Sentences like these are abundant throughout the book, as Snicket strives to make it feel like a hard-boiled detective story.

Another thing I really didn't like was the names of the characters, which all sound vaguely like names from the algebra book (stupid puns), but aren't actually puns at all. They were really annoying, and not creative in a good way. I wish at least one of the names could have been more realistic. However, if this is the "true" story of Snicket's childhood (which I doubt), I suppose he couldn't really change the names, could he?

Overall, the mystery fell flat for me. It was really easy with huge font, so it was a quick read. However, I was confused throughout the book about why Snicket was a detective-in-training and what he was supposed to do with his associate in the city. I wish the author could have cleared a bit more of that up. The book wasn't suspenseful, it wasn't compelling, and I never really got into it. I may read Book 2, but I will certainly not be waiting eagerly for it. Though I would like to find out the answers to my questions (be they right or wrong).

www.novareviews.blogspot.com

Dan says

This is the newest book from Lemony Snicket. It's the first of four volumes that form the authorized autobiography of the author, titled "All the Wrong Questions", and act as a sort of prequel to A Series of Unfortunate Events. I say "sort of" because so far there's very little link between the two series but that's not to say there is no link at all.

In this book 13 year old Lemony Snicket begins an apprenticeship to S. Theodora Markson, a woman who seems hopeless at solving the cases she's been hired for and never tells anyone what the S stands for. Snicket ends up in a town called Stain'd-by-the-sea which is a grim setting which works brilliantly. On arrival Snicket discovers a mystery involving a statue of a mythical beast and due to having a useless chaperone tries to solve this mystery himself.

Fans of ASOUE will love this. It's written in the same witty and brilliant style and has the same sense of doom and depression. It's great to have a new Lemony Snicket book and I wonder if this series will answers

some of the questions we've had for so long? But then again maybe that's the wrong question...

Barb Middleton says

You getting this all right, son, or am I goin' too fast for ya? Oops. Wrong character. That's hard-boiled detective Sam Spade. Thirteen-year-old Lemony Snicket would say, *This was nonsense, of course, but there's nothing wrong with occasionally staring out the window and thinking nonsense, as long as the nonsense is yours*, which pretty much sums up this twisty tale. There's the nonsense of the mystery. There's the nonsense of the word definitions. There's the nonsense of the town with its missing ocean. There's the nonsensical adults. And while Sam Spade isn't in the novel, there is one character by the name of Dashiell, a femme fatale, and roadster, in this hilarious parody of noir detective fiction.

Prepare to parachute into this plot with a duffel bag full of questions and little answers. It's hard to tell what's going on at the start of the novel. Lemony is supposed to take the train to meet someone in the city. He's at a cafe with his parents, when a woman drops a note in his lap to meet him; he jumps out a bathroom window where he's left a ladder for himself (which makes no sense). The couple in the cafe are not Lemony's parents; laudanum was put in his tea because the so-called parents were going to do something to him but I have no idea what it is. Are you confused yet? As the story progresses I don't feel quite as lost or I'm adjusting to the odd plot progression, but I have to say the writing is so funny I wasn't really bothered by all the nonsensical who, what, when, where, and whys.

Lemony is an apprentice to a secret organization (I never found out what that was) and his boss S. Theodora Markson makes it clear that she is in charge and he is to do everything she asks. Lemony asks what the "S" stands for but she answers that he's asking the wrong question. (*Stupid*, is my guess.) The two have a job to do which is collect a missing statue in the town, Stain'd-by-the-Sea, which was once on the sea but no longer is - I have no recollection of why, so it must not be important to the plot (or I'm an idget). The plot changes so many times it reminds me of when I have to unknot my jewelry after traveling 22 hours from Taipei to Minneapolis. You'd think I'd learn to not throw it all in one plastic bag... Anyway, you won't know what is going to happen next and the unpredictability made it a page turner.

So many children's books have characters that give word definitions in an effort to aid young readers; however, it is done so much I somewhat dread coming across it. This author parodies this writing technique with nonstop over-the-top word definitions that pokes fun by having the characters do it so much I found myself laughing versus being annoyed. Take the interchange between Ms. Feint, the femme fatale, and Mr. Snicket:

We can rescue him without kowtowing to a villain like Hangfire.

What does 'kowtowing' mean?

To behave in an obsequious manner.

I could play this game all night, Mr. Snicket. What does 'obsequious' mean?

See what I mean? Nonstop nonsense.

Then there's the walk down literature lane. Two boys named, Pip and Squeak, drive a taxi (Squeak pushes the pedals and Pip handles the steering), and Lemony pays them in tips by recommending books. How can you not love that! There are constant references to books, films, and other media. No one can possibly know them all. I had fun guessing some, such as the character in Johnny Tremain, author Roald Dahl, and Laura

Ingalls Wilder.

I was disappointed in the ending that resolves nothing. If anything, I had more questions than throughout the entire book. I can just picture the author going, *Har-Har-Har, gotcha!* Okay, so maybe an English guy wouldn't sound like that... instead he'd yell, *Stop asking the wrong questions! Ask a few more!* A fun read.

Reading Level 5.6

Teresa says

The question I had before picking up this book was, What should I read when the antibiotic I'm taking makes me feel more ill than what it's supposed to be treating? I'm not sure if that's a "wrong question," but this book was a right answer.

At some point I realized -- with the stolen item and its convoluted travels and the girl that maybe shouldn't be trusted -- I was reading a mild parody of the *The Maltese Falcon*, which added to the fun. And, though it's not obvious, the dialogue of the last chapter convinced me I was right. It's not necessary to know that book, or the genre (which isn't a favorite of mine), but it did make this book even more fun than it already was.

My favorite parts, though, have to be the "tips" the young Lemony Snicket gives the young "substitute" cab drivers (whose names taught me about an unfinished work by Flaubert). It was fun figuring out which books they were talking about; and because of it, I just requested from the library "the one about the tap dancer and the lawyer," because it was written by the author of one of my favorite books when I was a kid.

Sara says

For me starting to read this book was like coming home from a long vacation to your own bed and toiletries and cuddly cat. So you will possibly guess that this review might be slightly biased toward the tendency I have to love everything Daniel Lemony Handler Snicket puts his hands on.

The things I loved about this book:

1. The setting. So. Weird. And quirky. A town by the sea that's no longer by the sea that's major industry is extracting ink from caves populated by terrified Octopi? How does one think of these things?
2. The characters. There's Lemony of course, who I am enjoying getting to know more as a character and not just as a narrator. But the other characters are fantabulous too. Moxie and Dashiell Qwerty and S. Theodora Markson, and Ellington Feint (I LOVE the names of his characters and their personalities), and the little little hints towards people we already know from the future -- I am so excited to read the rest of this series and learn more about these people.
3. The language. Back to true *A Series of Unfortunate Events* fashion, the word defining and strange similes and odd worldplay is back, and it's (for me) like being wrapped up in a warm blanket.

I just hope that the *Bombinating Beast* doesn't end up like the *Sugar Bowl*... :) When's the next book come out?

Mia Bakhthiar says

The story was interesting, and I didn't see the ending coming! I enjoyed it, though I would've expected more from one of my favourite authors.

Nathan Siegel says

I'm not sure if I would be a reader today if not for "A Series of Unfortunate Events" .

A few nights ago, I was in a small town, and in that small town was an "obscure" a word which here means "so small and pushed aside only an avid reader (or VFD member) would notice it." I walked inside and began talking to the owner about how I review books on "Goodreads", a word which here means "a website used to express one's opinion of a literary piece or work." She then went into the "back room" a word which here means "a supply closet", and pulled out a review copy of "Lemony Snicket's ALL THE WRONG QUESTIONS" and offered it to me for eight dollars, half of the cover price. My day was made.

I have been waiting for ATWQ since "The End" a word which here means "the final SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS book, published six years ago in 2006." Six years is a long time to wait for the next book by your favorite author! Although, yes, there are a few minor inaccuracies between Snicket's UNAUTHORIZED AUTOBIOGRAPHY and ATWQ, it didn't let me down one bit. Complete with black, white, and blue illustrations by SETH, who, unfortunately, is not Brett Helquist, but equally as talented. The first book of the quartet begins with Lemony Snicket receiving a note in a coffee shop that tells him to jump out the window of the bathroom. Snicket does so, and waiting for him in a black car is the mysterious, dark-haired S. Theodora Markson. (whenever someone asks what the S stands for, she makes a statement that begins with S. EXAMPLE: "What does the S stand for?" "Stop asking the wrong questions.") Markson leads Snicket to an odd town called Stain'd By the Sea, which used to be a sea, but was drained of it's water to "save the town". (A mystery which will probably never be solved.) In the town, they arrive at a frazzled woman's house who is missing a statue which is made from the rarest wood in the world. Snicket must find the statue in order to continue his apprenticeship at VFD. But he'd better not ask any questions.

The thing with this incredibly witty book is, it messes with your head. EXAMPLE:

1. What happens next?
 2. When will Snicket get a decent meal?
 3. Where is the item everyone is looking for?
 4. Why do you want to know?
 5. Are these the right questions?
- (from ATWQ 2-chapter sampler)

Snicket also uses the classic "A Word which here means.." line in the new series, along with a rollercoaster-fast plot, dark characters, and a mysterious society that brings them all together. Is Snicket cut out to be a VFD member?

Should you buy this book?

Is Beatrice in the books?

Are these the wrong questions?

NOTE: Most Barnes and Noble bookstores are giving out limited edition ATWQ chapter samplers in the

children's department!

Rashika (is tired) says

Actual Rating 3.5

I, like many other people, loved The Series of Unfortunate Events as a child so when I found out that this series would be a prequel of sorts, I was PUMPED. It only took me a couple years to getting around to reading the first book in this prequel series.

Lemony Snicket is probably one of my favorite characters ever so the fact that this series is all about a younger him made me really happy! I couldn't wait to get inside his mind and see if he was just as awesome when he was younger. The answer to that is yes. However, this book just didn't live up to the awesomeness of The Series of Unfortunate Events. The mystery element wasn't as satisfying and I felt like it didn't challenge me as much as The Series of Unfortunate Events did. There were also times when the book just jumped around in ways that didn't work for me.

Don't get me wrong, I really enjoyed the book and it had me cracking up at several parts but it really doesn't even begin to compare with The Series of Unfortunate Events.

One of the reasons this book probably didn't blow my mind was because in some ways, all I really did was compare this book to The Series of Unfortunate Events and everyone knows that that's probably not a good idea.

Who Could be At This Hour was a very fun read with an enjoyable mystery but one that didn't challenge me so I was left feeling a little disappointed but I still plan on picking up the rest of the books in the series. I got to have more of Lemony Snicket!

rhea says

Excited to get this book I jumped it ahead in the stack, I knew it'd be a quick read too. The first chapter or 2 I was worried that it wouldn't be as good as A Series of Unfortunate Events, but it picked up quickly and the word play and story line were exactly what you would want from his books (it was probably me jumping the gun too soon on first book intro stuff). It is a fun book and I cannot wait for the next book in the series! My bookshelves are thankful this series will only be 4 books, let's see if we aren't screaming for more though?

Also, I loved the art style, every picture was fantastic.

Jesse (JesseTheReader) says

Video review coming.. soon ;)

Laysee says

Anyone who, like me, had enjoyed reading “A Series of Unfortunate Events” will be thrilled to learn that Lemony Snicket has embarked on writing a prequel to it. “Who Could That Be At This Hour?” is the first book in a new series titled “All The Wrong Questions”.

We are introduced to Lemony Snicket, a near 13-year-old, who was recruited as a neophyte to an enigmatic secret society and sent on his first mission to investigate the case of a missing statue. It was an investigation calculated to frustrate the protagonist-investigator from the get-go.

A large part of the pleasure of reading this noir detective story is being taken on a journey where the landscape abounds in strangeness: a gray town paved by seashells though the sea has vanished, a forest composed of seaweeds instead of trees, and an abandoned coffee joint that still dispensed coffee and baked bread at the press of a button. What fun!

Snicket plays the victim-detective who quickly endears himself to the reader alongside a stellar cast of bizarre characters. My favorite is the pair of prepubescent brothers who provided the town’s only taxi service (one worked the pedals; the other the steering wheel!). The one character I’ll like to chortle is Snicket’s imperious and imbecile chaperone. Other quirky characters include Moxie, the self-proclaimed teenage journalist of a defunct newspaper and Ellington, the elusive girl with green eyes and question-mark eye brows.

As in the Unfortunate Events, there is the familiar, ludicrous world of interminable puzzles. Even as the last page is turned, the jigsaw pieces do not add up. In Snicket’s own words, “The map is not the territory”. This just about sums it up. There is something going on that we can’t see. And see I must, which is not good news. It means the start of me feverishly chasing more “messy mysteries” or “mysterious mess”.

Carmen says

A detective story about Lemony Snicket when he was 13. Funny and smart.

I like Snicket's description of LORD OF THE RINGS: "A bunch of elves and things get into a huge war over a piece of jewelry that everybody wants but nobody can wear...a wizard who's very powerful but not very helpful."

Or JOHNNY TREMAIN: "...about a boy named Johnny. He lived in America when America was still England. One day he burned his hand and was no longer able to work as a silversmith, which sounded like a miserable line of work anyway, so he took an interest in local politics. I felt sorry for the guy, but I had other things on my mind..."

Or LITTLE HOUSE IN THE BIG WOODS: "...a book that did nothing to relax my nerves. The story took place in some big woods where a little house was home to a medium-sized family who liked to make things. First they made maple syrup. Then they made butter. Then they made cheese, and I shut the book."

He doesn't say the title of any of these books, but any well-read person can deduce what he's talking about.

Abdollah zarei says

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Tina ↗ Lives in Fandoms (Book.enchantress) says

4 Silver stars/5

it wasn't as good as a series of Unfortunate Events, but hey, it's the first book in the series. & I laugh a lot during reading. so yep I think 4 stars is good for it.

C.G. Drews says

And WHERE is the famed illustrator, Brett Helequist? But maybe that's the wrong question.

As with all Lemony Snicket's work, it's brilliant. I'm biased enough to just outright say it. But I also admit that Mr. Snicket can also be an acquired taste. If you're not into books that present more questions than answer, refer to things but don't explain, introduce characters that are the opposite of who they say they are, then Lemony Snicket's work might just drive you crazy. But if you're already crazy, I suggest you read it.

Lemony Snicket is also a fabulous name.

Written as a kind of prequel to the 13 (technically 14) book series, A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS, Lemony Snicket's new book takes off in the recount of his first mission. He's an apprentice to a snobby chaperone (who is like every annoying character in A Series of Unfortunate Events combined into one) and trying to solve a mystery that has to do with a statue of no value but that everyone wants. VFD hasn't been mentioned, but it's practically sneaking off the page. This book is full of annoying and unsatisfactory characters. It also has a lot of questions. The wrong questions, as Lemony's chaperone (S. Theodora Markson -- and no, we still don't know what the "S" stands for) constantly reminds him.

As with Mr. Snicket's style, there's a lot of funny descriptions, humour and quirky names (take "Moxie" for instance...that is a fabulous name). I love Lemony's sense of humour, as well as his black-and-white view and untimely questions. He's very good at secrets. But I'm not sure he's very good at knowing who to trust.

The first installment in what hopefully will be another fantastic series by one of my all-time-favourite authors, WHO COULD THAT BE AT THIS HOUR? is a fantastic book, only losing a star because it could have been fifty times better with the old illustrator. Picky, I know, but don't ask me why. That would be the wrong question.

j says

Do any actual *kids* like Lemony Snicket books, or are they only read by hip parents who think that they are

the kind of books they *want* their kids to like?

Because, sure, I'd think it was neat if my daughter was into, like, opaquely plotted genre satires stuffed with obtuse narration, whimsical wordplay, literary references and impenetrable characters, books that tackled life's big philosophical questions through a meta-filter of storytelling.

But actually, kids want to read Captain Underpants and Judy Moody.

This is why the publisher has turned the Lemony Snicket books into uniformly designed fetish objects: because they appeal exactly to the book-loving parents who fool themselves into thinking their kids will one day pull them off the shelf and actually read them.

But not that copy! That's daddy's special matched-set copy.

Oh, this book? Well, if you read all 13 volumes of A Series of Unfortunate Events, it is more of the same. Delightful writing, a total unwillingness to actually explain what is going on, promises of revelations in future lovingly-designed books in the series, none of which will actually contain any of those answers.

(Xmas gift.)

Bern says

There was a book, and there was a twist and there was annoyance. I was reading said book, I was hit by a twist in it - which here means I was surprised by the writing inside it, not that it somehow managed to bend my body unnaturally - and when I was done with the book, I was annoyed.

I should've asked myself why I ever thought it would be any different than Lemony Snicket's other wonderful books, or why I even supposed it wouldn't be in the first place, but instead I asked myself all the wrong questions and thus I write this review, relaying to you my findings whilst reading Lemony Snicket's brand new book, Who Could That Be At This Hour?

This is a book about a boy in his apprenticeship being sent to an empty town surrounded by a waterless sea and a treeless forest, which are all in turn surrounded by mystifying mysteries extending as far as the non-astigmatic eye can see. The boy's name, in case you were (wrongfully) asking yourself, is Lemony Snicket, and the book contains his account on the finding and losing - then finding and losing yet again - of a seemingly unimportant statue of virtually no price at all.

I must say that I was rather skittish regarding Who Could That Be At This Hour?, as it is a sort-of-but-not-really sequel to Lemony Snicket's earlier-published series, A Series of Unfortunate Events. Seeing as there's a quite enormous gap between one series and the other, one would be prudent to feel skittishness regarding the new series, as sometimes authors lose track of the magic they managed to create at first, only to try and emulate it again and fail miserably at it.

I believed that to be the case as I read the first two chapters, however I was quickly proven wrong, which I consider to be as twisty as plot twists in middle grade books happen (not that I'm an expert on the area of middle grade plot twists, mind you. I'm sure there are loads of people who have profound knowledge of this area, however). Lemony Snicket's new adventure is as full of wonder, secrets, and questions left unanswered as his previous entries, and I was quite pleased to finish this book in total elation of what I'd just read.

However, I did mention that there was annoyance, and it would be quite redundantly neglectful of me to neglect to explain why: I would like the next book in this series, and I would like it as of this second. You've most certainly known people who throw absolute fits of frustration - or maybe thrown a few yourself - so I'm sure you need no help picturing myself as I hurl every object in sight on any flat surface in reach of me until the next book in this series comes out.

Betsy says

Last year I was running a bookgroup for kids, ages 9-12, when the subject of children's books adapted into films came up. We talked about the relative success of Harry Potter, the bewildering movie that was *City of Ember*, and the gorgeous credit sequence for *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. Then one of the younger members, probably around ten years of age, turned to me and asked in all seriousness, "Do you think they'll ever make a movie out of *The Spiderwick Chronicles*?" I was momentarily floored. It's not often that kids will remind me that their memories of pop culture are limited to their own experiences, but once in a while it happens. This girl couldn't remember back five years to that very film adaptation. And why should she? She was five then! So when I see a new Lemony Snicket series acting as a kind of companion to the aforementioned *A Series of Unfortunate Events* I wonder how it will play out. The original series was popular around the time of that *Spiderwick* movie. Does that mean that the new series will founder, or will it be so successful that it brings renewed interest to the previous, still in print and relatively popular, books? Personally, I haven't a clue. All I know is that the latest Lemony Snicket series *All the Wrong Questions* is a work of clever references, skintight writing, and a deep sense of melancholy that mimics nothing else out there on the market for kids today. That's a good thing.

To be a success in Snicket's line of work it's important to know how to ask the right questions. And this is a problem since Snicket finds it difficult doing precisely that. He was supposed to meet his contact in the city. Instead, he finds himself whisked away to the country to a dying town called Stain'd-by-the-Sea. Once a bustling harbor, the town's water was removed leaving behind a creepy seaweed forest and an ink business that won't be around much longer. With his incompetent mentor S. Theodora Markson he's there to solve the mystery of a stolen statue. Never mind that the statue wasn't stolen, its owners don't care who has it, and their client isn't even a real person. When Snicket finds a girl looking for her father and learns the name of the insidious Hangfire things start to get interesting, not to mention dangerous. Can multiple mysteries be solved even if you keep following the wrong paths? Snicket's about to find out.

What is more dangerous: Evil or stupidity? It's a trick question since there's nothing "or" about it. If there's one lesson to be gleaned from the Snicket universe, it is that while evil is undesirable, stupidity is downright damaging. Many is the *Series of Unfortunate Events* book that would show clear as crystal that while stupid and ignorant people may not necessarily be evil in and of themselves, they do more to aid in evil than any routine bad guy ever could hope for. In *All the Wrong Questions* the adults in charge are still inane, but at least the kids have a bit of autonomy from them. Our hero, the young Snicket, is still omnipotent to a certain degree, and only cares to share personal information with the reader when the plot requires that he do so. And because the book is a mystery, he's almost required to move about at will. He just happens to be moving between stupid people much of the time.

Of course the trouble with having Lemony himself as your protagonist is that the guy is infamous for never giving you good news. If adult Snicket is the kind of guy who warns off readers (in a voice that I've always connected to Ben Stein) because of his own sad worldview, reading this series means that we are going to see failure at work. We saw failure at work with the Baudelaires but with them it was always the fault of the

universe using them as punching bags more than their own inadequacies. That means that the author's trick with this book is to keep it from disintegrating into depression even as its hero ultimately screws up (yet seems to be doing the right thing the whole time). How do you pull this dichotomy off? Humor. Thank god for humor. Because like other post-modern children's mysteries (Mac Barnett's *The Brixton Brothers*, most notably) being funny is the key to simultaneously referencing old mystery tropes while commenting on them.

I always had a certain amount of difficulty figuring out how exactly to describe *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. The term "Gothic" just didn't quite cut it. PoMo Gothic, maybe. Or Meta-Gothic. Dunno. The *All the Wrong Questions* series makes it much easier on me. This book is noir. Noiry noir. Noiry noirish noirable noir. As if to confirm this the author drops in names like Dashiell and Mitchum, which like all of Snicket's jokes will fly over the heads of all the child readers and 82.5% of the adult readers as well (I kept a tally for a while of the references I knew that I myself was not getting, then just sort of stopped after a while). There are dames, or at least the 12-year-old equivalent of dames. There are Girl Fridays. There are mistaken identities and creepy abandoned buildings. There are also butlers who do things, but that's more of a drawing room murder mystery genre trope, so we're going to disregard it here.

Let us talk Seth. The man comes to fill the shoes left by Brett Helquist. He's a clever choice since there is nothing even slightly Helquistian to this comic legend. This is, to the best of my knowledge Seth's first work for children, though there may well be some obscure Canadian work of juvenilia in his past that I've missed. His work on the cover is remarkable in and of itself, but in the book he works primarily in chapter headings and the occasional full-page layout. The author must have relayed to Mr. Seth what images to do sometimes because there is a picture at the beginning and a picture at the end that continue the story above and beyond the written portions. As for the spreads inside, Seth does an admirable job of ever concealing young Snicket's face. He also lends a funny lightness to the proceedings, not something I would have expected walking into the novel.

There is a passage in the book where Snicket reflects on his life that just kills me. It comes a quarter of the way through the novel and is the clearest indication to the reader that the action in this novel happened a long time ago. It goes on for a while until finally ending with, "Stretched out in front of me was my time as an adult, and then a skeleton, and then nothing except perhaps a few books on a few shelves." Put another way, this isn't your average mystery novel for kids. It's not even your average Lemony Snicket novel. It is what it is, the first part in a new series containing a familiar character that need not be previously known to readers. I have no idea if kids will gravitate towards it, but if you've a hankering to recommend a beautifully written if uncommon mystery to kids that ask for that sort of thing (and they do, man, they do) hand this over. Worse case scenario, they don't like it. Best case scenario it blows their little minds. Blew mine anyway. Good stuff.

For ages 9-12.

Liam says

(3.8 STARS)

It wasn't until I picked up this book that I realised how much I truly miss Lemony Snicket's writing! It's just so quirky and intriguing! The series of unfortunate events series were the books that properly got me into reading so I will forever be thankful to Snicket for that and it was so nice to be back in that world with this book!

I didn't know what to expect from this at all but I really did enjoy it! To be honest, I was worrying that I

would be "too old" for this book but honestly I would never have labelled this book as a children's book!

Snicket is able to create fascinating characters and worlds so easily and he definitely did a good job of it in this book!

The plot was pretty gripping and the twists did take me by surprise so I'm looking forward to seeing the story unravel more over the next books.

It's just so nice to be reading Snicket again and I'm excited to see how the series of unfortunate events series ties in with this series!

Brandy says

Oh, Lemony Snicket, you've lured me into reading yet another entertainingly written, but incredibly unsatisfying book. You'd think after being downright lividly irritated about the unanswered questions at the end of the Series of Unfortunate Events books (13 books of enticing clues and no answers! Who does that??? And with a children's series?), I would know better. But the cool illustrations and the promise of a relatively short 4-book series convinced me to pick this book up from the table at Costco. While I did enjoy the writing, I found the characters and story much less engaging than the Baudelaire children and their adventures. It remains to be seen if I will pick up the others in the series when they come out. Can someone please read them first and then let me know if anything is resolved? If not, I'm not wasting my time - there are just too many other great, satisfying books to read.

Originally read Oct 22-Nov 1 2012. Reread Nov 2017 now that I have access to all four books in the series via the library! Greatly enjoyed the writing style yet again - fingers crossed for a satisfying story arc across the books.
