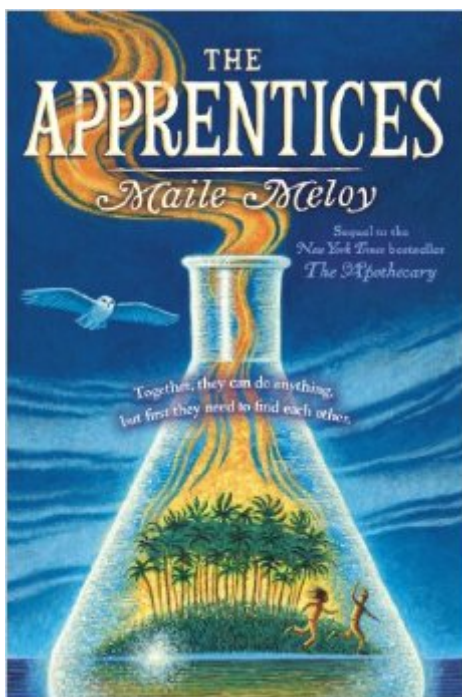


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The Apprentices (The Apothecary Series)



Synopsis

Two years have passed since Janie Scott last saw Benjamin Burrows, the mysterious apothecary's defiant son who stole her heart. On the other side of the world, Benjamin and his father are treating the sick and wounded in the war-torn jungles of Vietnam. But Benjamin has also been experimenting with a magical new formula that allows him to communicate with Janie across the globe. When Benjamin discovers that she's in trouble, he calls on their friend Pip for help. The three friends are thrown into a desperate chase around the world to find one another, while unraveling the mystery of what threatens them all. Acclaimed author Maile Meloy seamlessly weaves together magic and adventure in this breathtaking sequel with stunning illustrations by Ian Schoenherr.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0740 (What's this?)

Series: The Apothecary Series (Book 2)

Paperback: 432 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (June 17, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142425982

ISBN-13: 978-0142425985

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.2 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (74 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #29,126 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #9 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Exploration & Discoveries #1322 in Books > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy & Magic #1686 in Books > Children's Books > Action & Adventure

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Oh, the joys of an unsolicited ARC that turns out to be the sequel to a book you enjoyed. Prior to the arrival of this book on my doorstep, I had no idea that there would be a sequel to *The Apothecary*, nor did I have a specific hankering for one. However, since I did like the first, I was excited to discover what would transpire in this installment. Well, lucky me, *The Apprentices* is an even better

read than *The Apothecary*, maturer in plot, writing and characterization. Where *The Apothecary* was very much a middle grade novel, clearly skewing to a younger audience, *The Apprentices* could really have been published for either middle graders or young adults. Two years have passed since the ending of *The Apothecary*, bringing Janie from fourteen years old to sixteen. Janie, Benjamin, and Pip have all grown up in the gap between the two novels, still their charming selves but a bit wiser. Despite the maturer tone, *The Apprentices* retains the magic of *The Apothecary*. Once again, evil forces are at work, attempting to do evil things involving atomic bombs and it's up to the apothecary, his son Benjamin, and Benjamin's friends to save the day. Using a book called the *Pharmacopoeia*, they can create potions that make the improbable possible. For example, they can become birds, much like in *The Sword in the Stone*. On top of that, *The Apprentices* is also historical fiction. In the first book, Janie's parents had moved to England to escape the Red Scare, as they worked in the entertainment industry. The Cold War is still going strong in *The Apprentices*. In fact, Meloy even touches on tensions in Vietnam, China and North Korea. I love how she weaves the historical elements in, without beating the reader over the head with them. Meloy's characters are a lot of fun.

Where magic and mystery meet! Thoroughly engrossing, Meloy's new work *The Apprentices* is a simply spellbinding magical adventure. However, it is the characters - the true test of friendship, and the emotional connections, that is the heart of this story. *The Apprentices* is a sequel (to *The Apothecary*) but this reader had not read the first (an oversight I will correct) and this is perfectly comprehensible as a stand-alone. The plot is definitely interesting and unpredictable, yet it is Janie, Benjamin, and Pip who drive the story. The three friends search the world to find each other... well, the search actually starts sooner than that. Janie searches her mind for memories of three missing weeks. Her search allows us readers to get a sense of that first novel, and works as something of a prologue. I might wish this bit had been a bit shorter. This is also a good illustration of how wonderfully Meloy builds characters: Janie's roommate Opal's family are as real as any of the main characters, in the space of a paragraph. And the very first of the surprises happens so quickly after we disregard both Opal AND her parents... that I am immediately shocked and then mad and intrigued. However, I must tell you that I absolutely hate spoilers, and that makes writing a review for this (that anyone can comprehend, anyway) darn near impossible. Just as we begin to think we can see where this is going, we realize we cannot see at all. This book is getting a 5 star review because the plot is magically plotted - and as I read on, I can only tell you that further events are both logical and suprising, that magic is a delight - and friendship, true friendship, never lets you down. The

writer's style: Polished professionalism.

In this follow-up to *THE APOTHECARY*, Maile Meloy raises the stakes for her talented young protagonists. Maile Meloy's debut novel for young people, *THE APOTHECARY*, ended on a satisfying note, but also with most readers hopeful for a sequel. Now these lucky readers have got one with *THE APPRENTICES*, a thrilling tale that continues the story of Janie, Benjamin and Pip two years after the dramatic close of the previous novel. Janie is 16 years old and still has only hazy memories of what happened in London two years earlier. Her friend (and first love) Benjamin Burrows and his father have erased her memories, and she only knows what happened based on the diary Benjamin finally decided to share with her. Janie still has plenty of questions --- but now she's at a New England boarding school while Benjamin is somewhere halfway around the world with his father. Janie receives periodic letters from Benjamin that seem to make no sense --- but she can't be bothered with trying to decipher them while she engages in the all-consuming project of developing an easy method for desalinizing water. Janie's on the verge of a breakthrough when her jealous roommate (and her roommate's creepy dad) manage to get Janie expelled from school. Desperate to continue her studies, Janie lies to the school, hides from her parents and takes up residence with a local family who owns an Italian restaurant. Their son, Raffaello, is eager to show Janie a normal life (complete with romance,) but soon Benjamin contacts Janie using a new method that piques Janie's interest and eventually panics Benjamin enough to contact their mutual friend Pip for emergency reinforcements. *THE APPRENTICES* is a thoroughly enjoyable whirlwind of a novel, a fitting follow-up to Meloy's popular debut.

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