

The Curse of the Blue Figurine

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A mysterious stranger gives Johnny Dixon a magical ring that plunges him into a terrifying adventure during which he must outwit the ghost of the mad Father Baart.

The Curse of the Blue Figurine Details


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Author : John Bellairs

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From Reader Review The Curse of the Blue Figurine for online ebook

Amy Gourley says

I really liked this book a lot better than I thought I would. I had read A House with Clock on its Walls a few years ago but didn't like it much. But I enjoyed this one and even stayed up late to finish it. It's the first book in the Johnny Dixon series. I'm not rushing out to get the other books but I will pick one up if I find it at a garage sale and I do think I have a few other Johnny Dixons on my tbr.

Polly says

This book scared the heck out of me when I read it at age six or seven (yes, that was too young), but I went on to become a great fan of Bellairs at more like age ten or eleven, and I've never really stopped. They're quite well-written, full of actual historical fact, and full of funny and quirky characters. They are absolutely terrifying to the very young, and a few of them still make me a little uneasy if I read them at night, but then I am not a horror fan at all.

mark monday says

the place: a small town. the time: America during the Korean war. the hero: little Johnny Dixon, bookish and fascinated by history, a fussy boy and a lonely one - his mother having recently died and his father off to war, leaving him in the care of his grandparents. Johnny is thoughtful and curious, which leads to the problem: after he steals a quaint blue figurine from a church basement, a dark spectre from the past sets his sights on the lad, seeking to return to life through him. Bellairs tells his story in tones of rainy gray and earthy brown and shadowy black, creating an absorbingly oppressive atmosphere that mirrors Johnny's slow breakdown. a gothic tale - for the little ones! despite the darkness, Bellairs is a master at adding the light and warm touch here and there, in just the right places, just enough to make the story effectively heartwarming while avoiding anything remotely maudlin. the novel also features some of the most charming yet realistic senior citizens I've read about in a while. Johnny's special friend the professor is a predictable favorite, but I also loved grouchy Gramma and minds-his-own-business Grandpa.

it features a timeless lesson all kids everywhere should always keep in mind: if an adult is doing odd things with you and then insisting you keep it a secret... don't keep it a secret!

Miriam says

"Nutty people don't rat on you. Nice, friendly, ordinary next-door neighbor types--they would rat on you and think nothing of it."

Daniel says

I read a lot of the John Bellairs books when I was a kid. I was partial to the Johnny Dixon mysteries. I loved the characters--Johnny, Fergie, Professor Childermass. I suppose I was probably a little more like Johnny--meek and bookish--than I cared to admit. And in terms of creepiness, I would honestly rank some of Bellairs' best efforts up there with Stephen King. Thirty years later, I still get chills thinking of one particular sequence where some Bellairs characters are racing in a car to get across a bridge to escape a ghost pursuing them. Obviously there are ghosts and ancient curses, so if you're looking for realism these probably aren't the books for you. My own son went through a phase where he devoured everything he could find by Bellairs. And now, having seen that the author's "The House with a Clock in Its Walls" has been made into a movie, I decided to reread "The Curse of the Blue Figurine." There's always the fear that returning to one of the cherished books of your childhood will lead to a big letdown, but I'm happy to say that didn't happen here. I'm unfortunately not as voracious a reader as I once was, but I was able to dig into "Blue Figurine" with relish. The reason is that Bellairs knew how to flat-out write. He has a real knack for description, whether he's developing a setting or a character. His villains are sinister and his good guys are lovable (if curmudgeonly). His writing is very crisp, with no wasted words. In this, the first of the Johnny Dixon books, Johnny has stumbled onto a blue Egyptian-themed figurine in the basement of his church. Though he doesn't realize it at first, the figurine gives power to those who possess it, but an evil sort of power, and eventually it takes over their personalities. The figurine also summons the spirit of a priest who was practicing the dark arts back in the 1800s. Johnny eventually enlists the help of his neighbor, Professor Childermass, to set things right again. Though the books were written in the Eighties, they take place during the Korean War. Johnny's father is a pilot in the war, his mother is dead, and he lives with his grandparents. I never found it odd that Johnny spent so much time with Childermass, an unmarried man living alone. They go on little vacations together, etc. Now this would be viewed with suspicion, but the problems in Bellairs' books aren't criminal but rather psychological. These are spooky books, page-turners that are perfect for pre-teens (or their parents) to dive into.

Sheryl Sato says

Having read this book a few times as a youth, I find it just as exciting and creepy now. The writing is great and it is always interesting to note the struggles between good and evil, having good overcome due to the help of an unusual friendship.

Alicia Croy says

Loved it

I always look for new books to stretch my imagination just a bit farther this book hit the spot. Thank you for your adventure looking forward to the second one

Tara Lynn says

I think I've saved my Bellairs obsession till last because I used to get a new book in the series every Christmas. I've mentioned in an earlier review that Johnny Dixon's my favorite character in the series, and I

particularly love his story arc. Professor Childermass, his friend and eccentric neighbor, is one of my favorite characters throughout ALL of the novels, and his "fuss closet" idea was one I used myself! There's also a higher level of spiritual undertone in this series than there is in the others. Having gone to 16 years of Catholic school, many of the prayers and charms used against evil are intimately familiar to me as relics of my childhood.

C. says

I loved every ingenious intricacy of "*The House With A Clock In Its Walls*", wondering why I didn't know **John Bellairs** as a child. *Johnny Dixon's* series depicts 1951 instead of 1983 but books by **John**, who died in 1991, are special. I hope the ones continued for him are well done. "**The Curse Of The Blue Figurine**" did not approach the former's mysteriousness and ostentatious wonderment. A professor friend provides eccentricity and Grampa, joviality. *Johnny* solely lost a Mom and has a Dad in the military, different from *Lewis Barnavelt*. Grama is prudish but loving and stable.

Johnny deals with a violent peer, jealous over his scholarly skill. He stops being open with his guardians, after taking a curiosity from their church's basement that might confirm the professor's tale about a priest's ghost. The metaphysical emerges slowly but was doubted most of the way through. Belated confirmation detracted the sensation of reader and protagonist landing in a wacky atmosphere of infinite possibilities. I was kept wondering when the woo-woo factors or ancient connections might take centre stage. Even though the figurine mimicked an Egyptian item, this novel never delved into that territory.

Johnny's unexplained ordeal did take a physical toll, so he and the professor share a fun mountain trip. When they reach an ill-chosen town, there is no more doubt. Tumultuous action and spookiness suddenly grow heart-thumping. **John's** creativity is still admirable. His less tantalizing work nonetheless merits four stars. The sequels may well build-up steam. I wonder if it was too grand a possibility to recreate *Lewis Barnavelt's* calibre, at least in an opening volume. I appreciate **John's** obvious compassion for children overcoming difficulty. In the 1970s and 1980s, his spotlights banished away loss and bullying. This story too was in the hands of a sensitive original.

Chelsea says

3 STARS

Keegan Fink says

This book was pure comfort food for the imagination. A delightful gothic romp through a days-gone-by childhood. Curl up in front a fire, grab a cup of good tea, and pick out a comfy wingback chair (where available).

MarpleInvestigates says

This is a wonderful, spooky, Gothic tale for young readers, probably ages nine and older.

Cupof Tea says

I was so happy to find this first book in the Johnny Dixon series at the book sale a few weeks ago. My local library has never had this book and so I have only heard about the story from his later books.

This is just a creepy ghost possession book on the surface, but Johnny and the Professor are such rich characters and we get to see the beginning of their very strange friendship developed, including the discovery that the Professor has a "fuss closet" in his house to help let off steam, and that he used to do intelligence work in the war so he knows how to sneak around tailing people :)

Reading these as an adult I notice more how much religion and prayer are a part of Johnny's daily life, and how little support a boy in that era had against bullies and the like. And of course, how much more freedom kids had to roam, and the innocent view of his relationship with the crochety old guy down the street.

A fun little adventure. I'm looking forward to rereading the rest of this series.

Rachel says

These books were my absolute favorites when I was a kid and I've recently managed to buy all the original Johnny Dixon series in their hardback editions with the Edward Gorey artwork. I'm planning on rereading all 9 this year in order (though I don't think there's a greater timeline). I won't be rating them because they were all 5 star books when I was 11.

What I love about Bellairs: he doesn't treat his reader like an idiot. He names chess strategies and antiques and ancient Egyptian curses in the same sentence. While Catholicism plays a big part in these books, it's more in the mode of "capital R Religion" than anything resembling zealotry or devotion. I wished--and still do--that I had my own Professor Childermass across the street to eat cake with, and someday my dream house will have its own Fuss Closet.

D. says

John Bellairs' current reputation rests pretty squarely on his first YA book, *THE HOUSE WITH A CLOCK IN IT'S WALLS*. It's too bad, really, because many of his later books are much more satisfying. In fact, his books would be GREAT source material for a TV series or movie series. Now that I think about it, all his books would be an excellent series to adapt into graphic novels, considering the mood and gloom that permeates his novels.

THE CURSE OF THE BLUE FIGURINE is the first of the *JOHNNY DIXON* books, and it's a well-written, spooky, supernatural mystery. There are some genuinely scary moments in it, and some wonderfully realized scenes and character bits. His protagonist is a 12-year-old outsider, who finds himself dealing with forces far beyond what he expected when he accidentally steals a blue figurine from the basement of a church. As usual with Bellairs books, Johnny has an adult companion to help him with his circumstances, this time in the form of an old family friend.

Highly recommended.

Kelly Sedinger says

John Bellairs is one of the authors I read as a kid who shaped me most today, and this is one of his most effective stories. It introduces us to young Johnny Dixon, an awkward and smart kid, and his new best friend, the eccentric and kindly (and foul-tempered) Professor Roderick Childermass, who become embroiled in supernatural shenanigans when Johnny is snooping around the local church basement and finds magical objects belonging to the evil ghost of the church's former priest.

Bellairs's writing is full of wonderful atmospheric details, and his characters are all intelligent people. This book, along with several other Bellairs novels, made me a lover of the horror genre, even if the scares here are relatively low-level. If you have a ten-year-old nearby who could use a spooky read, give Bellairs a try. (This is the first in one of his major series. His other series-openers are THE HOUSE WITH A CLOCK IN ITS WALLS and THE TREASURE OF ALPHEUS T. WINTERBORN.)

Calista says

I can't believe many of these John Bellairs's books are going out of print. They are some great middle grade mystery, gothic and horror all rolled into one story. I read this for the first time and I enjoyed this little book set up in New England. Johnny find this little blue Egyptian figurine in the basement of a church one day and it starts all kinds of trouble. His cranky neighbor, professor Childermass helps him by being a friend. The end is rather thrilling. This is a quick read for middle grade literature. Find a copy and give this a read. Good stuff.

Jennifer says

Best Bellairs title, IMHO. Scared the pants off me and still does. A particularly deft handling of how a child experiences guilt.

Jurvis says

I stumbled on this old edition (notice I didn't select the non-Gorey-illustrated edition- for shame publishers! for shame! Gorey's illustrations were as much a part of the experience as Bellairs words) in the Goodwill last season. An unfortunate head cold left me longing for simpler reading fare and Bellairs lived up to my middle school memories. A solid mystery with real characters. You better beat Summer to the old editions wherever you may find them before she snatches up every last Gorey-illustrated edition...

Richard Denney says

One of my favorite books by John Bellairs!

