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The Purloined Boy, by Mortimus Clay, is a work of fantasy literature for young adults. In parts dark and grotesque, in others luminous and inspiring; it could be described as R. L. Stine meets Plato. It begins with the question, Where do all those children on the milk cartons go? It provides the answer through the eyes of one of those children, a boy named Trevor Upjohn, the purloined boy.

The Purloined Boy Details

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From Reader Review The Purloined Boy for online ebook

Rick Davis says

There's a lot of unimaginative twaddle peddled to children these days in the guise of literature. I'm happy to say that this book is an exception. It's interesting, well-written, and has some depth to it. Imagine my consternation at finishing the book (which ends on a massive cliffhanger) and finding that the sequel was never published! It's still a great book, but prepare to be frustrated.

Update: I just heard that Canon Press is now going to publish this series, and the sequel is on the way. Consequently shifting my review up to 5 stars...

Lisa says

I'm having a hard time starting this review; bogeymen haunt every child's imagination, the quintessential nightmare...and I am 28 :)

But what I like about the whole good-vs.-evil struggle in this book is that the bogeys are scary, yes, but they are terrified of Lucian, something more terrifying than they could ever hope to be. The author understands that the most terrifying model of evil is not the evil born from a human's imagination (that can be conquered in our minds with enough courage), but the human gradually turned inhuman, led astray by his or her own arrogance, weakness, greed... until often (at least in fantasy stories) the outside appearance reflects the evil within. Tolkien was a master at this; every villain he created was a symbol of light and hope, something resembling human, until it was corrupted by fear and hatred. Wilde's Dorian Gray is another good example.

The most destructive choices are not those you know are wrong and wrong for you; those are easier to avoid because they are evil on the face of them. Surfaces can be not only deceiving but dangerous, and Lucian's arrogance and lack of human understanding and compassion eventually twisted him into the worst kind of monster: something that was once human until it crushed out all remnants of human feeling to become darkness itself.

The 'heroes,' Trevor and Maggie, seem to be woefully in over their heads. I feel, however, that this is a *hugely* refreshing change from 11-year-old protagonists who are raring and ready to overcome any obstacle and kick some bad-guy butt. When I was 11, I was practically scared of my own shadow, and I am so happy to find Trevor, a child hero who actually seems to me like a real child. Book One saw the exit of Trevor's and Maggie's Obi-Wan figure, though, so they're going to have to get their act together pretty fast.

I am so excited that Book Two is on the first-reads giveaway. Keeping my fingers crossed.

Paul says

This is the tale of Trevor, a young boy who becomes one of those children who end up on milk cartons under the word Missing.

Trevor is living in a dark and dreary town called Superbia, along with many other children. Think of an orphanage from Victorian England. They are not allowed to say words like "parents" or "home." If they do, the boogeymen who run Superbia (and who kidnapped the children from their beds), will send them away for behavior modification, or send them to the Pantry, to be fattened up and eaten by the boogeymen. Becoming a meal for the boogeymen is the eventual fate of all the children.

After a very vivid dream about his parents, Trevor asks about going home, and is sent away for behavior modification. Around this time, he meets Maggie, a fellow orphan who also has memories of life before Superbia. She tells Trevor that she is part of a secret society whose aim is to help all the children who want to return home to actually do it. He also meets Epictetus, a one-eyed slave who is a leader in the "underground," and Zephyr, a very unique talking mouse. Trevor also learns about Trothward, a very nice place outside Superbia. He also learns about the long-term war going on between the Guild, who runs Trothward, and Lucian, the leader of the boogeymen. This leads Trevor to one adventure, and narrow escape, after another, while he is traversing many dank and dreary passageways beneath Superbia.

This is a young adult book that was made to be read aloud to older children, say between 10-13 years old. It may be a little too much for younger children. There are a number of dark and spooky bits in this story, and, being first in a series, there is not a "happily ever after" ending. The author does an excellent job with this tale from beginning to end, and it is very much worth the time.

Jenna says

I won this book a couple of years ago on the contests page, and I loved it. I read it fairly quickly (in about a week) and now that my niece is old enough to read chapter books, I am lending it to her, and I know she will enjoy it! I just saw that there is a second installment of the book and can't wait until I get a chance to read it!

Carrie Kitzmiller says

<http://booksandmovies.colvilleblogger...>

Jill Williamson says

Trevor Upjohn lives in Superbia with many other children. They take lessons and eat meals together, but certain things are not allowed. Like saying the words: home, parents, mom, dad. Saying these words will get a kid sent to see the bogeymen.

But Trevor has been having a lot of dreams lately. His friend Maggie insists that they aren't just dreams, they're memories. Could she be right? Did a bogeyman steal Trevor from his real home years ago? And if so, why?

These questions bring Trevor a new companion. A mouse named Zephyr who has come to help Trevor escape from Superbia for good, and someday, maybe, get him home again.

What a clever premise for a story. The book started out a little slow but intriguing. The idea of these kids living in a prison of sorts hooked me in. I wanted Trevor to escape his nightmarish life. And when he did get to a different place, it was just as creative and interesting as Superbia. The magic in this book is different than any other I've read. And there is a tree that bears light-giving fruit that I found a clever twist on good and evil. The plot builds as I neared the end of the story and left things open for book two. I recommend this book for readers eight and up.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Karin Librarian for TeensReadToo.com

THE PURLOINED BOY begins with the question, Where do all those children on the milk cartons go?

It provides the answer through the eyes of one of those children, a boy named Trevor Upjohn, the purloined boy.

There's nothing hiding under the bed. There's no such thing as a bogeyman. Nothing is in your closet ready to gobble you up as soon as you fall asleep. At least that's what everyone says.

Trevor lives in Superbia, "the worst place in the universe," where the kids eat watery gruel, are watched by Guardians, and punished for saying naughty words like home and mother. Trevor is among the many children that have been snatched from their homes by bogeymen and are now considered missing. The children are taken at such young ages that they don't remember their family and consider Superbia their only home.

When Trevor begins to pay attention to his dreams of home he sets into motion events that will change his life forever. He and his friend, Maggie, uncover the secret of Superbia and what the missing kids are really for, but can they escape the bogeymen and make their way home?

THE PURLOINED BOY is a great story, but more than that, it is a pleasure to read. The book is beautifully written and caught me on the first page with its lyrical sentence structure and descriptive vocabulary.

Visit Mortimus Clay's website to keep up-to-date with the latest information about the author.

The sequel, THE QUEST FOR THE FEY BRAND, is set for release in April 2010.

Uriah says

Received a free copy from the author as a first reads win for the second book The Quest for the Fey Brand.

I really enjoyed this story and the characters that were developed in it. The only reason that it gets 4 stars instead of five from me is I was left feeling unresolved. The writing is great, the characters are interesting but

the story was almost a prelude to the real story. Granted, this leaves me eager to read the next book. I just wish there had been an intermediate resolution in the first book.

The best thing I can compare it with is as if I were reading The Lord of the Rings (one of my all time favorite books) and the hobbits were preparing to leave Bree and the story just ended there.

Trisha says

Trevor Upjohn's dreams are disturbing. As he sleeps in his cot in Superbia, watched over by Guardians and bogeymen, he dreams of "home", a place he has been told is fictional, a word he has been told is dirty. These dreams lead him to The Guild and begins his adventure.

The two main characters of the book, Maggie and Trevor, are not fully developed, but they are both well-positioned for some interesting character insight in later books in the series. Trevor, the protagonist, has your typical "reluctant hero" persona, and Maggie has that whole spunky romantic interest thing going on, but their characterization is different enough to make them intriguing and likeable. The real character stars of this book for me were Maggie's uncle Epictetus and the Master Illuminator Ichabod.

Epictetus appealed to me in both his moderate, realist outlook on life and his superhuman kickassery. Ichabod is a crotchety old man who apparently has memory issues. Both of these men are Masters of the Guild, leaders of the resistance against Lucien, the head of the bogeymen. I think you know you are an adult when you read young adult literature and you immediately are drawn to the adults in the book.

There are some almost too familiar elements in the book. It is clearly the start of a quest narrative, a la Sword in the Stone. Also, the adults in the novel were at times frustratingly obtuse and stupidly ignoring or discounting the children. I've always had a problem with that part of young adult lit. At the same time, the premise of the world felt particularly unique, and I look forward to seeing how Clay continues to develop this world.

Linda Harley says

Unlike anything I've read in a while. I found this story to be fresh with new ideas and concepts, that made it engaging and left me wanting for more. I hope that Mortimus Clay will work on publishing the next one in this series soon, because I can't wait to know what happens to Trevor and his friends. The world that Trevor finds himself in are dominated by the bogeymen who have thousands of children which they feed upon. Trevor finds himself on an adventure to escape the bogeyman and find a life that is better. Most of all its a story of a boy that wants to go home, and all the adventures and mismatch of characters he encounters along the way. Personally I think that there is something for everyone in this book, and kids of all ages (including grown ups like me) will enjoy this heart warming tale.

For more reviews visit www.rosebuz.com

Cindy says

This book was a "hidden" gem as I didn't hear about it until I got it for the blog tour. I really really enjoyed it and found it great for kids and adults alike!

The characters were detailed and realistic, the kids asked questions and weren't treated stupid for asking. They also were explained things when they needed to have things explained.

The action moved along but not so fast that you were lost or didn't get where you were going. Although bad things do happen to the main character, there is always something good to be had and sometimes even a little light at the end of the tunnel.

I can't wait till the next book!

Michelle says

There are a lot of good things going on in this book. The symbolism is pretty solid, the premise is intriguing, and the author's own idea of writing posthumously is fun. However, I have a few issues.

First of all, Trevor--the titular Purloined Boy--has no character. He only does what Mr. Clay needs him to do in any given scene, like way too many child heroes I've read about. Maggie, our Spunky Girl today, is irritating. Most Spunky Girls rub me this way. Both the leads suffer from something I used to do, called Flaw of the Day. For example, and I'm making this one up, a character may be terrified of speaking in public, but one good pep talk and he's over it, and it will never be mentioned again. It isn't blatant, but the trope is definitely there. Paracelsus and Lucian are interesting, but everyone else is a stereotype. The inevitable traitor is obvious from him being the only opulent and petty guy in Trothward--the good guy base. The bullies are just that, bullies, without real motivations or humanization. Mr. Clay may have their motivations in his head, but they haven't gotten out on the page. Honestly, I would rather read about Mortimus Clay himself--his backstory sounds much more interesting.

Second, parts of this book don't gel. We open with some Lemony Snicket-esque quirky writing, which fades away and only returns sporadically throughout the book, making it obvious that Mr. Clay is not writing in his own voice. Then we have, in the same book, a creepy fake Santa Claus, 1984-esque world, tree people, a Paradise Lost story, and a cartoony mountain man. These things would take a very experienced writer to fit together, and this is Mortimus Clay's first (posthumous) book.

There are many good things in here, though. The symbolism didn't always make sense standing alone--specifically, during Trevor's escape from the Pantry--but most of it was strong and unifying rather than distracting, Biblical to the point of plagiarism, or another Narnia ripoff. The Paradise Lost part is really, really good. Also, this was originally just the first chunk of the full book, which editors made Mr. Clay chop up, so I can't make a full judgment yet. Suffice it to say, Mortimus Clay's only problems are from inexperience. I fully expect the rest of his posthumous career to be great.

Jennifer Jeffryes says

This was an absolutely fabulous YA fiction work. The plot was engaging and the characters lovable. The only downside is that it ended on a total cliff hanger, and I'm wondering if/when the second book will be published.

Gef says

I had trouble staying involved with the story, which is a shame because this is a remarkably imaginative tale with engaging characters and picturesque--though bleak--settings. I just found too much of the action to be predictable. I'm interested to see what the sequel is like in 2010, however.

Melissa Bennett says

I really wanted to read this book when I saw all the great reviews on Amazon and Goodreads. So I had high expectations. At first when starting the book I was a bit disappointed. The writing just didn't catch me and it didn't make me want to continue but I'm loathe to not finishing a book. I kept at it and was very happy I did. By the end of the book I couldn't put it down.

It's about kids that go missing and where they end up. Did you know that sometimes bogeys sneak into houses and steal kids! When they do, these children live in a place called Superbia. It's a bleak place that kids are punished if they say they remember home. They are brainwashed to believe that home is a lie and does not exist. Those who do not fall for the brainwashing disappear from their beds in the night never to return. But there are adult humans there. Ones that want to save the kids that believe but ones that are also brainwashed and work for the bogeys. Oh, who to trust!

It's a quite entertainig read and I'm lookig forward to the next book in the series.
