



The Book of Storms

Ruth Hatfield , Nicholas Delort (Illustrator)

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"A boy on a quest against the power of the storm"

Eleven-year-old Danny's parents are storm chasers - which sounds fun and exciting, and it is, so long as you aren't the son who has to wait behind at home. And one night, after a particularly fierce storm, Danny's parents don't come back. Stranger still, the old sycamore tree in Danny's yard seems to have been struck by lightning, and when he picks up a fragment of wood from the tree's heart, he finds he can hear voices ... including that of next door's rather uppity cat, Mitzy. The stick is a taro, a shard of lightning that bestows upon its bearer unnerving powers, including the ability to talk with plants and animals - and it is very valuable.

So valuable, in fact, that it attracts the attention of a Sammael, an ancient figure of darkness and a buyer of souls. And he will do anything to get his hands on it ... And so begins a dangerous and daring quest. Danny, who is bewildered, alone and unaccustomed to acts of bravery, must confront his fears, find his parents and unravel the secrets of The Book of Storms.

The Book of Storms Details

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From Reader Review The Book of Storms for online ebook

Anya says

I featured this book in my Just Hatched feature where I read the first chapter and reflect on first impressions. I hadn't realized that this was a UK original so that was cool to discover, however there were quickly hints that it would be one of those overly simplistic middle grade reads that I don't enjoy too much.

Kathy Martin says

Eleven-year-old Danny O'Neill is forced to do all sorts of adventurous things when his parents disappear. They went out to watch a storm, as they often did, and didn't come back in the morning. Danny discovers that the sycamore tree in his backyard was struck by lightning. Danny finds a piece of undamaged wood and, the next thing he knows, trees and animals can talk to him. With the companionship of the cat next door, Danny sets off to find the mysterious Book of Storms and rescue his parents.

His opponent is Sammael a creature from the ether who has a plan to gather storms and wipe humans off the planet. What is saving humanity is that he can't directly kill anyone. However, he can certainly arrange accidents that cause deaths. Sammael needs the Book of Storms to complete his dastardly plans.

Meanwhile, Danny recruits his older cousin Tom to help him on his quest despite the fact that Tom doesn't believe any part of Danny's story. I did like how Tom wasn't going to abandon Danny despite his disbelief.

I think the character that I liked best was Sammael's dog Kalia who was loyal to Sammael despite the abuse that Sammael heaped on her.

The book was filled with action and adventure as the very reluctant hero had experiences way outside his comfort zone. I liked the way Danny grew and changed through the course of this book. There is even some hope for his relationship with his neglectful and obsessive parents.

Misty says

I really didn't expect the intensity of this book and the storyline. It really kept me wondering what was going to happen. I didn't like the speech very much or how the animals or earth spoke to humans it was too much human then earthly, if that makes sense! I was also shocked by some frightening scenes I would definitely classify this a more mature book than mid elementary.

Kristen says

The Book of Storms is the tale of a boy named Danny who wakes up one day to his parents having disappeared. They frequently run off into the night to chase storms because his would-be older sister Emma was killed in one a long time ago. But, his parents are always back by morning. What he discovers outside is even more frightening and he finds a stick that allows him to talk to animals, plants and other living things around him.

Searching the house, he finds a notebook that details all of his parents forays into storms and leads him to his next clue. There was a man they met that allegedly had a “Book of Storms”. Going off in search of him, Danny finds that there is more dangerous and mystery than just his parents disappearing. An evil being named Sammael, who cares for nothing but his dog (and even that is brutal at times) is after Danny for holding power that he should not have. The same being who is behind Danny’s parents’ disappearance.

I quite enjoyed watching Danny grow into a character who loathed adventure and rather be attending school, into more of an adventure-lover. I loved that the author switched viewpoints to show what Sammael was up to while Danny continued on his journey. It was unique in that it’s something I never have seen explored much, controlling storms and delving deeper into the secrets they hold.

The author does a great job of twisting humor in with the action and adventure feel of the novel. I think that’s important in children’s books. I enjoyed the setting, the characters and the plot.

Verdict:

A somewhat different adventure/fantasy novel that will make you question the next storm that rolls into town.

Amanda Curless says

Review for “The Book of Storms”

Summary

Eleven year old Danny O’Neill has always been a quiet boy who never has had a thirst for adventure. Suddenly he is thrust into a quest of his own when his parents come up missing after a terrible storm passes over. Danny discovers on his way that he can speak to all creatures when holding a magic stick, which turns out to be what is left of a dangerous storm. Danny meets an old man, who holds the key to why he can suddenly speak to animals; the Book of Storms. After the old man reluctantly gives him the location of the book, Danny escapes death and the old man takes his own life by touching the magical stick and incinerating himself. He finds out that an evil creature named Sammel caught his parents using a storm and he must call the storm to return his parents. Danny doesn’t realize that Sammel is trying to have him killed as he makes his way toward his parents. Unfortunately for Sammel, Danny’s Aunt, the old man, and a wild pack of dogs could not do his bidding. Now, he now must find a way to do it himself without Death finding out. Danny, frightened from all of the near death experiences he has had within the past few days, has acquired the help of his older cousin Tom. Tom reluctantly follows him, making many attempts to convince Danny to come back home with him. After many struggles, they make it to a high hill where the book has led Danny so he may ask the storm that took his parents to let them go. He never expected Sammel to be there and try and stop him. A battle ensues and nearly kills Danny, but with the help of Death herself, Danny prevails and defeats Sammel. Sammel slumps off into the night, but he has plans to come back.

My Review

This book is rated for ages 9-12, which I would agree with for most of the book. However, there are a few passages that do not fit within the language of the book and seem thrown in from another age group. One example would be the passage: “...wide stretch of heath that crowned the top of Sentry Hill like a monk’s

tonsure” (pg.282), which did not seem characteristic of what a 9-12 year old would comprehend. This was one of a few passages that really struck me as odd and may confuse some children. If this was a common thing throughout the book, then I would see it as a way to possibly have the child expand their vocabulary. Unfortunately, I found these few and far between and I feel like they were thrown in at the last minute. It was very dry and clumsy read overall. The character development was barely there and unfinished for the first book of a series. I have no desire to find out about what happens to these characters in the second book and it is not because I did not like them. I neither liked nor disliked the characters. I felt absolutely nothing for them. The plot was confusing and left many things completely unexplained. If a child read this book, I feel like it could turn them away from the fantasy genre as a whole. While they may find the animals, storms, and fantastical characters in the book interesting; there is not enough support built up behind these elements to help the child imagine them in their mind. It is all very unbelievable and unsubstantial. The book only had one saving grace and it was that the animals could talk and what they said was interesting and sometimes witty. If the creatures were more developed, then I feel like it would have made the entire plot more believable and relatable. Overall, I give the book two stars and only for the talking animals and the idea of storms being conscious beings.

Kristina Jean Lareau says

3.5 stars

A really interesting premise for a novel. It feels a bit like A Wrinkle in Time meets Sandman.

Conrad says

This book was very slow at first but gradually it became more fast paced and interesting.

M.J. J Mallon says

Review also at: <http://kyrosmagica.wordpress.com/2014...>

It is an altogether different experience writing a review about a book written by someone you know. Ruth Hatfield is a longstanding member of the Children’s writing group that I attend in Cambridge. At her book launch I mentioned that I would write her a review and her tentative response, ” I hope you like it,” made me smile, because having read drafts of Ruth’s wonderful writing I was certain that I would like the Book of Storms and in this I wasn’t disappointed.

The Book of Storms is without doubt a wonderful debut by Ruth, confidently written, and engaging from the very start. Danny, an eleven year old town boy adventures into the unknown to find his missing parents after a storm struck the sycamore tree in his garden leaving behind a Taro, a piece of tree which contains the essence of the power of the storm. The Taro endows Danny with the ability to hear animals talk. He realises that being home alone with no parents is not all it is cracked up to be, especially as he has no sibling alive to share this moment of liberation with. Sadly his sister Emma’s young life had already been claimed by a

storm. Danny sets out to find his eccentric, unreliable but much loved parents, whose obsession with storm chasing has led to their disappearance. This is no easy task for young Danny as his adversary Sammael is a ruthless, dark, creature untouched by human feeling. Sammael's intention is to wipe humans off the face of the planet, with the help of The Book of Storms, and Danny is the one obstacle standing in his way. Sammael tempts his victims by offering them the one thing that they desire more than anything else in the world in exchange for their soul. Before you even realise what this truly means to you, what dreaded price you have paid, he has the grains of your soul safely deposited in his pocket. Sammael's only redeeming feature seems to be his fondness for his dog, Kalia, a grey, mistakenly loyal, lurcher. Kalia's only wish is to serve his master even if his master is an evil, impatient guy who tends to kick him when Kalia disappoints or misbehaves.

There are so many wonderful characters, Abel Korsakof, the old Polish guy who has an obsession with storms but is under the control of the dreaded Sammael.

Danny's reluctant cousin Tom who joins him on his quest to find his parents. Tom enjoys nothing better than a good adventure but soon it is clear that Tom has had enough and wants to go home to the farm. He thinks his cousin Danny has gone loopy talking to animals, even though he himself would like nothing better than to talk to animals himself.

Courageous Mitz the cat is fabulous, as are the horses Apple and the piebold, Shimny. There are also talking ants, swallows, grasses, worms, the river, and even dust mites! The world of nature truly comes alive. At times the natural world is a frightening, terrifying place but the character of eleven year old Danny rises above his fear, time and time again, as he grows in wisdom far beyond his youthful years. Sometimes even those who appear harmless are anything but, and those that should protect him, frighten him, wielding an axe in the middle of the night when he least expects it!

The pace of the novel picks up in the final chapters to its exciting conclusion. But I won't say any more about the ending of the story for fear of spoiling it for you, other than to say that it ends on the top of a hill with a threat, which no doubt will be tackled in the future novels as The Book of Storms is the first novel in a trilogy. I'm so looking forward to reading the rest!

Of course The Book of Storms would be lost without the much needed character of death: "Sammael watched her. They rarely met, but he was always struck by her ugliness: her shapeless, plain face and drooping mouth. Her red eyes were usually as dull as ancient garnets, dragged from the earth covered in dust. Sammael hated creatures that tried to stand in his way, but he hated dull things even more. Death was both. All work and no play, he'd taunted her once, and she hadn't argued."

Just a thought to leave you with, if you were approached by Sammael what would you be tempted by? What is the one thing that you long for most? I think for writers it would probably be no self doubt, just the certainty that everything we write will be loved by all!

Matthew Ogborn says

Always been fascinated by storms and I wanted to see how it would be portrayed from, essentially, a kid's viewpoint interspersed with the main adult antagonist. It treats nature with respect and there are fascinating descriptive passages from the perspective of the animals and wildlife but I felt the plot itself tripped over itself more than it should have done.

Alec Jones says

Fantastic little book! Really grabbed my attention from page one. I loved the way each chapter reads, changing from different perspectives, and characters!

My reasons though for not rating this 5 stars, would be that (knowing fully well that it's the start of a trilogy) there were quite a few loose ends left untied. The ending especially felt.. a little bit rushed in parts.

Overall, a really fun and interesting title, with plenty of room to grow!

Also, I really liked Sammael.

Mary says

I didn't finish this. The beginning was boring, and the villain was too creepy. He stole children's souls. This was in the children's section in the library, but I think it is too scary for children.

Natasha says

A good, enthralling story. Review to come.

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"The Book of Storms" is about Danny O'Neill and his quest to find his parents after they strangely disappear during a storm and don't come back. This book is full of magic and adventure, as well as talking animals and nature that makes you feel like a child at heart once again. However, this innocence is challenged by the existence of the antagonist - Sammael - who constantly tries to harm Danny with his power over sand and the storms themselves.

First of all, I loved how from the very first sentence we were propelled into this story, with no stop for a breather, the first scene setting the tone for the rest of the novel. Danny appears to be an innocent boy as he hides underneath the covers, doing as his parents have told him as he waits for the storm to be over. By the end of the book, however, his character goes through great development and he becomes strong and adventurous with a sturdy belief in what he knows. Tom Fletcher, his cousin, acts as an opposite - a man who has lost his childishness, who is still young but devoid of imagination and innocence. Constantly Tom denies Danny's claims about what his happening, even when it seems obvious that what Danny is saying is true. Perhaps this is why he does what he does in the end, trapping himself in a situation that he will surely regret in the future.

I have to say I loved Sammael's character, even if he was our 'villain'. He was quite sassy at times and I found myself very entertained by the way he spoke and the way he acted within the novel. We might assume that he is completely bad, but his attitude towards his dog at the end shows some humanity, despite the fact that he claims to hate humankind.

I'm not quite sure whether this is a first book in a series/trilogy. Due to this, I couldn't give this 5 stars. If it is a book in a series, I feel like it does well as a stand-alone. As well as this, I would have liked more of a set-

up of Danny's interaction with his parents at the beginning rather than being told what they were like. Even so, this was a very enjoyable read and I look forward to reading more of Ruth Hatfield's work in the future.

Darth J says

This was *going* to be a 1.5-2 star for me for the most part, but then something completely unredeemable* happened at the end. I would give this book the 1.5-2 star rating simply for the dull writing, which was a major disappointment when the premise and logo promise something exciting. Although the artwork at each chapter is nice in a subdued yet detailed kinda way, it doesn't save this book from itself or deserving only 1 star.

When the story isn't listlessly written, the emotional parts are just depressing. I could go on about the isolation of our MC from his parents because they are obsessed with storms and finding out how they connect with their dead infant daughter, but really this book is just a major bummer.

Now to harp on the writing again. The best way to describe it would be a plate full of plain pasta. No tomato sauce, no olive oil and garlic, no pesto. No flavoring *whatsoever*, not even the water used to boil the pasta was salted. It's tasteless and bland and the whole time you're consuming it you think, "Why am I even bothering?"

Even worse, the titular "Book of Storms" doesn't appear until nearly the last third of the novel. When it does, there's really nothing special to it. It has some vague The Neverending Story-esque power to it that writes things as they happen, and then the cliché of the villain using this book to write his own story in it comes along too. This is one tepid and unoriginal object to base a story around. The only kinda interesting thing is that the boy finds a charred stick that allows him to talk to plants, animals, and other naturey things in a Parseltonguish way.

There is some PG cussing as well, due to the frequent uses of "crap" and taking "Jesus" in vain. As this is a middle grade book, parents who find those terms offensive may want to steer clear.

In addition, there are plenty of grammatical errors. It's as if this wasn't edited beyond checking to see that there weren't any red squiggly lines in Word. I find this to be sloppy in a traditionally published book and I doubt an editor gave this more than just a skim, if any at all. They certainly would have caught that many confusing passages and would have had the author work on the dry tone.

***The hero kills an innocent dog!!!** In the climax of this story, our MC (an eleven year old boy) uses a pitchfork to stab the villain's coat as it lays on the ground, thinking that the coat is the source of the villain's powers, but doesn't realize that the dog is under it. True, the dog is the villain's companion, but the dog is innocent and just wanted to be loved by the villain. Even though this is a story, I can't look past the killing of a pet like that. It was brutal and disgusting. It was the clincher to why I am giving up on this series.

Tash says

Reviewed for Confessions From Romaholics

The Book of Storm was an interesting read and it is perfect for any middle grader reader who is a fan of fantasy novels. The book tells the story of Danny an ordinary eleven year old who is forced in to a situation because of his parents. His parents are storm chasers and for years have been leaving him home and chasing them. However this time, they haven't returned and the only clue is a taro , a piece of wood . The taro has come from the sycamore tree in his garden and it is powerful. It contains the storm power and gives Danny the ability to interact with animals and talk to them. Danny revels in the power and the fact that he is home alone but soon becomes worried and bored as nothing as he has imagined it would be.

So he decides to find his parents and try to learn more about his sister Emma who died in a storm before he was born. He knows the storm is responsible for his parents disappearance as despite being obsessed with the storms and being unreliable they have always came back until now. Therefore he is forced to go to the only people he knows can help, his Aunt Karen and Tom who can provide his needs and a base for his mission.

Little does he know that is a start of adventure with adversary who is determined to win at all costs with his faithful dog Kalia who trying to please her master . Making his way to his Aunt's farm, Danny discovers the power and the secrets that world around him have been hiding in the trees, grass and animals and starts to enjoy the power. But lurking around is Sammael a mysterious dark creature who wants the taro for his nefarious purposes and holds the answers.

Sammael has been tempting people for years with the Book of Storms, the book that tells everything about the storms and he wants it back ever since he signed the rights away to Abel Knopf for his soul. Abel is no innocent old man , the old man knows more that he lets on about the book and Danny's parents and knows it only time before Sammael comes for him. The Book of Storms is the key to this mystery that is only get bigger by the minute and Danny soon discovers that he is a pawn in a dangerous game.

Danny is Sammael's answer for everything and it is going to take a team to help defeat him. From Mitz, Danny's cat who saw the storm to Tom the older cousin who thinks it a bit of adventure. Danny is in for an adventure that he won't forget in a hurry.

This book is set a steady pace and picks up towards the end of the novel as Danny and Sammael face each other. Who will win and will the book be back in safe hands or hands that shouldn't have anything to do with the world. It is a classic fight of good versus evil but is told in captivating way that is full of twists and turns.

It is an engaging read and I loved the plot and prose and I look forward to reading future novels from Hatfield. I would love to see a story from her where there is some creative world building because if this book any indication of her imagination. I'm excited as this book was oozing creativity but it was set in our world at present time. For a debut I enjoyed it a lot and hopefully it won't be too long until we see a new book from her.

4 couples

For more of my reviews, visit [Confessions From Romaholics](#). And drop by the blog's Facebook page

Ariel Hess says

Disclaimer: This review is solely my opinion. I purchased a copy of this book on my own from book outlet. The comments in this review do not reflect the views of the author or the publisher.

I thought this was a great story. I liked the way this book was written and felt the same feelings Danny felt. Danny was in complete shock at the beginning of the book, not realizing his parents were indeed missing. He struggled to come to terms with the fact that he had to journey alone to find them but continued to seek out help from others such as Mitzy and the creatures of the earth. I did not wholly understand the power that Sammael had or the importance of his dog, other than being a companion. I also did not understand the concept of a Lurcher and felt that could have been explained more in the book. Overall, I thought this book did a great job of capturing my attention and had me on the edge of my seat a good portion of the time. I recommend this book for anyone in middle school interested in a fantasy novel that focuses on the importance of working together. I assume the overall lesson in this book is not to give up and to seek out help when needed. It is also important to be careful who you trust because Tom made a mistake in this book towards the end and I am curious as to how his error will affect everyone else.

Full Review located on my blog at [Librarianiel Book Reviews](#)
