



# The Backstagers and the Ghost Light (Backstagers #1)

*Andy Mientus , Rian Sygh (Illustrations)*

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The stage crew at St. Genesius Prep—or Backstagers, as they like to call themselves—are ready for whatever the theater world can throw their way: the madness of tech week, inevitable prop malfunctions, and all the paranormal activity that goes on behind the scenes. Luckily Jory, Hunter, Sasha, Beckett, and Aziz are up for the job!

But lately, someone—or something—seems set on ruining their production of *Phantasm*. It all started when an actor brought a Spirit Board to the cast party, and the ghost light blew out. Every good theater kid knows that a ghost light must be left on to keep ghosts from moving in the shadows of an empty theater. To figure out what's haunting the theater and save the show, the Backstagers will have to use their smarts, bravery, and a little bit of magic!

## The Backstagers and the Ghost Light (Backstagers #1) Details

Date : Published September 25th 2018 by Harry N. Abrams

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Author : Andy Mientus , Rian Sygh (Illustrations)

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## **From Reader Review The Backstagers and the Ghost Light (Backstagers #1) for online ebook**

### **Christie says**

I felt at home as I read this book. Think "Harry Potter" meets the television show "Smash" meets Seth Rudetsky. I found it to be descriptive, entertaining and at times, pretty wild. The fantasy part of this book took me to depths (sometimes literally) I hadn't expected. I directed a teenage summer camp for 10 years and would definitely recommend it to my former students. I also appreciated how the author made the characters' sexuality just a part of the book, not the focus of the book. It's who the characters are, but not what the book is about. Read this book if you're a theater kid, used to be a theater kid, or want to know what it's like to be a theater kid.

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### **Camille says**

This book put me through all kind of emotions and that's what I loved the most about it. I wasn't aware of the backstagers comics and now I want to read all of them as I'm desperate to see all these wonderful characters again ! (tho I'll be sad because it seems Reo and Chloe won't be in the comics..) This was Andy Mientus' debut novel and I can't wait to read the next one. Theater (onstage and backstage) mixed with magic is now one of my new favorite trope. I urge all of you to read this wonderful little book that deals with friendship, finding your place, death of loved ones and even a little bit of romantic love !  
I do wished there were more female characters and sure hope we'll see Bailey, Chloe and Phoebe again !

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### **Stephanie says**

\*Thank you Netgalley & ABRAMS Kids Books for allowing me to read a digital review copy! ♥\*

The great thing about Andy Mientus taking on the Backstagers in novel form is that now some of my FAVORITE characters in the comics universe now live in book format. And that's pretty cool. Frankly, EVERYONE should be BFFs with Jory, Hunter, Aziz, Beckett, and Sasha, and now more people have the chance to do so!

The heart of the story was fantastic. The mystery and the weird ghostly mystery at the heart of this story were very enjoyable. I think that I did want to see more from this novelization than I got (the characters were very quickly introduced, and I can't help feeling that people who don't know these characters would have a more difficult time truly getting into this story). I think the beginning especially felt rough, and the fact that Jory still considered himself to be Brand New bothered me a little bit, but the feeling of being kinda stuck resonated well enough that I was able to forgive it. I loved the introduction of Reo the witch, and while there was some heartache to Hunter's undergoing stage manager trials, it does give me GREAT JOY to imagine a world of the Backstagers where Hunter runs the show! (That said, I really do just want the story of Tim & Jamie, please give this to me one day)

While the beginning felt rough, and the end somewhat rushed, it was a delightful & fun story, and Mientus managed to capture quite a bit of the quirk and fantastic world of the Backstagers! There were scenes that truly added to the universe of the Backstagers, and I'm very grateful that this book exists. I think the finished

product will be a delight to behold, since there will be some art by Rian Sygh that will add wonderfully to the story.

3.5 Stars!

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### **Robert Jones says**

Disclosure: ?Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from the publisher through the NetGalley book review bloggers program. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

?Whoever thought Jory would find such amazing friends when he moved? Whoever thought the backstageers would gain two new recruits that year. But as with great gifts, comes great suspense.

?Just when things were going great, strange things start happening when they are picked to conduct a play that is still showing on Broadway.

?Roe is a new strange student, who just happens to be from a family of witchcraft. Chloe Murphy a strange student from another school tries out for the female lead. But what are your true intentions? What is that strange noise coming from deep inside the restricted access door? There's only one way to find out.

?In my honest opinion, I absolutely loved this book. There may be a age limit on it, but I could picture everything. I would love a copy, when the book is completed finished because there was a good amount of pictures that were missing from this unfinished book. I already want to read the second book, which is already available for ARCS.

?The storyline is one that you can follow, very intensely and it takes a very stable turn of events, which throws you in very quick. This being a short children's book, I fully understand. I can't even lie, I would recommend this book from Children & up or anybody who still has a imagination.?

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### **Shelly says**

A great continuation to the comics!

If you loved the comic book series, I definitely recommend picking this up as it continues right where the comics left off.

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### **McKinlay Dennis says**

I love these characters so much. I can't wait for more!

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## **Amelia says**

Comic novelizations have started becoming a bit of a trend lately. Shannon and Dean Hale's successful and enjoyable take on Unbeatable Squirrel Girl; Lumberjanes got the novel treatment last year (even if I didn't enjoy it that much); and one of my favorite comics of all, Giant Days, will be coming to a prose shelf near you sometime very soon.

After reading The Backstagers Vol. 1 and 2 at the end of April, when I came across this on NetGalley I could not bear to pass it up. And I have to say, Andy Mientus did a heck of a job getting the same spirit and humor and general weirdness of the comics to come across in a novel.

Lovely, diverse, funny, it's a book you can get through in a couple of hours that'll leave you in a good mood the rest of the day.

Thanks to the publisher and NetGalley for the eARC!

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## **Bailey says**

i started reading this book this morning bundled in my brooklyn 99 sweatshirt in the student union. i finished it with tears going down my face, barefoot and under a soft, warm blanket. this read was perfect for the chilly, slightly stressful day i had today. i loved every single character! they all made me so happy and i could relate to all of them. all the dynamics are wonderful too. the story itself is whimsical and captivating—a bit rushed at times—and the writing style was perfect for a story like this. there were plenty of smiles and laughs, but plenty of feels, too. this has very quickly become a new favorite!

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## **Adriana says**

I haven't read the graphic novel that introduces the characters so I came into this wishing for a bit more of an introduction. However, the pertinent details get adequately explained and the plot is fun and quirky enough to really get you into the story. It's cool to find a book that pays homage to the people behind the stage, those who are actually 90% responsible for the success or failure of a show.

It really gets into the details of a production without getting too advanced for the younger readers it's target towards.

I also really enjoyed seeing the diverse cast get treated as the totally normal thing it is.

Would totally recommend this for younger readers, even those not familiar with the source material.

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## **Yas says**

I have not read the comics beforehand because I was so excited to dive into a book written by Andy Mientus, one of my favourite Broadway stars! It would have certainly helped to understand the setting more, but even without that knowledge beforehand, it was a nice read.

The thing I liked most about this was how casually queer everyone was. There's two couples among the backstagers (all boys) and another one of them has a crush on this girl he knows from back when he attended the local all-girls-school. There's no questioning or even long rants about their status as queer people and yet it's always present. It was delightful to read that representation that doesn't make a big fuss about it.

That being said, the characters still felt a little flat. I don't know if it was because I didn't read the comics or because it's a book for middle-graders, but even if it seemed funny at times that all the characters only have one big characteristic to them that gets repeated over and over again, it got a bit irritating. There were some promises for development coming up, so maybe it will change in the next parts. I certainly hope so because even with the little I saw of them, I adopted all the Backstagers already.

The plot was entertaining and easy to follow, but still full of suspense. I had ideas for what's going on and assumptions about why it came to be, and at some times I was surprised anyway. Together with the writing style it kept me on my toes and glued to the page - though I would have wished for better descriptions of actions at some points. There's a chapter that consists solely of dialogue, which was great within the plot and situation, but then something big happened and it's not depicted *how* exactly. It bothered me a little, though it didn't hinder the understanding at all. Either it was intended or that's something Andy will develop in the future (it *was* his first book, after all).

The illustrations were fantastic, as was the layout and design of the book in general. There's a play with fonts at times to show something otherworldly, making you *hear* that voice even better. At some points there's orange writing on a normal beige page, which was hard for me to read, but it fit to the aesthetic overall, so it still was nice.

All in all, I really liked this. If I hadn't known this was written by Andy Mientus, then I would have definitely recommended it to him specifically - seemingly everyone is bi, there's - of course - lots of talks about musicals (and who doesn't know the infamous *Violinist On The Ceiling?*), gaming and even a local witch boy showing up. It's a whole cluster of different interests that fit together so, so well and make an interesting and easy read. I'll definitely read the comics soon!

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## **Renata says**

I read & enjoyed the first Backstagers comic and wasn't sure what this prose novel would be? But I checked it out because I was curious about Andy Mientus as an author. (He's Broadway famous, not regular famous, but I was excited.) It's a really sweet and funny story, and it's something separate from the comics, although I think it helps to have had the (very inclusive cast of) characters introduced in the comics? Def recommended for all the theater nerd tweens & teens.

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## **Liesl says**

A perfect love letter to theatre and backstage shenanigans. As a musical geek, I loved spotting the references to many of my favourite musicals and anyone who's spent a reasonable amount of time running around the endless liminal spaces of backstage in a theatre will love the concept of Backstage as being somehow outside the usual limits of space and time. I loved the ghost plot and how it resolved itself, not to mention the allusions to traditional theatre superstitions. Also the perfect balance between characters' relationship drama

(I love Jory and Hunter so much!), supernatural hi-jinks and the process of putting on the school show. I absolutely have to read the original comics now!

*Thank you Netgalley for giving me an ARC copy in exchange for an honest review.*

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## **elle buss says**

everyone who knows me knows that i love andy mientus, so as a fan of him and also the original backstagers comics, i was obviously super excited to read this book. however, i wanted to make sure i gave a totally unbiased review it, regardless of who wrote it. and I LOVED IT. every second of this felt so homey and enchanting. it was so nice to be reunited with these characters, and the writing was so funny and descriptive and refreshing to read. it was super comforting and i'm WILDLY excited for the next book. if you're ever looking for something middle grade that you can just sit back, relax, and enjoy the universe, i would 100% recommend this. so yeah i love andy mientus even MORE now

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## **Kristel says**

### **PLOT ---**

How great is the backstage world? I didn't know anything about the story behind the ghost light. Is it true? I didn't investigate about it, but I want to believe it's true and there are thousands of ghost lights on right now in theaters all around the world. This supernatural adventure was fun, a tiny bit scary, and sad since it dealt with loss.

### **CHARACTERS ---**

The same characters from the comics make an appearance showing more depth since there is more space for inner monologues. I loved being inside their heads and getting to know them better. They're going through some changes and through hard times, but the good thing is they have each other and that's beautiful. Also, new characters! Yay! Amazing addition!

### **THOUGHTS ---**

After reading the two Backstagers comics, I knew what to expect but this story just gave me more. In the comics there is so much to see, a lot of details, yet there are not enough pages to narrate a big story. They did it and I loved it, but with books, there is so much narration, more space for feelings, also more space for a little bit of heartache. I enjoyed how Andy Mientus portrayed the characters from the comics. It was a great beginning!

### **CONCLUSION ---**

From the ending and the spine of the book, this is the first of a lot of Backstagers books and I really can't wait to find out more about what goes on behind the scenes. These stories are simple, easy to read, and very interesting. Its simplicity doesn't take anything from the overall experience and it leaves you wanting more. And I definitely want more.

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## **Laura says**

I adore The Backstagers. One of my favorite comics. This book was an excellent addition to the world. The characters remain endearing and completely relatable. The tone is respectful and playfully challenging - written perfectly for its target audience. I love these boys!

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