



# The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place

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**I Prefer Not To....**

That's Margaret Rose Kane's response to every activity she's asked to participate in at the summer camp to which she's been exiled while her parents are in Peru. So Margaret Rose is delighted when her beloved uncles rescue her from Camp Talequa, with its uptight camp director and cruel cabinmates, and bring her to stay with them at their wonderful house at 19 Schuyler Place.

But Margaret Rose soon discovers that something is terribly wrong at 19 Schuyler Place. People in their newly gentrified neighborhood want to get rid of the three magnificent towers the uncles have spent forty-five years lovingly constructing of scrap metal and shards of glass and porcelain. Margaret Rose is outraged, and determined to strike a blow for art, for history, and for individuality...and no one is more surprised than Margaret Rose at the allies she finds for her mission.

## The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place Details

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Author : E.L. Konigsburg

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# From Reader Review The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place for online ebook

## Lauren says

This is a very quotable book.

"The only thing more destructive than someone who thinks his idea is the only possible correct one is a group of people who all think they and only they have the right answer."

The main character felt wise beyond her years, but not in a fictional or cheesy way. I liked all of the characters, even the antagonists, because they were so lifelike and they actually had depth.

I mean, what's not to like about this book? The wise uncles were awesome:

*Time is not money, Mrs. Kaplan. Time wasted is often time well spent. Money wasted is merely redistributed.*

The headstrong, witty heroine:

*As soon as I had a plan, I was ready to change history.*

*But there was this important difference: I would be fighting to save something other than my own sweet self.*

*Slipping and sliding and using words I had only read in banned books,*

I know how ya feel, sister.

(I did say it was a very quoteable book, right?)

This was a funny but thought-provoking young adult noovel, spoken with the voice of a wise child. E.L. Konigsburg, how do you do it?

Okay, I'll end with my favorite quote from the entire book-

*Words can be a part of your soul before they are a part of your vocabulary.*

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## Michael Fitzgerald says

Weak ending - very rushed and far too neat and tidy, though unsatisfying. The best parts are probably Margaret Rose back at 19 Schuyler Place up through the beginning of the preservation operation. That part is believable, unlike the ridiculous way things turn out.

Molly Ringwald cannot correctly pronounce the word "superfluous," omitting the first u and making it something like "superfelous"- multiple times.

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## **Ebster Davis says**

I'm reading this story now, on page 105.

My favorite part so far is her strong sense of "self"; her identity, family and heritage, determines how she thinks of herself and how she sees the world instead of how others perceive her. Very meaningful and it gives her the potential to be a very powerful character, although I doubt the author will go in that direction.

My least favorite part is how the author is basically conveying principles and quirks of sociology and psychology in lieu of forwarding the plot.

I really liked the camp-leader lady. Mostly because I wrote a character in my first NANO story who behaved a lot like her and ended up being an android created by evil lizard people. :D

Two hundred more pages to go!

\*\*\*\*\*

Done now!

Good drama story. Not unpredictable, but very thoughtful and methodical. I enjoyed the psychosocial "inuendoes" but I'm not sure I would have understood them at 12-13. I don't read Margaret Rose as a child at all. She's more like an extremely well developed lizard person.

Which is kind of awesome! I just wish her character were a bigger part of the story instead of the social issues she is dealing with.

In short, this book made me think and I liked it. :)

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## **Janelle says**

My family checked out a bag of library audiobooks to take on a long road trip recently. Many were titles I thought I'd like but didn't love enough to tune in the entire time (and so I won't even be reviewing them). But this was the exception - *The Outcasts* was the standout hit of the trip for all of us.

We listened to the unabridged version read by Molly Ringwald, who is a delightful reader. She brought just the right amount of acting to the job. Some audiobook readers go gangbusters on accents and whatnot... Molly provided just the right amount of differentiation to help distinguish among characters without overdoing it.

This is Konigsburg's second-to-last work, published in 2004 long after I aged out of the target audience. It is set in 1983. Come to think of it, in 1983 I was about the same age that Margaret Rose, the main character, is in the book. Maybe that's part of why I liked her so much. She is a smart, sassy, plucky young woman who sees through adult bull\*% and quietly gets things done.

The thing that needs to get done in this book has to do with the art towers her great-uncles have built in their

backyard. The neighborhood is undergoing gentrification and neighbors sued to have the structures destroyed. Margaret reaches out to artists and business people to strategize and save the towers.

I felt a bit let down by the ending, since the towers aren't saved because of their intrinsic value as art - instead they are purchased by a telecommunications company and relocated to a hill to be used as cell phone towers. But that ending goes with the Uncles' philosophy about enjoying things while they are yours and then letting them go. It also fit well with the sense of quiet despair and lack of control Margaret has when her parents divorce.

The journey that Margaret goes through during the summer of 1983 is a universal coming-of-age story about a girl beginning to understand adult things. But it's also touching and really, really funny.

At one point during listening, I turned to my beloved and said "Why haven't we read every single thing E. L. Konigsburg has ever written?" I don't know the answer to that, but I know how to fix it. We're about to go on a Konigsburg jag. Hang on.

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### **Amy says**

E.L. Konigsburg is the writer I want to be when I grow up. She paints her characters so beautifully, and so realistically. There is always a realistic center that the books center around, whether it's 3 towers built by Margaret Rose Kane's two uncles, an academic bowl (The View from Saturday), or my very favorite From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs Basil E Frankweiler, where two children run away, and end up living in a museum.

Like her other books, this one deals with a 12 year old beginning to understand her world, and come to terms with some of the things life brings, finding answers to questions etc. How this kid deals with arrogance and ignorance, both in the form of various adults (though she stumbles on some great ones, too, and with some adolescent bullies, was well handled. My big complaint? As a folk artist, I loved the idea of the towers Margaret Rose's uncles built but wish I could see them in reality, not just my mind's eye.

PS Noticed that Charleston SC, my hometown, is actually mentioned in the story! Twice!

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### **Althea Ann says**

"I picked this up because I'd read several of Konigsburg's books when I was very young, and really liked them, esp. "Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth" and "From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler."

What struck me though, is that although this book is marketed as a kids' book, probably because that's what the author is known for, it really isn't. Although the protagonist is 12, the story is told from the point of view of an adult looking back at being 12, not from the point of view of a 12-year-old, and I think that really shows in the themes of the book.

The protagonist, Margaret's parents is sent to summer camp while her parents are away on a trip. She was looking forward to it, but when she turns out to be the 'new girl' in a cabin of girls who already know each other, things don't start out that well and they rapidly get worse. Luckily, one of her two eccentric bachelor uncles shows up to face down the unsympathetic camp director and rescue her from the bullying. Margaret's

delighted, because she really wanted to spend the summer with her uncles anyway, helping them work on the amazing sculpture towers in their back yard. Unfortunately, neighborhood gentrification has set in, and the towers are scheduled for demolition. The uncles think the situation is hopeless, but Margaret can't just let it happen...

This is not a perfect book. The summer camp segment at the beginning is kinda typical; and too long. And I felt that the 'redemption' of the bullying girls later in the book is too easy, and doesn't 'ring true.'

However, I read the whole thing in one sitting - I couldn't put it down. And it really stands out as a novel for the author's refusal to make things black & white, or to go with the easy 'happy ending.' People here are nuanced, with shaded layers of motivations; we feel that they are real people, even when we only glimpse them in passing. It deals deftly and accurately with picturing a young woman's first feelings of love, shows that one can and must do something about issues that one cares about - but also acknowledges the reality that even when you 'win,' not everything is likely to be perfect.

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### **Jenny K says**

I have been wanting to read another book by CL Koingsburg so when I saw this at the library I grabbed it. As in *The Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, the main character is a young teen girl. We see her interact with a variety of problems that crop up during this summer and the friends, family, and even enemies that help her through. Some mature themes and camp pranks make this suitable for a more mature teen...you wouldn't want these pranks reproduced in your home by a youngster needing to develop discretion. :)

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### **Jason says**

*The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place* was an interesting book at the time I read it. At a glance Margaret Rose Kane is like any other protagonist in a story, only to grow as the story continues. From a very basic summary Margaret is sent to a summer camp while her parents supposedly neglect her in favor of a trip to Peru. Her attitude towards the camp is one that emits negativity, refusing to do anything the counselors say just to spite everyone around her. To her credit this attitude eventually succeeds, although not in the most exciting fashion, and she finds herself at her uncles' house 19 Schuyler Place.

19 Schuyler Place holds three gigantic towers that her uncles have passionately created over their lifetime. It is these three towers that become a focal point of the story as the neighborhood plan to demolish the three towers. Their reasoning differs from my recollection - from endangering neighboring houses, to disrupting the flow and regulations of the area.

As the story progresses the uncles slowly begin to wane in their prevention of the demolition. They begin to spend more time away from the house, presumably to not show their pained expressions to Margaret. For the stubborn Margaret Rose however, she is not willing to let the towers go down without a fight and she begins her elaborate plan.

All that summary could have been taken away by the blurb of the book, which I admittedly used to refresh my memory (because it has been so long since I've read the story), but from a review standpoint it was difficult to give it a solid rating. I find it difficult to give books a proper numerical rating as I was in ALL of my prior "reviews". Before it was simple enough to just give it a 5 if it met entertaining status, a 4 if it had

noticeable flaws, and anything lower would be based on my judgement. However now that 5-6 years have passed I realize that this book shouldn't be measured or compared against the other books I "reviewed". If I were to give it a four - does that mean it was worse than a five? Better than a three? No. It's not to compare this book to another based on how many stars it holds on a site. It just means that at the time of the review, I thought it deserved this much out of a total five.

Margaret Rose develops as much as any other protagonist would, like you expect from a novel that is directed towards young readers. Despite that there were simple allusions that would sometimes throw the reader for a loop. At certain points in the story it seems like the government had won, there was no winning solution in a losing fight, when they were outnumbered from the start. Margaret gains allies slowly and by doing so she gains confidence and new insight towards characters that she once saw as differently.

As the blurb read it said, "Margaret Rose is outraged and determined to strike a blow for art, for history, and for individuality". 4-5 years ago when I first read this I thought nothing more about it. Now however it seems that the symbolism in the tower is not just these three traits, but the stake of being different. Having the towers in the backyard of 19 Schuyler Place IS different. It's something that not many people can say they have. In the eyes of the neighborhood, such a drastic change is something that can't be overlooked and that it must be conformed to otherwise looks like a everybody else. It's an odd take on the book, believe me I couldn't quite understand my own thinking myself, but it's one that looks more and more believable if you look at all the little telltale signs the book gives. Being different, being the same or fitting in - it's a topic that many young readers can connect to. Especially in the classroom and outside of it, there's an ever-going battle of accepting difference. This becomes more and more obvious at the ending or you could look no further than the title - Outcasts.

The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place manages to be very poetic at times where I don't expect it to. The writing came across as very simple, but required some thought process to be used to see an underlining meaning that the story was inferring.

An example of that is the internal conflict between Margaret and her parents. This conflict could've been more played out but I'm guessing that wouldn't have made for the best read for students. This conflict reveals itself to be something more serious towards the end, but the story is still very safe with domestic conflict. This isn't the only thing that needs to be inferred upon but it's one that's revealed early on and not expanded upon until later.

That being said I'm not sure who I would recommend this for. It's not for adult readers, but I can't wholeheartedly recommend it to the very young as well. In actuality I think it's fine to read this in junior high and high school as well, although the diction might seem a little too easy at that education level. The story ends with what I thought was a satisfying ending. It ties up the loose ends of certain characters that you may not have given a second thought to, although it's more like a brief summary than an epilogue. There are some thoughts that I would like to have answered, but it's not realistic to be able to put a lifetime of stories into a simple book.

It did leave me wanting to know more about Margaret - but hopefully Silent to the Bone answers some of my questions. I find it odd how I read the "prequel" before Silent to the Bone - especially since Silent to the Bone was written four years prior to 19 Schuyler Place. However I love the book as a standalone, so I'm not sure how I'm going to approach Silent to the Bone (if I even bother to). There is even an allusion to the book in the epilogue, Margaret even mentions the main character of Silent to the Bone.

In the end I found myself liking Margaret, even more so after all these years later rereading the book. As

many changes as there will be in an ever-changing world 19 Schuyler Place will always rest between it's neighbors 17 and 21.

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### **Dawn says**

This is the first book I've read by e.l. konigsburg. What a great story of family love and loyalty. The characters are people I would love to meet and stage a revolution with!!

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### **rivka says**

E.L. Konigsberg's books are always excellent, but this was even better than most. Clearly based in part on the real-life story of the Watts Towers, Konigsberg used them as a starting point and an inspiration, but the towers in *Outcasts* are in most ways distinct from their real-life counterparts (and the resolution of their fate is as well).

Jumping back and forth between the narrator's present (spending the summer with her eccentric uncles) and recent past (the few tortuous weeks she spent in summer camp), we see the parallels between the difficulty a teenager who is a little bit different has fitting in with her peers, and the difficulties her uncles are having fitting into a neighborhood that has changed around them.

And the solution to what seems an insoluble problem is nothing less than brilliant. :D

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### **Janine says**

I enjoyed this book. It was a little quirky, with a great female protagonist. I was unsure of Molly Ringwald as the narrator at first, but her sort of monotone narration actually fit the story really well.

I couldn't help but think of *Moonrise Kingdom* as I listened to this audiobook. For me, there was a very similar tone and feel between this book and that movie. They're not related in any way, but the sort of borderline fantastical, over the top characters and storyline, combined with protagonist that acts much wiser than her years just made me think of the movie.

Margaret Rose is definitely a fun character, and I absolutely adored both of her uncles, but Uncle Alex in particular. I also appreciated the way the story came back around to tie into Margaret's experience at camp in the beginning of the book in a way that felt really satisfying. I also appreciated the way that some of the holes left in the camp story at the start of the book get filled in by the end.

It was a nice audiobook to enjoy this week after struggling a little with my last audiobook attempt.

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## Isa Chapman says

I think that the book *The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place*, by E. L. Konigsburg, was a pretty good book. It was about a girl who goes to summer camp for the first time and all the other girls play pranks on her, like making it look like she wet the bed. She really wants to go to her uncles house but she can't because they are hiding something from her. Her uncles have built 3 tall metal towers that they painted and hung bits of glass from. When they town threatens to tear down the towers, the girl must find a way to save them.

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## Jackie says

based on <http://www.discoverlosangeles.com/blo...>

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## Robert Beveridge says

E. L. Konigsburg, *The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place* (Atheneum, 2004)

What do you do when you're faced with the destruction of a local landmark? What do you do if that local landmark was built by your relatives? It's an interesting question, though on the surface one has to figure it's going to be pretty narrow-market subject matter. Pretty familiar territory to me, though, as my in-laws' parents and grandparents were intimately involved with the now-dismantled Euclid Beach Park (watch for the forthcoming Arcadia Press title!), and, well, it's E. L. Konigsburg, who after *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* can do no wrong in my eyes, so away I went.

The time is the end of the eighties, the place small-town middle America. Margaret Rose Kane is going through adolescence with the help of her parents and a couple of eccentric uncles who are well-known in the community for three large works of art in their backyard, forty-foot-plus towers decorated with all sorts of shiny gewgaws. The trouble first starts when Margaret's parents are travelling in Peru for the summer, and the uncles have prior commitments, so Margaret is shipped off to a summer camp she loathes. After she and the head of the camp reach a “mutual decision” (read: she quits just before they toss her out on her ear) and she's rescued by one of her uncles, she finds out about those prior commitments—they're fighting a legal battle with their neighborhood association, who are trying to get the towers taken down for being unsafe and a blight on the community. As with all these sorts of sillinesses, there are people trying to stop it, but no one's quite sure how to go about doing so. Margaret to the rescue, and in organizing the fight to stop the towers from being torn down, she learns far more than she would have stuck in some summer camp in the woods.

Konigsburg is a gifted writer, and once this book gets going, it's fabulous. The book's problem, unfortunately, is that it does take quite a while to get going. Still, I'd advise that if you're thirty or forty pages into the book and wondering if it's ever going to go anywhere, press on; you've got some more crust to chew through, but the meat inside is well worth savoring. And the resolution of the book is truly wonderful, bringing everything full circle in the best of ways. This is fun stuff, and I definitely recommend it both for the teens who are its target audience and us old fogies who were raised in *Frankweiler*. \*\*\*\*

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## Banzai says

The author of the beloved "Mixed up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler" has written another treasure. This one is the coziest little protest to gentrification you ever did read. Set in an older neighborhood in anytown, USA, two crumudgeonly Hungarian brothers, their incorrigible granddaughter, an Italian truffle-hunting dog and a hot summer camp janitor all work to save three glorious towers constructed by the Rose brothers in their own backyard from the evil, bland, homeowners association.

My favorite line:

"We found the time by not being in a hurry."

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## Goodworth1 says

I loved this book. Such a beautiful story about being yourself, the value of family, and standing up for what you believe. I spent a pleasant afternoon at the pool with this book and enjoyed myself immensely. It flowed nicely between past and present and gently probed growing up issues such as bullying, first crushes, and independence. But for me the largest theme was that of family. A fiercely loyal, loving, and quirky group of family that loves you can help you through anything.

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## Sandra says

In some ways, the actual plot of this novel is forgettable; I read two books sort of back to back (this one and Joan Bauer's Rules of the Road) and would say that Bauer's has the more compelling plot, in a way. And Bauer's is written in an entertaining way that's sophisticated and insightful enough that adults should enjoy it (if YA lit is their cup of tea to begin with).

But nobody quite writes like e.l. konigsburg. (Does she always keep her name lower-case? That's how it's listed on the cover of this particular book.) She weaves little themes in and out in a very entertaining way (for instance, the anthem "God Save the Queen," and "a" as a prefix, such as "asymptomatic"). She never talks down to readers, and I suspect that some of the stuff she writes will pass by younger readers without impacting their enjoyment at all, because they are subtle.

Relationship dynamics are particularly enjoyable, especially those between a camp director and her adult son (and also between the heroine Margaret Rose's two uncles, which, although more predictable, is very entertaining).

The most interesting thing about the plot here is the focus on "outsider art," complete with detailed descriptions so compelling that you just want to go out and make something in your front yard!

I now have a jones for more e.l. konigsburg, for sure. There are several I never read, and while recuperating from surgery, this kind of stuff is just perfect.

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### **Lili's Bookshelf says**

This book was just all right to me. I really liked the beginning and ending, but the middle dragged a LOT. I sort of had a love-hate relationship with Margaret Rose. In some parts she came off as very charming and authentic, but at other times she sort of just seemed pretentious and insufferable. And was I the only one who thought some of the adults in the book had a strange relationship with her, particularly Jake? It was left ambiguous as to how old he was, but he was clearly an adult (I guessed between 20-25). I felt like it bordered on inappropriate in some instances. I think this book would have been a lot better had it been portrayed as a young adult or adult fiction book. I know E.L. Konigsburg only writes children books, but I feel as though the subject matter of the towers came across as sort of boring for kids. It could have been spiced up a lot with some YA/adult elements. The camp portion of the book was one of my favorite elements, so it would have been cool to keep that but see Margaret as seventeen/eighteen instead of twelve. One of the things I really liked about this book was the fact that it was written in first person but included a lot of scenes where she wasn't present. It added a lot of dimension to the story to hear her relay other's stories. I will probably read another E.L. Konigsburg book in the future, but I won't be in any rush to find them. Overall, just a "good" book.

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### **Clarice says**

this book would probably be good for someone else... i got it a few years ago and never got to finish it. i am giving it 2 stars because it makes a good pillow.

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### **Kailie Diller says**

The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place is about a girl named Margaret. Every summer she goes to her Uncles house, but this year she didn't. She went to camp instead. She was really excited at first but she realized that they were mean to her. Whenever they would do an activity she would say "I prefer not to." Uncle Alex finds out and comes to her rescue. He asks Jake, one of the workers at the camp, to take them home. When they got to 19 Schuyler Place Uncle Alex asked Jake if he wanted to stay for dinner. The Uncles told Jake the stories about the two towers they have in their backyard. Jake told Margaret that he'd paint a rose on her ceiling in her bedroom. Margaret found out why she wasn't able to stay with Uncles. It was because the town was forcing them to take down the towers, her favorite things in the world, during the summer. I think that people all ages should read this book. It is very interesting. It is also very descriptive. The author wrote a very good book.

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