



The Extraordinary Education of Nicholas Benedict

Trenton Lee Stewart, Diana Sudyka (Illustrations)

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Before there was a Mysterious Benedict Society, there was simply a boy named Nicholas Benedict. Meet the boy who started it all....

Nine-year-old Nicholas Benedict has more problems than most children his age. Not only is he an orphan with an unfortunate nose, but also he has narcolepsy, a condition that gives him terrible nightmares and makes him fall asleep at the worst possible moments. Now he's sent to a new orphanage, where he encounters vicious bullies, selfish adults, strange circumstances -- and a mystery that could change his life forever. Luckily, he has one important thing in his favor: He's a genius.

On his quest to solve the mystery, Nicholas finds enemies around every corner, but also friends in unexpected places -- and discovers along the way that the greatest puzzle of all is himself.

The Extraordinary Education of Nicholas Benedict Details

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Author : Trenton Lee Stewart , Diana Sudyka (Illustrations)

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From Reader Review The Extraordinary Education of Nicholas Benedict for online ebook

Veronica says

Having read the Mysterious Benedict Society, I always wanted to know the background of Nicholas Benedict, the founder of the society. This book gives all that and more. Nicholas is nine and has been moving from orphanage to orphanage for years. When his guardian drops him off at the new orphanage, she warns him to be good. The problem is not that Nicholas cannot obey, but that his conditions make him easy pickings for teasing. He has narcolepsy and falls asleep at random times. He also falls asleep any time he feels extreme emotions. Nicholas also has a photographic memory and can speed read.

This is a great addition to the series and I love that this is where Stewart went after finishing the last book (so far) in the series. Getting some background on Nicholas provides an intriguing look at the boy who became the man.

Gillian says

I LOVE THIS BOOOOOOKKKKK!!!!

I mean I would have liked it if they had put more detail into his life and made it go through his ages besides being nine. I'd also like to know why he never married I bet he was a strapping young lad! I really liked how it ended though and the mystery did not get boring for a second. I loved how they Incorporated a deaf character (violet) and how violets swooped to the rescue when we all thought jhon was gone forever. I loved the book but I feel like I need more information please. This is Gill and I aproved this messege

Steven Grecia says

Words can't explain how much this book disappointed me.

Trenton Lee Stewart. THE Trenton Lee Stewart. He wrote this book? Where's the Trenton I idolized who wrote The Mysterious Benedict Society Trilogy? Where is that brilliant author who opened my eyes to the world of reading?

The book went from boring to boring-er. The setting was isolated in their own little place. Trenton forgot to use his imagination. Halfway through the book, the story went on and on and on and on about a stupid treasure. They put all their effort on a treasure they were not even sure existed. Like whaaaaat? And then Trenton tried fitting all the exciting parts at the end of the book. And by 'exciting' I mean 'not THAT boring.' There were REALLY REALLY REALLY insignificant characters in the book. The book would've flowed without them, but apparently, Trenton's creative juices weren't working that time. I don't know how he connected this story to The Mysterious Benedict Society, but he did. The book ended abruptly, as if Trenton suddenly got exhausted of writing and decided to stop the book right then and there. WELL, IF HE JUST CUT OUT THOSE REDUNDANT MEETUPS WITH JOHN AND VIOLET, THERE WOULD'VE BEEN LESS WASTED PAGES.

I STILL HAVE SO MANY RANTS ABOUT THIS BOOK BUT I CAN'T SEEM TO EXPRESS THEM IN WORDS. I AM REALLY SORRY FOR THIS VERY INFORMAL REVIEW BUT PLEASE EXCUSE ME, I'M TOO DISAPPOINTED IN HIM.

I'm sorry to all the fans of this book, but sad to say, this is a mere shadow of what Trenton could do. I'm so disappointed right now, I won't even try finishing this sentence.

Madi says

Star Rating:

4.5 stars

Plot:

It's about the life of young Mr. Benedict.

We get to see how he handles being an outcast, what he does when terrible bullies make fun of him and threaten physical harm, and what he does when he finds out about a missing treasure that's somewhere in the orphanage.

Characters:

Nicholas: Awe! He's so cute! And amazingly smart, and a very dad reader. I wish I could read that fast. And a note about the other books in the series, I loved to see how all of the children (Reynie, Sticky, Kate, and Constance) all have some of the same characters he has. Nicholas is like all four of them rolled into one.

John: I loved him, and how kind he was to Nicholas. I wish the Spiders would just leave him alone. But he seemed under appreciated. I wish Nicholas would have thanked him more for all the sacrifices he had to make.

Violet: She's so kind! Willing to do just about anything to help Nick. Even give up her dream. The world needs more people like her.

Opinion:

I loved it! I really liked how much we get to hear about Mr. Benedict, and I think it helps to understand his character more in the other books.

I did miss Reynie, Sticky, Constance, and Kate though.

Recommendation:

11 and up maybe? I think it would go over younger kids' heads.

Michelle says

I met Trenton Lee Stewart after a concert in central Arkansas several years ago. It was a funny experience because I had not read much of the Mysterious Benedict Society (if any of it) and I knew he was famous for it but couldn't think of anything to say to him. I wanted to smack my forehead afterward because it was silly to have a chance to rub shoulders with a literary celebrity but waste the opportunity by several moments of silence.

Anyway. I read the MBS series and thought they were good. A little hard to get into sometimes, but my sons love them and have read them multiple times. But then they persuaded me to set aside my grownup fare and read THIS book, insisting it was Stewart's best yet. I read the first chapter and found that I couldn't put it down. It has a narrative pace that is much more compelling than the MBS books. Its characters are more real. Its plot has neatly executed intricacies that satisfy. Its message is uplifting and inspiring.

I agree with my sons -- this is Trenton Lee Stewart's best work thus far! And now if I were to meet him again, I would have plenty to say to him, including to express my hope that it has been submitted to the Newbery committee. It is every bit as good as Louis Sachar's "Holes"; in fact I like it even more because of its power to make me want to be better, kinder -- to use my gifts to help those I care about, like Nicholas Benedict.

Mimi 'Pans' Herondale says

OH MY GOD!

This book was exactly as I wanted it to be. I actually liked it better than I thought I would!

Favorite characters: Nicholas and his two friends. I mean, the others were all mean and evil! I mean, usually I like villains, but this one was not one of my favorite characters!

AND THE END WAS AMAZEBALLS! Oh my god, it was better than I would have thought! And the treasure was perfect. I am not going to tell you what and where it was, because that would be a spoiler, but to me it was perfect.

And the plot, a orphan boy who when he reads he reads books in minutes and then remembers everything he reads? I MEAN, WHO WOULD NOT LOVE THAT!!?? That would be awesome. And his two friends were also great.

OK, and that concludes my review of 'The Extraordinary Education of Nicholas Benedict'. I would recommend this book to humans ages 10 and up. It was a little long, but me being a speed reader I read it in about two hours straight!

Megan Kirby says

I love that Trenton Lee Stewart writes smart, complicated kid's books, but it's getting awkward to have to sneak onto the children's library floor each time he releases a new Benedict Society book. Extraordinary Education was so good, though, that it was totally worth the skeptical looks the librarians gave me when I clomped through reading time in my Doc Martens.

This is the prequel to The Mysterious Benedict Society trilogy, which I tore through last summer. Stewart reinvigorates a fairly standard children's mystery plot with realistic characters, awesome wordplay and really, really solid writing.

I was a little disappointed that Carson Ellis didn't do the illustrations this round, because her drawings added one more layer of depth to the other books in this series. Sudyka does a fine job-- people unfamiliar with Ellis' work might not even notice the shift-- but every time I came to a new chapter illustration I felt a pang akin to homesickness. Guess I'll have to move on to Wildwood to get my Ellis fix.

Levi says

This book was really good! It takes place before the other books when Nicholas Benedict is a child. In the beginning of the book, he is just moving to a new orphanage. Once there, he has to face his many problems. His strange sleeping condition (he constantly will suddenly fall asleep), the spiders (a group of bullies), and the strange mystery surrounding the Rothschild manor. However, he is not alone. He is almost instant friends with John Cole, an older boy. Nicholas soon finds himself in the middle of a huge mystery that will change his life forever. It is a great book that I think many people would enjoy!

Nicole Marie says

The Extraordinary Education of Nicholas Benedict is indeed a most extraordinary book that I loved from the beginning and one that I will definitely read again. It's a very enjoyable, fun, easy to follow piece of literature that readers young and old will love. This wonderful story has kept me up into late hours of the night, and early hours of morning, urging me to keep on turning the pages because I didn't want to put it down.

All the characters felt real and present, my favourite definitely being Nicholas; the nine-year old orphaned genius boy with narcolepsy who can read a book in five minutes, fix pretty much anything, and get startled to sleep. I've never read a book before with someone like him in it, and I can't wait to read The Mysterious Benedict Society.

I loved how everything turned out in the end and it was overall very satisfying, from the writing style, to the plot, and to the separate life and development of each character. I recommend this book to anybody and everybody.

4.5 stars

Lynette ~ Escaping Reality – One Book at a Time ~ says

I cannot wait to read this book!

I LOVE The Mysterious Benedict Society, and was SOOOO psyched when I learned that a new book was coming out.

UPDATE:

Simply put, I LOVED THIS BOOK.

Bella says

What an incredible journey that was. I am very glad to have made my way to Rothschild End. I hope that my further adventures with Nicholas, John and Violet will be just as intriguing and wonderful. This is a wonderful introduction into the series and a must read for anyone who is currently reading or has finished the series.

Onward to the next one!!

Clare Cannon says

Perhaps even more enjoyable than the Mysterious Benedict Society; I really liked the *young* Nicholas Benedict and his adventures at a new orphanage. It almost felt like I was back at Hogwarts. There's something captivating about following a new kid at a big, old fashioned school that is part fascinating and part scary, part welcoming and part awe-inspiring. Add to that some down-to-earth friends, some plotting enemies, some ambiguous teachers and some mysterious predecessors (who've planted a treasure) and I'm under the spell.

I really do like Nicholas. In this book he goes from being a good person to becoming an even better person (I cried by the end). I found it impressive that this change was inspired by seeing the striking goodness of a particular adult, and to me this seemed novel for a children's book.

Nicholas also makes 'super intelligence' look like so much fun. You can't help but want to imitate him with his extraordinary memory, his astuteness in observing things and tuning in to detail, and his capacity for detecting what other people need.

There is some realistic friendship development, particularly with one boy who sometimes lacks the courage to stand up for his friend for fear of drawing the attention of the baddies to himself. But once he faces his weakness he is able to overcome it, and the friendship becomes deeper than before.

And the story conveys a profound appreciation for the treasure of books, especially with Nicholas' talent for reading a large one in 10 mins and memorising the entire thing! Don't I wish...

www.GoodReadingGuide.com

JonathanT says

SO THIS WAS GOOD. But at the same time- it was also so. painstakingly. slow.

TBH NOTHING REALLY HAPPENS. Basically it's just about how Nicholas goes to a new orphanage and has to deal with bullies and then finds out about this lost treasure and then has to solve the mystery on how to find it.

Which is fun!! And bouncy!!! And there's plenty of signature Trenton Lee Stuart wit!! But- like I said. IT'S INCREDIBLY SLOW, other than a few interesting twists at the end.

However I do love 9-year-old Nicholas!! 1) he's a genius, 2) he's incredibly smart (hmm?? me?? redundant?? pssht never), and this is actually just a two point list. Don't question.

Violet was a nice addition also, she was a lot of fun. But John felt sorta cliche?? As in like 'typical normal nice kid in orphanage.' << THAT WOULD BE JOHN.

So I did like this!! **Just not nearly as much as Trenton Lee Stuart's other books.** Mostly because the plot was kinda cliche and boring- I guessed about the treasure and was right, which felt a little anticlimactic haha. Although the ending was pretty fabulous, and everything tied together perfectly.

I would probably recommend it to anyone who enjoys a mystery and won't mind a slower plot. :D

Kate says

I don't know what it is about these Benedict books, but they make me feel like a kid again more than any other children's books I've read as an adult. I get wrapped up in them the same way I used to with my favorites back in elementary school. It's a really nice place to visit.

That said, as much as I enjoyed learning Nicholas Benedict's early history, this book flagged so much in the middle third that I almost gave it up. I skimmed a lot because I didn't feel the clues were building fast enough towards a resolution - I needed a little less exposition, a little more action. I did like where the story ended up, however predictably, and I felt Nicholas's own self-revelations were as significant as the solution to the mystery. He was kind of an irritating, smug little bastard for a lot of the book, and I appreciated his ability to reflect upon that with satisfying conclusions.

While Nicholas's insane genius can be alienating and occasionally comes off as a mere plot contrivance (really? You picked up sign language in two seconds? Okay), I do like him as a model for how to stand up to bullies and use your nerderific powers for good. I'm sure it's encouraging to kids who get picked on for being different or "too" smart, and there's some practical advice in there as well.

Will we get to meet Nicholas as a teenager next? Now that, I'd like to see.

Tarissa says

"The Extraordinary Education of Nicholas Benedict" makes an excellent example of creativity and ingenuity in an author's writing style.

This book is actually the prequel to the "Mysterious Benedict Society" trilogy. You really must read the trilogy first, in order to catch all the little details hidden in the prequel. While we've so enjoyed the adventures and quests of Reynie, Kate, Sticky and Constance who form the Society --- and all of whom are very bright children that Mr. Benedict cultivates --- we finally get the chance to meet the boy himself, young Nicholas Benedict.

"Shall I tell you what I'm thinking, Mrs. Ferrier?"

"Heavens no, Nicholas! That would take hours and we have only moments."

With the prequel in hand, we can learn about Mr. Benedict's childhood --- about how he came to be the old man with narcolepsy, who uses a wheelchair, wears green plaid, and knows ever-so-many things. The entire back-story is finally revealed in a truly "extraordinary" way.

Young Nicholas is a nine-year-old boy with a mind that works overtime. Sometimes it's a great asset, and sometimes he finds himself in trouble because of it. He's always thinking, reading, and trying to figure out the next puzzle of life. Starting over at yet another orphanage is always hard, but that's exactly where he's going... Rothschild's End, the place where he will find friendship, enemies with the Spiders, and an unexpected treasure hunt. All great elements for a good story to be told.

"He had plotted any number of different strategies (plotting strategies was the sort of thing Nicholas did when other children were playing jacks or Old Maid)..."

I simple adore this book. It appealed to me on so many levels... the charm of a long-ago childhood, the love of libraries and books, the dreary orphanage holding so much potential within its walls, the wit found in tricky puzzles and clues, and the one boy who sees everything differently and can change it all. Complete with a few surprise twists now and then, to make sure you're awake.

By the time I arrived at the last chapter, I felt so sad that I would have to finish it and part company with the characters within its pages. It's a book to laugh and cry over. "The Extraordinary Education of Nicholas Benedict" is a book to cherish. This is the way an author writes a book that all ages can enjoy.
