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Story Thieves



Synopsis

This "clever opener likely to leave readers breathless both with laughter and anticipation" (Kirkus Reviews, starred review) is the first in the New York Times bestselling series from the author of the *Half Upon a Time* trilogy. Life is boring when you live in the real world, instead of starring in your own book series. Owen knows that better than anyone, what with the real world's homework and chores. But everything changes the day Owen sees the impossible happen—his classmate Bethany climb out of a book in the library. It turns out Bethany's half-fictional and has been searching every book she can find for her missing father, a fictional character. Bethany can't let anyone else learn her secret, so Owen makes her a deal: All she has to do is take him into a book in Owen's favorite *Kiel Gnomes* series, and he'll never say a word. Besides, visiting the book might help Bethany find her father—or it might just destroy the *Kiel Gnomes* series, reveal Bethany's secret to the entire world, and force Owen to live out *Kiel Gnomes*' final (very final) adventure.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 750 (What's this?)

Series: *Story Thieves* (Book 1)

Paperback: 416 pages

Publisher: Aladdin; Reprint edition (December 15, 2015)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 1.1 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (56 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

There's an awful lot going on in this book, and it's all good. (It might also send you to other James

Riley books.)The setup is straightforward. Bethany can climb right into any book and be in its story. She's looking for her Dad, who disappeared into a book when she was a kid and who never returned. Bethany is careful to never change a story or even be noticed as she looks around for her Dad. Owen sees Bethany enter a book and basically blackmails her into taking him into his favorite fantasy adventure series, which stars Kiel Gnomfoot, Owen's all-time best fictional hero. MILD SPOILER. As you might suspect, Owen gets right in the middle of the story, interferes with everything, breaks down the wall between the book world and the real world, and all heck breaks loose. END SPOILER.At first I was concerned that this might develop into a time-travel, parallel universe, multiple worlds storyline that would become hard for a younger reader to follow. Not a problem. The whole fictional/real world portal angle is handled very crisply. Indeed, as new characters come on board during the course of the story the action is explained to them, and this serves as a refresher for younger readers and keeps them on track.I was also a bit concerned because the book starts with Owen blackmailing and deceiving Bethany, (who is for her part sort of a grump anyway), and I wasn't sure what I thought about spending a couple of hundred pages with two such bickering, unattractive characters. Well, that meet-cute-conflict angle gets cleaned up pretty quickly and both major characters end up as engaging and appealing in their own rights and as a team. There is some drama, but that develops into trust and friendship.

Owen is in math class, mentally enumerating tortuously dull things to prove that nothing is more boring than fractions. Until class gets a fraction less boring when Bethany is caught hunched down behind her math book. It looks like she might be sleeping until she drops her math book to reveal a copy of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory hiding behind. Did he see chocolate on her chin?When Owen looks for Bethany after class, she's disappeared. He finds only a chocolate-stained copy of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory lying in the hallway. If that doesn't beat all, it's a book from the library where his mom works and makes him help out. Disgusted at Bethany's mishandling of the book, Owen takes it back to the library and reshelves it. Or at least he attempts to, but the book starts jumping around. Suddenly five chocolate-covered fingers [push] right out of the center of the book, [grab] the edge, and [begin] to pull themselves out!It turns out Bethany is half-fictional, and she's desperately searching for her fictional dad. Owen, thrilled that books are real, sees an opportunity to be an active participant. He aims to prevent the death of the Magister in the seventh Kiel Gnomfoot book. He promises Bethany he'll keep her secret and leave her alone if she'll give him five minutes in the book. And he thinks he can use a magical spell to locate her father!There are many wonderful aspects to

Story Thieves. The principal characters are extremely relatable. Who hasn't sat in class bored silly wishing life were more interesting? And who doesn't love to escape into a book when life gets crazy? Full of adventure, humor, and seemingly endless imagination, Story Thieves is a ton of fun.

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