



Cat Burglar Black

Richard Sala

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K. Westree: Teen Cat Burglar

When K. Westree arrives at Bellsong Academy, she thinks she's left her cat-burgling past behind her. But K. soon discovers the school has a mystery of its own, a hidden treasure left behind by its founder, and she's the only one who has a hope of finding it. As she resumes her cat-burgling in an attempt to discover the school's secrets, K. begins to question if a normal life is really what she wants.

Cat Burglar Black Details

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Author : Richard Sala

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From Reader Review Cat Burglar Black for online ebook

Sesana says

K's parents died when she was young. The orphanage she was raised in doubled as a training ground for pickpockets, and K was a top student until the place burned to the ground. Now, she's been sent to the private school her aunt owns, only to find that it too doubles as a training ground for thieves. She and the other three girls at the school have been recruited to rob three paintings from eccentric and wealthy owners, because each holds a clue to a larger puzzle.

Cat Burglar Black was written for a YA audience, and it shows most in how quickly the story is told. In roughly 120 pages, we have backstory, setup, three major robberies, plus the climax of the plot. It's a little rushed, and it would have been improved by expanding some of it, especially the robberies themselves. That said, I liked the characters, the art, the plot itself, and the way the action was handled. It's a fun read, and it has an open ending that might lead to future volumes.

Praxedes says

The clever mystery that forms this graphic novel is greatly enhanced by the visuals. Normally I am not a fan of diffuse colors and irregular lines, but in this case it totally worked! Sala's coloring and lettering slowly shift, conforming to the plot the way a shadow conforms to changing light sources.

I wish Sala had gone more in depth into the characters...the reader is left with the initial intrigue without resolution or explanation. It seemed to me that every persona had a neat back story that was just aching to come forth.

The story itself is quite good, although it ended a bit abruptly: perhaps there is a sequel?

Gianna Petrillo says

1. 5th-6th grade
 2. This book is a comic book style book about a girl who was born to be a cat-burglar. She ends up at a school run by an aunt she never knew she had. This book is filled with adventure and suspense.
 3. I think students would like reading this book for the style it is written in. I also think they would like reading it because of the story itself, considering it is constantly drawing you in. This book is quit long so I think students would also like reading it independently during reading time or take it home.
 4. I would only use this book for independent fun reading, or to help show students what a graphic novel is. Since it is long I would not want to do a lesson plan on it.
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David Schaafsma says

Richard Sala writing for all ages... a mystery, not all that well conceived, executed okay. Have to see how my kids like it but I just thought it was okay. Girl as main character with thief/acrobat skills... spooky house... but felt to me sort of superficial, really, when I think of other "younger" books and the complexity

they go for with this audience.

Scottsdale Public Library says

Richard Sala's books are eerie, mysterious, offbeat, and full of quirky humor. *Cat Burglar Black* is one of his only graphic novels that may be deemed appropriate for all ages. It is also one of his most attractive looking books. His highly original drawings appear throughout in rich watercolor dyes that have never looked better.

The story, divided into five chapters, is probably the closest thing in form to a Lemony Snicket novel in graphic form. Terrible things have happened to the main character K. and she is thrown into an unfortunate situation. Not only have her parents died, but at a young age she was placed into an orphanage where she was trained to be an expert thief. *Cat Burglar Black* begins when a reformed K. gains entrance into an exclusive girls' boarding school. When she arrives, though, things are not as she might have imagined. There are only three other students, classes are not offered and the headmaster and her cohorts are intent on using K. to uncover the secret to a lost treasure.

K. has special talents as an acrobat and a thief. But as her classmates begin disappearing one by one, will K. begin to unravel the mystery of what happened to her father? Will she be able to outwit the wicked faculty at Bellsong Academy? Will she be able to get out alive?

If you're looking for a quick, exciting read that features an unusually brave girl in the lead, you won't be disappointed by *Cat Burglar Black*.

-David K.-

Nicola Mansfield says

What a devilishly divine caper! K. has been raised in an orphanage by a wicked woman who has trained the children to be master thieves and pickpockets when one day she receives a call from a long lost aunt to come live with her at a rundown boarding school. K arrives and meets 3 other girls who seem to come from similar circumstances as her and the teens are encouraged to continue their thievery working for a secret organization. I loved this book! The story is fast-paced, a little over-the-top at times but so much fun it's forgivable. A spooky atmosphere, people who go missing, strange voices in the night and a spunky heroine who isn't about to believe any old line make this a can't put down read. The ending leaves many questions unanswered and while it is a satisfying ending one can't help but think that a sequel is planned. Mystery fans will love this, especially girls.

Christy says

I wish there was a sequel!

Jan Philipzig says

Cat Burglar Black is Richard Sala lite - a mystery for all ages, not as weird and deranged as his other stuff. To be sure, we encounter various spooky locations and shady characters, but the overall tone is not as outlandish as you would expect from Sala. Still, the mystery is masterfully developed, as the reader constantly feels there might be more to a situation or a character than meets the eye. I was just a bit underwhelmed with the rather uninspired way things were resolved in the end.

Jackie "the Librarian" says

K. is the new girl at Bellsong Academy for Girls, a mysterious boarding school owned by her aunt. K.'s never met her aunt, she's an orphan who until recently was part of a gang of thieves led by the evil Mother Claude. She was Mother Claude's star performer, perhaps because of her gymnastic abilities inherited from her trapeze artist father.

But things are not right at Bellsong Academy, either. K.'s aunt lies swathed in bandages (why does that make me suspicious?), and the teachers have a plan for K. and the three other students (all girls with special abilities). Yes, it involves some breaking and entering.

It all is very dark and mysterious, in a Lemony Snicket kind of way, with a dash of *The Mysterious Benedict Society*. It appears that some of the characters meet gruesome ends... or DO they? We are left in suspense at the end of this first volume of K.s adventures.

Quite Alarming! And lots of fun. This is a perfect graphic novel for reading in the fall, as days grow shorter, and creepy stories sound good once again. Recommended for ages 11 and up.

Shelley says

Summary:

Katherine Westree, who goes by "K", has been an orphan since she was young and grew up in a home under the "care" of a cruel woman named Mother Claude who taught and forced children to steal. K with unique talents herself is invited by an aunt she didn't know she had to live at Bellsong Academy For Girls. But this is no ordinary school, because these girls are "exceptional young ladies" skilled in acrobatics, stealth and theft. The school is run by a group called "The Obtainers." Their goal? To steal portraits of K Westree's great ancestor in order to solve a puzzle to a secret hidden treasure on the grounds of the school. If a school training girls to steal wasn't bad enough, when K goes to meet her aunt she finds her in wrappings and K keeps hearing a voice talking to her. There is definitely something very strange or even sinister going on in Bellsong Academy for girls.

My Rating:

A Solid 5 stars!

My Review:

(view spoiler)

I truly enjoyed this novel. It's adventurous, exciting, suspenseful, mysterious, dark and dangerous. This novel will keep you in suspense with questions wondering "Why won't Aunt Vivian reveal her face?", "Who is the strange voice talking to K?", "How will K and the other girls discover where the treasure lies?", "Who really are The Obtainers?". All of these mysteries and more will be solved. Keep your wits about you and don't blink as the action and adventure continues up until the very end.

About the Art:

Besides the story being absolutely fantastic, I also enjoyed the art. The artwork is simple, cartoony but makes very effective use of lighting and shadows to set the tone of the scene or even to make the characters more animated or show a memory from the past.

Jennifer says

Meh. This GN of a teenage loner trained in the art of theft who is joining an exclusive boarding school for "exceptional" young ladies had promise but ultimately failed to engage me on an emotional level. I liked the art, the color and the action sequences, but there was too much telling of the main character's background instead of showing and I wanted a deeper characterization of the protagonist. Also, the dialogue was a little stiff. The ending is left wide open for a sequel, so we'll see...

Aurora says

"Cat Burglar Black" is a crime graphic novel. It tells the story of an orphaned teenage girl nicknamed "K". As a young girl, K was raised in an orphanage. The orphan's matron was very greedy and raised the orphans to be thieves to steal things for her. Later, K is invited to attend the "Bellsong Academy", an academy for exceptional young ladies. At the school, K meets other girls who were having trouble 'fitting in' like her. Mrs. Turtledove, the headmistress of the school, asks the girls to steal some ancient paintings of great value to the school. Once again, K is asked to be a burglar. Throughout the story, K questions if the life of a burglar is the kind of life she wants to live.

I enjoyed this book. I liked the iconic, colorful art style. I liked how the colors became darker as the plot thickened and the climax approached.

I liked K's reflection on her life throughout the story. From the beginning, she was hesitant to be a burglar for the matron, so it made sense that she would be reluctant for Mrs. Turtledove. I also liked how all the girls just wanted to be happy with their lives. They were all reluctant to working for Mrs. Turtledove. Many of them contemplate escaping. One of the girls K meets, Dory, thinks about her life and how she wants to just be content. She states, "I don't care how many shrinks or cops they get to poke at me or what they say my mother did. I'm doing just fine, thank you! Just fine!"

Overall, I admired how the story was reflective as well as mysterious. I also liked the plot twist at the end of the story! I would recommend this book to anyone who likes crime or mystery novels.

Rebecca says

This is an odd little graphic novel--Edward Gorey meets Nancy Drew via Charles Dickens, in a way. Cat has been raised as part of a band of children forced to be thieves, and thus is a trained cat burglar. When she is freed from that life, she goes to join an aunt at an exclusive school that turns out to be so exclusive there are only three other pupils--all of them cat burglars, and Cat is forced into the same life she left, though now

with a purpose--treasure hunting.

You never do find out what happens to the other three girls, who seem to get picked off one by one during their nocturnal escapades, and the author seems to have no problem killing characters off. It felt a bit odd with the cartoony style of the drawings, which was perhaps the point. Also odd is that Cat looks like a 25 year old woman, not a 16 year old girl, both in the face and the frame. I'm not saying that a cat burglar can't have wide hips and thighs, but it does seem that it would not be the ideal body type for the job, so I wasn't completely convinced about her.

Anyway, I ended it feeling kind of eh about it.

Callie Rose Tyler says

A little disappointed with this one, I enjoyed it but it is nowhere near as good as Delphine which I found to be darkly magical.

It was an interesting story, teenage cat burglars being forced to steal some mysterious paintings, but the execution was not creepy or suspenseful. There is a level of strangeness but not enough to stir any level of emotion from the reader.

I enjoyed the characters and setting but everything felt very underdeveloped and the ending felt very rushed.

Overall, good not great. While this didn't quite live up to its potential it was still a quick and entertaining read.

Sam Quixote says

The book follows the story of a young girl - "K" - who goes to a strange town where she is told to burgle a number of residents whose houses contain paintings which if collected together will reveal a secret of buried treasure. But as K sees her friends being picked off on these dangerous missions, she begins questioning the direction of her troubled life and tries to find out about what really happened to her parents.

This is the first Richard Sala which is in colour, bringing to life the usual dark shadows for readers of this book, aimed primarily at younger readers. This is also the first Richard Sala book I feel is a truly great comic book. While his previous efforts have ladled on the grotesquery's of the horror genre and brought to life characters and settings in line with Charles Addams/Edward Gorey/Hammer Horror etc. Sala's work has always been eye-catching and unique but his books have never quite made for a compelling read. "Cat Burglar Black" is a more controlled story with a fervent plotline throughout.

The characters are similar to Sala's previous efforts, especially the Obtainers, but the driven, original story and fresh looking images make for a much more interesting read than his previous books. Definitely Sala's best so far, this is the place to start with discovering this somewhat flawed but always interesting comic book artist.
