



The Marvelous Adventures of Gwendolyn Gray

B.A. Williamson

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Gwendolyn Gray faces an overwhelming battle every day: keeping her imagination under control. It's a struggle for a dreamer like Gwendolyn, in a city of identical gray skyscrapers, clouds that never clear, and grown-ups who never understand.

But when her daydreams come alive and run amok in The City, the struggle to control them becomes as real as the furry creatures infesting her bedroom. Worse yet, she's drawn the attention of the Faceless Gentlemen, who want to preserve order in The City by erasing Gwendolyn and her troublesome creations.

With the help of two explorers from another world, Gwendolyn escapes and finds herself in a land of clockwork inventions and colorful creations. Now Gwendolyn must harness her powers and, with a gang of airship pirates, stop the Faceless Gentlemen from destroying the new world she loves and the home that never wanted her—before every world becomes gray and dull.

The Marvelous Adventures of Gwendolyn Gray Details

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Author : B.A. Williamson

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From Reader Review The Marvelous Adventures of Gwendolyn Gray for online ebook

Samm | Sassenach the Book Wizard says

Thank you to NetGalley and the publishers for an eARC.

I really enjoyed this book. It was quite sweet and even as someone in their mid 20s, I remember feeling (and still do really) like the odd ball out or having trouble finding people that understand me or don't judge me.

Gwendolyn is an incredibly likable, enjoyable and intelligent character that I couldn't help but root for and want to protect. Her curiosity and strength were so admirable and definitely my favourite part of this book as a whole. She's a really great character to root for and watch develop. I also really loved her brother-sister duo helpers...and Gwendolyn's love and passion for that one book (we all have one book we would take with us on an adventure).

I loved all the portals and the chase happening from Mister Five and Six. I also enjoyed the concept of the segregation within Gwendolyn's home world and then you zoom out and see other worlds. Loved getting to travel all over the place and the creativity that went into the transportation and "magic"/inventions.

My only two complaints were that I don't think the villain dystopian guys were quite as fleshed out as I would have liked and the pacing. The pacing wasn't bad, I just found that parts where there were supposed to be climaxes, I found myself inhaling and waiting...and waiting and then realized they had returned to the traveling aspect of the adventure journey.

The cover is STUNNING and a fantastic representation of the book. I will definitely keep an eye out for a finished copy for myself and will certainly be picking up a digital copy for my libraries.

Erica Mae Campos says

This review is originally published on my blog: <https://bookishpuffcorn.wordpress.com...>

The Marvelous Adventures of Gwendolyn Gray by B.A. Williamson is a fantasy read about a 12 year old girl whose imagination is vast. Gwendolyn, with her red hair, always stands out. She lives in a grey world where everything is dull colored and uniformed. The red-headed girl was special, although others look at her as a freak. Everything changed after Gwendolyn gave her classmate bunny ears.

B.A. Williamson is a new author to me and I admit that the cover and title immediately caught my attention which made me request it from NetGalley. I can say that it was written quite nicely. Williamson made a great job at creating different worlds including where Gwendolyn came from. The book is divided into three parts which indicates the phases of their adventures.

Gwendolyn is different. She doesn't exactly blend in. She has a very wild imagination like kids these days and she refuses to be part of a boring world. I love how she still chose to be herself and stand up for who she is. Gwendolyn still doubts herself but she is a really loving daughter. All she thought about was how she was going to find her way back to her family. She reminds me of Merida from Brave.

Starling and Sparrow are Gwendolyn's adventure companion. They're brother and sister that came from a whole new world. The characters are great. They all have their very own personalities. Sparrow is a little stubborn. Starling is quite older and acts like a disciplinarian. I actually see myself in her because I'm the eldest child in the family.

It took me almost a week to finish reading this because I was in the middle of a reading slump. (I think I still am, somebody help me!) But when I got to the second part, I couldn't get enough of it. Every character turned out to be lovable and the story got more interesting. I got the feeling wherein I belong to the world itself.

It's a pretty colorful read. The book is not just great for middle-grades but for every other age as well. The book has a dystopian opening but it slowly came to life. It was like, a whole new world opened up for them (the characters and also us, readers).

What I didn't like is the unnecessary romance! Gwendolyn wasn't even in her teens yet. She was twelve but to force her into romance? I didn't like it at all. It seems a little forced and maybe even slightly creepy. But all that aside, it ended really well. The revelations and plot twists left my mouth hanging open.

Overall, I rate The Marvelous Adventures of Gwendolyn Gray 4 out of 5 stars and I look forward to reading more of the author's works!

***** I have received this book via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Clare O'Beara says

If there is any complaint about this book, it's that too much is packed in to the later sections that doesn't directly relate to the early chapters. Our young heroine Gwen has red hair but lives in an otherwise drab city, described in depth from her home and school life to the bullet train and the strange lurking men. She notices that certain kids disappear from her class. Because the other kids are busy being programmed with boring lessons, they don't notice, but Gwen does because she is not in the loop. This could be an author's warning about education.

Gwen tries to escape bullies and finds that at the far edge of the city, everything gets run-down and weird. Then she meets two youngsters who drag her off to adventures. This could be a warning about mixing with squatters and drug users, except that it's not presented as a bad idea. Not in the context of escaping the lurkers. I thought this was a mixed message.

Gwen's adventures then resemble Stardust with pirates and merchants and towns. As I mentioned, long before the end I was saying, but what about the other kids and the indoctrination? Is this dystopian (in which case we need to address the problem) or just daydream escapist fantasy? Well, decide for yourself, but I have no doubt that young readers, especially girls but boys too, will have a great time reading the adventure. And getting kids to love reading is what it's all about, right?

I downloaded an e-ARC through Net Galley and Fresh Fiction.

Sunshyne says

This book was marked in the young adult realm, however, I feel its for middle graders. With that being said. I enjoyed the book immensely, it gave true emotions and I found myself laughing out loud a lot. Gwendolyn is a unique little girl living in the dullest city possible. She is the only spark of creativity and color in a world so Gray and unoriginal. So basically shes the spark of red in a black and white/grey world. I think it was a great twist on fantasy and dystopian.

Kara says

I took one look at this cover and HAD to know more about Gwendolyn Gray! I was captivated from the first page and was completely horrified when Gwendolyn gets attacked by school bullies. The misters in bowler hats, also completely terrifying!

Then Sparrow and Starling show up and the REAL fun begins!! World jumping, running from the bad guys, getting rescued by a pirate, and trying to stop the darkness from destroying everything on the map? Just outstanding! The world building is SO real, the reader feels like they're RIGHT THERE with Gwendolyn instead of just reading it. Reminded me of The Neverending Story except there's no Falkor in this. But there were a couple of movies that came to me while being on this journey, I think Alice in Wonderland the pirate version is the best description because of how LIVELY and dangerous the plot is.

Not a complaint, but the only reason I didn't give this one a five star rating was because it was darker than I anticipated. The blackness that reaches through space and people trying to grab Gwendolyn had my eyes get bigger every time.

"You mean what if it all falls apart and we're forced to improvise and fight to get out alive?" He grinned wickedly. "Well, we call that Tuesday..."

Favorite character, EASY, was Kolonius..he has THE BEST lines in this and made me smile how he kept messing up Gwendolyn's name. So clever and funny! Also LOVED that Figment thing, I want one in PURPLE, PLEASE!

The ending had me SLIGHTLY confused. I get her imagination had a huge effect, but does that mean the bowler men were also just a figment or something more? Still a great book and one I really enjoyed. How she dealt with the school bullies at the end and the teacher was awesome.

I received a digital ARC from the publishers via NetGalley. My review is voluntary, the thoughts and comments are my own.

Shae Petersen says

This was a very exquisite and imaginary story. I really enjoyed it, particularly the whimsical writing style. I found the writing very easy to read as well as immersed with plenty of cute sayings and lines to ponder. I found Gwendolyn a very likeable character and thought her fiery red hair added to the colour she brought to the grey world in which she lived. I loved the dystopian vibe I got initially, with the lambents being these

brainwashing stones that controlled society. I loved this aspect of the book. I really enjoyed the ending and thought it wrapped up nicely. There were a few plot lines that I felt went off on tangents, like the bowler men disappearing and the pirate story dominating the book. I didn't like how the bowler men kind of reappeared and then were destroyed, I felt that all needed a bit more. But I was so happy when the lambents were all destroyed and everyone was normal. I also liked how it ended up being Gwendolyn's imagination. Overall a beautifully written middle grade story that I thoroughly enjoyed.

Charlotte says

This book is for a younger audience, probably ages 9 to 14. I am an adult and I thought it was a beautiful story. Young Gwendolyn is 13, but does not want to grow up because adult life is so boring. She lives in a world of sameness and no color. Everyone has hair that is black or washed out blonde. Her whole world is in shades of black and white Gwendolyn is bullied because she's different. She refuses to use her lambent, and instead lets her imagination run away with itself. She has no friends and so she talks to inanimate objects. Until one day her imagination makes things real, and that's when her life starts to change. This story gives the message that being different isn't always bad. You can do anything you set your mind to. This book is a great read, worth all 5 stars in my opinion.

Mitticus says

+Digital ARC gently provided by Netgalley in exchange for an honest review+

Gwendolyn Gray is a twelve-year-old girl living in a gray city, under gray skies, with gray clothes and gray buildings. She doesn't want to grow up, after all the adults look all the same and didn't do anything different ... ever. But Gwendolyn has something that they don't - she has imagination.

This is a middle grade fantasy-adventure story. At the start it reminds me a bit of *Momo de Ende*. But later some characters invoke different imagery like the sci-fi-noir-film *Dark City*. There are chase, and ships, and pirates, and strange and beautiful cities.

And bad men.

? The good :

-Fearless red-head girl with great imagination. Who falls in love with the first book she sees.
-Great 'winks' to other books. I mean the crocoach?

? The no-so-good:

-Though she is not yet a teen girl she is annoying: It's ALL MY FAULT that so many teen protagonist exhibits.

Ug.

-Pushing the friendship in romance for a not yet 13 y.o. girl is not my cuppa. Thank you very much.

At the end, there still unresolved questions (view spoiler), so... will be probably a next book, Mr. Author? Seems like it.

#TheMarvelousAdventuresOfGwendolynGray #NetGalley

Edit: There will be a second book. (See comments)

Lili Marcus says

Gwendolyn Gray is a twelve (going on 13) year old red-haired girl in a seemingly Dystopian Gray world and the only citizen who has an imagination and that's her problem. With her colored hair and vivid, colorful imagination, she's labeled as Rebellious and Rioter. And at first, she didn't even know the real danger of her imagination, or the real beauty of it. And as everything in Gwendolyn's Gray world turned clearer to her, she was also thrown into a perilous adventure that includes saving the world and her own made-up world.

First, I love Gwendolyn and her ability to conjure everything that comes in her mind. Second, I love the double meaning of every sentence and of the entire story. It shows how powerful imagination can be and how magical. And by making imagination as some kind of magical ability, it also brings a message to us that any of us can have colorful lives, all we need is our imagination.

I was really surprised to find myself so fascinated while reading this. And the storytelling is amazing. The narrator, which thankfully isn't Gwendolyn as I'm afraid of what she might sow in my mind with her imagination (lol)...anyway, the narrator succeed on taking me into Gwendolyn's world and share her adventures. I particularly loved how it ended. Not only did everything turned alright, but the little surprise (though I actually guessed it beforehand) was a nice treat.

If you love Middle Grade and Children's, this book is for you though I am 25 and terribly enjoyed it. If you're older you can buy this for a kid. Children will like this story best as its very magical and imaginative.

NOTE: The publishers and author provided me a copy thru Netgalley. Thank you...

Alina says

****Note: I received a copy courtesy of Netgalley and North Star Editions in exchange for an honest review.*

Gwendolyn Gray is a 12yo girl living in a distopian gray world: gray sky, gray buildings, gray landscape, gray clothes, gray everything.

Her elaborate pencil box had every shade available—light grey, dark grey, medium grey, charcoal, ivory, smoke, ash, and a dozen other shades.

She's unique in her city, as she's the only one red-haired and also the only one with an imagination. And what an imagination, that can conjure things out of her mind! I liked the pace of the novel, the action and the twists, and I very much liked all of the characters, with distinct and seemingly-real personalities.

I totally loved B.A. Williamson's writing style, and I very much enjoyed the interactions with the reader. Here's a little taste of it:

If Gwendolyn had turned around and boarded the monorail like a good little girl, her life would have turned out very differently. But stories are rarely told about normal, well-behaved little girls, the ones who go home and grow up into normal, well-behaved ladies. So it is fortunate for us that she did not go home, but went back into the School instead, though I cannot promise that it will end fortunately for Gwendolyn.

“What else could go wrong today?” Which, as everyone knows, is quite the worst thing to say in such a situation. But the fates had mercy on her this time.

The novel reminded me of several other works, like:

- Brave - the same red-haired, courageous and curious girl
- Michael Ende's Momo - a girl against bad grey men in bowler hats:

- The Adventures of Baron Münchhausen mixed with Peter Pan - flying ships and pirates:

- The Lambents made me think of a combination between the memory-erasing neuralyzers from M.I.B. and the mind-controlling TVs from Fahrenheit 451

I totally see this as an adventure movie for kids (and not only kids) ?

Finally, I will leave you with my favourite phrase from this novel:

“Magic, invention, spells, stories. It’s all the same. Pulling stories out of thin air is just as much magic as pulling a rabbit from a hat! Magic equals imagination equals creation!”

Taylor says

I received an arc from netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Middle grade fiction never ceases to amaze me, and this book is another fantastic example as to why I will NEVER stop reading 'children's books'. Gwendolyn lives in a boring grey city with boring people, but she refuses to grow up to be a boring grey person and who can blame her?! Adulting SUCKS! I loved coming home from a long day at work to read about her crazy imagination and the PIRATES ??? I AM A SUCKER FOR PIRATES!

she doesn't conform to societies standards which is a great lesson in itself. This fun book that has just a TEENY bit of a '1984' vibe would love this. It isn't completely dystopian but I love how it is hinted.

A great read for all ages!

B.A. Williamson says

Yeah, it's a pretty good book. I guess. I mean, it's all right.

Pop Bop says

"Creepy!? Do you mean creepy good, or creepy bad?" (H. Wolowitz)

I mean creepy very good.

If this were an adult novel it would start as "1984" with a touch of the movies "Dark City" and "Metropolis", and proceed to an extended series of fantasy/action sequences. Since it is in fact an ambitious middle grade book it just has hints of "1984", and an opening touch of dystopia, but then a generous helping of sly fantasy that drifts into magical realism steampunk. Actually, in order to really get a sense of the wonder of this book I'd also add some "Wizard of Oz", a touch of "Peter Pan", a hint of "The Matrix", and the progressive symbolic colorization of the movie "Pleasantville". How's that for a list of ingredients?

The setup is that Gwendolyn is something of a rebel and free thinker. Everything, and I mean literally everything, around her comes in shades of grey. (There's a great joke to the effect that her most prized possession is a drawing pencil set that consists of every possible shade of grey.) Gwen's a red-headed, green-eyed non-conformist who fantasizes that there must be more out there somewhere beyond her strictly regimented city, ringed in as it is by class specific circles of housing and a limitless supply of rules. One day Gwen daydreams about a mean girl growing rabbit ears. The girl in fact does grow rabbit ears and is whisked to the principal's office, where she is disappeared/disintegrated by two creepy truly unnerving men in black suits and bowler hats, and then erased completely from everyone's memory. Wow, this isn't just Alice-in-Greyland anymore. The balance of the book moves Gwen through the multi-verse as she tries to avoid the black men and bring life and color back to her world. The book gets pretty magical steampunk power-of-the-mindy by the end, but everything is racketing along at such a pace that you don't mind that we aren't on the rails anymore.

There is a lot of dry and deadpan edge and vinegar, but the odd spoonful of sugar makes it easy to digest. Gwen is neither always right nor always wrong, and the challenges she faces and the choices she makes feel authentic. I suspect that almost any young reader will respond well to the general tone, and more advanced readers will get some of the more adult themes. Doesn't that sound interesting?

This is also one of those books that subtly subverts a lot of middle grade fiction cliches. Gwen's parents have their rough and their smooth sides, and are treated sympathetically, which I found refreshing. The author has no problem exhibiting the fact that this is a story. In fact, the idea of the power of stories and storytelling is central to the book. So, the author will offer dry observations and chummy asides that are aimed directly at the reader. The reader is almost collaborating with the author, and it sometimes feels like the author is asking

the reader for advice on what should happen next. This is not off-putting but rather is quite engaging and strikes me as likely to have the effect of making the reader feel comfortable and welcome.

The upshot is that while this book appears at the outset to be a conventional sort of fantasy adventure it actually zigs and zags unpredictably and invites and challenges the reader's imagination. That struck me as a solid plus.

(Please note that I received a free advance copy of this book without a review requirement, or any influence regarding review content should I choose to post a review. Apart from that I have no connection at all to either the author or the publisher of this book.)

Kal ★ Reader Voracious says

??Happy book birthday to one of the most imaginative and engaging middle-grade fantasy books I have ever read!

Let me preface this by saying that I do not read a lot of YA these days, but if more were as eloquently written, engaging, and surprisingly relatable as *The Marvelous Adventures of Gwendolyn Gray* I would definitely read them more frequently. I was hooked with the opening and continued reading with fervor.

The story follows Gwendolyn, a twelve year old girl with a wild imagination - one that is in contract to the drab, dystopian City she lives in: gray sky, gray skyscrapers. School in her City brings the Foucaultian notion of education serving only to prepare children for adulthood and to train them in the rules of society. Her imagination gets her into trouble with her vivid daydreaming... Not to mention that she sticks out like a sore thumb with her fire red hair... she doesn't want to conform. She accidentally rides the metro beyond what is known and uncovers a world beyond her imagine, stumbling into a battle beyond reason. Rescued by two kids that appeared seemingly out of nowhere, she embarks on an adventure to save the world.

This YA tale is written in third person, Williamson crafts a compelling a fast-paced read that is suitable for the middle grade reader as well as those interested in dystopian adventures with strong female leads. The central themes of the book - imagination and creativity - are woven into an allegory for growing up and having that childlike wonder crushed by society.

Thank you Netgalley and the publisher, North Star Editions and Jolly Fish Press, for the free digital ARC in exchange for an honest review.

filming.pages says

Thank you Net Galley and B.A. Williamson for the free copy of this book in exchange with an honest review

I really really loved this book! I had no set expectations going in, but the writing really grabbed me from the first pages! I know that you may be wondering, why an adult would read a children's book? Well, if every children's book was as good as this one, more adults would read them!

The plot was fast, with the right amount of adventure and humour and with very nice vocabulary, which is something I always look for in children's book especially. I believe that when a kid reads a book he ought to have fun, but he also ought to learn something from it, whether that's the moral of the story or the chance to expand his vocabulary.

Gwendolyn and Sparrow were my two favourite characters in the book, they were funny, adorable and fearless and overall, I loved them so much! Sparrow made my laugh countless times with his antics and as an older sister myself, I could really relate with Starling's (Sparrow's older sister) exasperation regarding him!

“The Marvelous Adventures of Gwendolyn Gray” is the kind of book I wish I read when I was 11, because I found Gwendolyn very similar to myself when I was her age. I loved the message of the book, how it tells you that no one's weird and having traits that separate you from the group, doesn't mean you are abnormal or an oddity.

Summing up, I urge everyone with a younger sibling or any parent to gift this book to their loved ones. It is an amazing adventure, filled with many twists and exciting themes, like pirates and airborne ship battles, which are sure to enchant any child!
