



Ordinary Magic

Caitlen Rubino-Bradway , Hans Daellenbach

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Ordinary Magic

Caitlen Rubino-Bradway , Hans Daellenbach

Ordinary Magic Caitlen Rubino-Bradway , Hans Daellenbach

In Abby's world, magic isn't anything special: it's a part of everyday life. So when Abby learns that she has zero magical abilities, she's branded an "Ord"—ordinary, bad luck, and quite possibly a danger to society.

The outlook for kids like Abby isn't bright. Many are cast out by their families, while others are sold to treasure hunters (ordinary kids are impervious to spells and enchantments). Luckily for Abby, her family enrolls her in a school that teaches ordinary kids how to get around in a magical world. But with treasure-hunting kidnappers and carnivorous goblins lurking around every corner, Abby's biggest problem may not be learning how to be ordinary—it's whether or not she's going to survive the school year!

Ordinary Magic Details

Date : Published May 8th 2012 by Bloomsbury USA Childrens

ISBN : 9781599907253

Author : Caitlen Rubino-Bradway , Hans Daellenbach

Format : Hardcover 277 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Childrens, Middle Grade, Magic, Young Adult, Fiction

 [Download Ordinary Magic ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Ordinary Magic ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Ordinary Magic Caitlen Rubino-Bradway , Hans Daellenbach

From Reader Review Ordinary Magic for online ebook

Andrea says

One of those books which divide me in response. "Ordinary Magic" has a lot going for it - it's fast-paced with a fascinating premise, a really strong sense of place and a more-ish voice. I think a lot of people would like it.

However, I found the huge amount of snappy patter conversation a bit like wandering onto the set of a Marx Brothers movie, and as I read, I kept being niggled to death by issues with the world-building.

This is a world full to the brim with magic. Everyone uses magic for everything - food is conjured, magic carpets are the main mode of transportation, prisons have magical doors - even the showers are turned on and off with magic. And a tiny percentage of the population is born with no magic at all - Ords. They can't use magic and magic can't be worked on them.

At the age of 12, all children are officially tested on their level of magic. Before that they're not allowed to try and use it, and they're not allowed to have it used on them. Which I guess means for the first twelve years of their life, children must be having someone else turn the shower on and off for them and (given the way everything else depends on magic) presumably someone flushes the toilet for them too. This age testing thing makes little to no sense given the sheer ubiquity and reliance on magic in this world - let alone the likelihood of any child refraining from trying to use magic for 12 whole years. It's simply a device to have a big dramatic judging, life-changed-forever start to the novel.

And dramatic it is, since upon being judged an Ord, the child is apparently completely dropped from society, ostracised, treated as non-human and hated and feared.

The hatred was given little foundation and was particularly difficult to believe in. Ords are demonstrably not 'contagious' and live completely mildly in society for 12 years and then suddenly are apparently frightening? What are they going to do that they haven't been doing in the previous 12 years? The negative attitude toward Ords is so complete that almost all families abandon their children or want nothing to do with them, they are referred to as "It", addressed only as "Ord" and sold to adventurers as useful trap-clearing tools. [At least until King Steve came along and started trying to change this.]

Main character Abby is slightly different in that her family is deep-down nice and refuse to stop loving her. This (perfectly normal) reaction is apparently so unusual that when Abby goes to Ord-school, the other students resent her for having a family that doesn't hate her. While overall Abby comes across as an extrovert and occasional chatterbox, she also has a touch of virtuous martyr about her (seen both in this attitude toward her in school, her wanting to share her room because of trouble sleeping but not actually telling anyone, and most especially the weird victimisation of Abby by the cook which seemed to occur purely so Abby could stoically refuse to complain about it or resent it).

[I was also very confused as to why Ord school doesn't seem to have any general lessons on cooking, cleaning, sewing - all the things that other people do by magic which Ords will need to accomplish the hard way. Instead they get the standard history, maths, etc, plus self-defence, running away, and magic identification classes.]

Anyway - a very readable story which I wasn't able to fully enjoy because I was distracted by the world building.

Miriam Reeves says

This was a fun read and made me want more. It was fun to see ordinary people as the unusual. I Hope there are more to come.

Fafa's Book Corner says

Review posted on Fafa's Book Corner !

Beware spoilers ahead!

This book was recommended to me by Sierra! Click on her name to read her review.

I heard about this through Twitter. Sierra was doing one of those 1 click= 1 book and out of curiosity I looked at the thread. Out of 50 plus reccomendation's Ordinary Magic caught my eye. I love reading Middle Grade especially books with magic in them! I was happy to see that this was in my library. While this wasn't what I was expecting I still enjoyed it!

The book begins with Abby and her family getting ready for her Judging. Abby has been looking forward to this day. She can finally practice magic! She's a bit nervous about the level she'll be and the Judging in general. Luckily her whole family are going to support her.

Once Abby and her family reach the place where she'll be Judged they go their separate ways. Abby to be Judged and her family to wait. Abby is told that she needs to step through a barrier and then her test will begin. She does so but nothing happens. Abby doesn't feel any difference. The people Judging her look shocked and ask her to walk around the barrier several times. They inform Abby that she is and Ord. She has no magic in her whatsoever. Abby is in shock and really upset.

Her parents are called in and they in just as much shock as Abby is. The man informs Abby's parents that because she is an Ord they will need to get rid of her. Her parents deny doing so and leave. Her siblings are in shock as well but quickly try to cheer Abby up. When they leave the building word has gotten out and everyone is avoiding Abby's family.

They arrive home to have a party for Abby nonetheless. Abby remains upset because none of her friends came and some of her other family members didn't come. Her aunt left early and her parents told her that if she was going to leave early then she shouldn't come back. Abby's family make sure that she has a good day.

The next day Abby wakes up to her family having a heated discussion. Abby joins her family and asks what's going on. Her oldest sister Alexa say's that their counsel has requested buying Abby. Abby then asks her parents whether they are going to sell her to anyone. Her family replies with a firm 'No'. Alexa then mentions that as her work for the King there is a school for Ord's. And that they are going to enroll Abby in it. Abby is quite shocked when she hears this as Alexa doesn't mention her work. But she's willing to give it a go seeing as she's not sure what to do with her life.

I was expecting to love this book. But nonetheless I did enjoy it! I really liked the writing style. The author did a good job of writing about a 12 year old. This book is written in first person in Abby's point of view.

Now when I saw Sierra mention this book the only thing that I remembered about it was that it had magic and that Abby was an Ord. I didn't realize just how brutal this book was going to be! I was so surprised and angry when I read about how Ord's are typically treated. Normally they are sold off to basically anyone asking for them. Simply because they have no means of survival in society. Most people treat Ord's as objects and avoid them like their contagious. I'm not even exaggerating. This book was also action packed! Surprisingly so.

The family aspect was amazing! I loved reading about their interactions with one-another! I always had a huge grin on my face whenever Abby's family came in! I liked Abby's friends Fran and Fred. And I kind of liked Peter. I also liked Abby. And while Abby still didn't really stand up for herself she did grow.

Once Abby gets to school she's not well liked. Quite a few people are jealous of her because her family cares about her. People also don't like the fact that Abby talks a lot about her family. They always seemed to forget that Peter also had his mother. But that might just be because Peter's mother is an Ord and Ord's seem to stick together. The ending was bitter sweet but realistic.

I had 5 problems with Ordinary Magic. I felt that the book started to lose its appeal once Abby started attending school. I also felt that while Abby went through character development the other characters did not. I would've liked to read more about Peter just to understand his character. I really did not like the way Cook Bella treated Abby. She was unfair through-and-through. I think that it may have been her way of teaching Abby. I never felt that Abby ever became one of the kitchen staff. It seems that it is implied but I never felt it.

Overall this was a good book! I recommend to anyone looking for a standalone fantasy middle grade book.

Jamie says

Ordinary Magic, extraordinarily dreamed up and written by Caitlen Rubino-Bradway, introduces readers to a world where magic is the norm-- everyone has it, uses it, lives with it. Except "Ords." Ords are, for those of us who are Harry Potter fans, Squibs: non-magical people born from magic folk. However, unlike in the world of J.K. Rowling, ords become "its," less than human, looked at by people as expendable, the shame of one's family, nameless things to be bought and sold into servitude (even though King Steve made ord slavery illegal) or simply forgotten.

However, having no magic also means that ords are IMMUNE to magic, making them valuable to "adventurers"-- men and women in search of treasures or relics or monsters to kill. Ords can bypass magical traps, spells, whatever, but are unable to benefit from magical healing and being saved if they fall off a cliff. Bummer.

On page one we meet Abby Hale, the youngest of five children born to a magical baker (or bake-ess, if you will) and flying carpet maker (that's how they travel-- awesome!). Abby is on her way to the Judging, a ceremony for 12 year olds to have their magic level evaluated for school.... I think you see where this is going.

Abby, it turns out, is completely devoid of any magic and one hundred percent "ordinary." At this point, society expects Abby's family to cast her out, sell her to the local Guild, or auction her to traveling adventurers. Instead, the Hales are a loving, tight-knit family who will do everything in their power to protect their daughter. Fortunately, Abby's eldest sister, Alexa-- a bada** witch-- runs a private school for ords in the city of Rothermere, where she can be educated on self-defense, survival, history, math, literature,

and how to wash dishes. She meets friends along the way, runs into a couple sketchy adventurers, and has to learn a new way of life.

Ordinary Magic has a well-paced story with dimensional characters and heart-warming relationships, creating a world to which I'm excited to return. It's for anyone who loves fantasy, YA novels, a great story, and especially Harry Potter fans who are always on the hunt for another book to read after finishing that series. While the story centers around these ordinary children, the magical world is charming and open for even further development in future books.

I absolutely loved this book! Abby is a wonderful, witty girl with spunk, honesty, and a big heart; she's not perfect though: I found myself appropriately frustrated at her naivety and handling of certain situations.... but she's 12! Not only do I love and relate to Abby, but I also connected to the community surrounding our main character. The teachers, especially Becky, have mysterious backstories I'm still waiting to discover, and I'm interested to see how her friends Fran, Peter, and Fred develop. Oh and I love King Steve. He's just awesome.

Rich themes and an engaging story and characters left me wanting more, more, MORE! I was sad to leave Abby's world, wanting so much to continue my ordinary journey.

Leah says

I finally pulled *Ordinary Magic* off my shelf after three years (eek!) and couldn't wait to finally dive in: in an entirely magical world, a girl discovers she *can't* do magic. That sounds pretty awesome, right??

Unfortunately, *Ordinary Magic* is a story that **sounds** fantastic and that's about it. Naturally my first thought was *Harry Potter*, only a bizarre, backwards version. Instead of discovering she's a witch, Abby finds out she has no magical ability whatsoever and her town loses its collective mind. You see, Ords (aka Squibs, to keep the HP theme going) are seen as contagious, disgusting, non-humans to the point where families will *disown 12-year-old children* or simply sell them off to the highest bidder. Because magic doesn't affect Ords (for example, magic fire could burn their clothes, but not the actual person) adventurers seek them out to hunt down treasure, etc.

So here we have an entire society willing to kick children to the curb despite having cared for and loved them the previous eleven years of their lives. Of course, Abby's families couldn't imagine selling her or forcing her to leave - this is actually so out of the norm that her classmates (at an Ord school) are jealous. I could see what the author was trying to do, the tension she was hoping to build, but there were gaping holes in the logic. After Abby's Judging, the entire house had to be stripped of magic...which is fine and dandy until you realize that doing so was pointless: prior to Judging, children aren't allowed to do magic and must be helped to pretty much do anything. Opening cupboards, washing dishes, turning on the faucet to shower, this is all done with magic. Removing the magic from their house after Abby found out she's an Ord is pointless.

Ordinary Magic ends in a way that practically requires a sequel (though some storylines were forgotten about, so who knows!) yet it's been three years and still no word on whether or not there will be a second book. I wanted so much more from this story than I got. Enjoyable for a chapter or two, but then I got bored and ended up setting it aside for a few days...but never felt compelled to return. This would have been a DNF had I not been so close to the end.

Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says

Originally posted here.

This book is so freaking cute and clever. I just adored it right from the beginning. It's a little bit Sabrina, the Teenage Witch and a bit Harry Potter and a bit ordinary. Now, please do not take too much away from the HP comparison. The plot isn't HP at all; it's more the atmosphere and the cast of quirky characters, and the boarding school setting.

In Abby's world, magic is normal. The weird people are those without any magical powers. On her Judging day, where her level of magical abilities will be determined, she's not worried at all, because everyone in her family is crazy talented. Besides, ords (ordinary, magicless people) are RARE. She's never met one. Until she learns she IS one. I just loved this concept. I love when what is ordinary is turned on its head.

The plot was the only thing that was a bit weak, very middle grade. Basically, ords can be useful for a couple of things, so they are generally sold as slaves to adventurers who use them to break into places guarded by magic, which doesn't affect ords. The big bads of the book are some adventurers determined to capture Abby and make her their little ord slave. While the concept is fascinating, they just do not have the evilness of a good villain, and I was never particularly concerned about what would happen.

What made this book completely awesome were the characters. There really wasn't a character I was not entertained by, except perhaps Trixie. Everyone is unique and funny and just bursting with life. The writing is full of humor. My favorite character was probably Peter, because I have a soft spot for people who are hard on the outside but squishy soft on the inside.

I want to share a bit with you as a perfect example of the tone of the book. This was one of my favorite parts. On her first day at the ord boarding school, the headmaster delivers this delightfully sarcastic speech:

" 'Well, I see you're all here. Again.' Her brisk, warm voice carried through the crowd 'Now, you know I don't like to give speeches'—someone choked off a laugh—but this is an extraordinary occasion. I could not let it go by without saying...how disappointed I am.' Everyone at my table sat up straight, darting quick, worried glances at each other, but all around us the other kids were smiling. 'Yes, another year has started, and we have exactly the same number of students as last year. Not one single student was lost.' "

Isn't that just the best? The headmaster gives a hilarious, ironic speech to scare the newbies. I was much amused. The speech continues to relate all the ways in which the students DIDN'T manage to die.

Ordinary Magic is fresh and fun. I highly recommend it to anyone who likes stories full of magic, even if the characters aren't. Based on the ending, I suspect more are on the way, and I hope that that is the case.

Hannah White says

This book was amazing. I absolutely loved every word of it. It was simple and complex at the same time. I loved the themes, so expertly woven in. I loved the characters, so wonderfully fun and unique in their own way. I loved Abby and her family, the whole dynamic of it. I loved her friends, and the king, and all the strong messages I got from this little book. The author has a strong voice, very believably a 12 year old's, and so FUN. Everything about this book was FUN. I loved Alexa and Becky especially.

Over all, this book left me smiling and warm and happy, snuggling my stuffed animal rabbit and grinning like a fool. I have been struck dumb by the incredible Ordinary Magic of this book, and I highly recommend

it to middle age readers, or anyone who is a fan of Harry Potter and/or Septimus Heap.

Sierra Abrams says

Ordinary Magic by Caitlen Rubino-Bradway

Pages: 288

Release Date: May 8th, 2012

Date Read: 2012, February 24th - March 1st

Received: ARC via NetGalley

Rating: 4.5/5 stars

Recommended to: 10+

SUMMARY -

Abby is about to be tested for magic - will she be a Level 5? A 6? She comes from a very prominent family, where everyone uses magic well; her older sister tested at Level 9! But when Abby is discovered to be an Ord, a non-magical human, she is cast out by the society around her. Ords are unnatural - they are usually sold to Adventurers or the Guild. Abby's parents, of course, refuse to sell her, and find a place for her at Margaret Green School, a place where where Ords learn how to protect themselves and live in a magical society. When Adventurers strike, seeking slaves, and the students are in danger, Abby and her friends muster all the courage and wit they possess to outsmart the enemy.

MY THOUGHTS -

Already I have the winner for the "CUTEST book of 2012"!! This is it, ladies and gents! Ordinary Magic is stinking adorable. And not only that - it had me laughing out loud all the time, and loving every second. The way Caitlen Rubino-Bradway portrays everything through stellar writing and her brilliant story-telling style had me applauding for more.

While absolutely everything about Ordinary Magic was just adorable, my favorite thing about it was the humor. In character, in conversation, in their way of life - I still giggle when I think about Gil, or Abby's hilarious sarcasm, etc., etc.

CHARACTER NOTES -

Abby, her family, the mages, her friends at school, the Adventurers, the King - all brilliantly done! There was no need to tell the reader who all these people were because the reader is shown from page 1 with crystal clear imagery. Because of this, I want to say each and every one is my favorite and tell you why, but that simply can't be done.

Abby's voice is realistic and funny. I love her. Like, want-to-be-best-buds love her. She's spunky, determined, and totally sweet. She can have a bit of temper but is really mature. Talk about perfect character building...

Peter, Fran and Fred were awesome. I love that Fran always speaks in a whisper, Fred is everyone's buddy, and Peter can be a total jerk, but deep down is a totally great guy trying to figure things out. I'm hoping, in maybe another book - romance for Abby and Peter? :)

Mom and Dad, Abby's parents, are some of the most hilarious parents I've ever read about in Lit. I could relate to them on a personal level because they remind me of my parents. Not in every way, but enough to make me love them even more than I would have originally. They were SO funny, always teasing their kids

and making jokes.

But. My favorite. He would have to be Gil, Abby's older brother. Oh, my gosh. He's such a riot!! I was NOT expecting such hilariousness from him, and about him from his family, but he proved to be the biggest source of laughter for me. I. LOVE. HIM. The twist about him in the end just made me burst into hysterical laughter! I'm cracking up just thinking about it!!

STORY NOTES -

Think: fun, adventure, magic, kinds, bad guys, and lots of wit. I love when kids have to outsmart the bad guys ("Home Alone" style!), and Ordinary Magic had plenty of that. There were a few scenes that were a bit slower than the rest, but never boring. The pace is otherwise consistent and actually pretty fast. (It took me a bit longer than typical due to a crazy week, but normally I could've finished a book like this in 2 days!)

Every scene has a purpose. I love that about Ordinary Magic: nothing is unimportant or out of place. I also love the originality of the idea. Instead of a magician surrounded by non-magical people, it's the other way around. And it's just as fascinating to read about!

I also love the mix of cultures. Kings and castles mixed with boarding schools, mixed with city life and fairs and magic carpets. (I LOVE magic carpets!) It's flipping awesome!

SUMMING IT UP -

What's not to love? This book is all sorts of awesome fun. There's no reason why you shouldn't have this on your TBR. Add it now - you won't be sorry!

Recommended 10+

Read more reviews at [Yearning to Read!](#)

Heidi says

Originally reviewed [here](#).

I tried with Ordinary Magic, I really did. I read every word of this book even though I kind of wanted to add it to the DNF pile long before the last page. I was so disgusted, appalled, and confused by the world that Caitlen Rubino-Bradway built that I could not click with Ordinary Magic at all. When I first saw this title pop up on NetGalley, I decided to try it because I love middle grade, and it sounded cute. To me, I was imagining that it would be like "Story of a Squib"—the tale of an unmagical kid born into a magical world. I didn't realize how abhorrent the story would be.

Here's the deal: "ords" in this society are nothing. They're worse than just a disappointment to their families, because most of the time, they're no longer even considered people. This made zero sense to me. I get that you could compare it to some families' reactions to finding out their kid is homosexual, or compare it to how slaves were treated in this country's early history, but none of that could really add up for me. I can't understand how an entire society could find it acceptable to treat ord kids—kids they had raised and loved as friends, siblings, children until the age of 12—like worthless property. It was generally accepted that these children could be sold, used for dangerous tasks, and they were despised to the point of people not touching them as if they were catching—this later treatment reminding me of the horrible way those with AIDS can be treated. I guess I see what Caitlen Rubino-Bradway was doing here in turning these children into social pariahs, but I just don't buy that these extremes could ever crop up, particularly in a society that seems very modern.

And that's another thing I didn't get about this book. When it is determined that Abby is an ord, at her Judging at age 12, her family has to drain magic from the house so that she can access things (like the sink) without help, since all of these things are usually controlled by magic. This makes no sense given that prior to finding out, she wasn't allowed to use magic and would need help for these same things...so she was 12 and could never get a box of cereal from the cupboard or wash her hands after she peed? Right...

Then there's the reality that magic can not directly affect ords. It can affect things around them (aka, you could light their clothing on fire), but not them. And you can buy magic-proof clothing. So essentially, all of these magic people are running around with no idea how to fight physical fights, and the ords could kick their butts handily, but don't. I get the whole, they're the vast minority, and society represses them in part because they are scared thing, but again...it doesn't add up for me. If a society has become this advanced, there's a pretty good chance that such an oppressed group with such potential power would have at some point banded together and rebelled.

I thought the school could be fun and cute, but honestly I found it rather boring. The only highlight being that they taught kids to kick the crap out of one another. It seemed as if there should have been a storyline developing from Abby working in the kitchen, but it never really came to anything. In fact, I expected Abby and the other ord children to find some inner power and strength that was magical in its own right, but I didn't really feel like they ever did.

I was glad to see that this society was changing, that the King had outlawed the selling of ords and the authorities seemed like good people, but I just expected more from this story. I will say that Abby's family was fantastic and the best part of this book. Her parents loved unconditionally, and she had four older siblings—two sisters, two brothers (just like me!) that were all fun, unique, and invested in their little sister. I think my favorite thing about Ordinary Magic was Abby's brother Gil, who wrote popular romance novels under a woman's name.

Steph Su says

Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh. "Charming" doesn't even begin to cover the magical delight that is ORDINARY MAGIC. From a fascinating magical world to laugh-out-loud character interactions, there is nothing ordinary about this book at all!

ORDINARY MAGIC is as good as a Pixar movie in terms of having both kid and adult appeal. Young readers will be fascinated by the colorful, yet familiar, world that Rubino-Bradway creates, replete with magic carpets, boarding schools, and kickass family members.

What makes ORDINARY MAGIC truly extraordinary, however, is its rare quality of appealing to a wide age range of readers. The story zips back and forth with witty banter, and it is the more experienced reader that will be delighted with how Rubino-Bradway mashes together so many almost stereotypical features of magical worlds to create one that is unique and not at all stereotypical. There are a whole bunch of cute romantic undercurrents throughout the story that will make you squeel with suppressed glee.

Readers will surely get a heck of an experience out of ORDINARY MAGIC. This is truly one of the most memorable middle-grade novels I've read in recent years.

Michelle says

There are so many reasons why Rubino-Bradway's *Ordinary Magic* is now one of my favorite middle grade books to recommend. Rubino-Bradway created a world that, while built entirely upon magical inventions and a thriving absolute monarchy, is still recognizable as a contemporary society. I really enjoyed having the world slowly revealed to me--always feeling familiar, but with interesting magical quirks. Rubino-Bradway turned the typical plot of a middle grade fantasy on its head: here is a world full of magic, and, rather than being exceptionally gifted or special, our heroine turns out to be completely ordinary. She then goes on to show that one can be completely "ordinary" and still be smart, brave and strong; that you don't have to have "special" gifts to be the heroine of your story!

Rubino-Bradway's characters are all interesting in their own ways. I think it is sometimes hard to write a large family--not to mention a full cast of characters in a boarding school--and have each member maintain believable and distinct personalities, by she does it with aplomb. Abby's family was just *wonderful*. I love that they are supportive, loving, and *present*. I am so tired of absent parent syndrome! I also appreciated the way Rubino-Bradway handled the parents for each of the ordinary children a little differently. Naturally, not everyone would be supportive if they discovered their child was a social pariah--but there are varying degrees of how supportive or un-supportive they could be. I like that (though some parents did completely abandon their children) some parents still tried to support their children financially, or made sure a kindly neighbor took them in. I also liked how, though some parents were equally supportive on a personal level, Rubino-Bradway shows that the family's power and relative position in society can vastly change how helpful that support can be. It was a very frank look at bigotry for a middle grade novel!

Rubino-Bradway also handled the friendships between the ordinary children beautifully. The varying degrees of intimacy based on both personality and interactions felt very authentic. (And, can I just say, I am getting a very Anne-Gilbert vibe from Abby and Peter?) Most importantly, though, *Ordinary Magic* was a fun, engaging read. Rubino-Bradway writes with such charm that I was not only caught up in the story immediately, but felt at-home, and was sad to have it end. It was scary and exciting and funny. This is a book that I will own, and I can't wait for her next.

Stephanie says

I loved Ordinary Magic SO MUCH that it just makes me want to dance every time I think of it. Last night I tried talking about it to Patrick, but I was burbling so much - and I had to keep stopping to make squealing noises of excitement! - that it was hard to be coherent about it.

I love it THAT MUCH.

Ordinary Magic is an MG fantasy novel set in a secondary world that feels very 21st-century - just another modern MG setting except that, oh, yes, people use magic for almost everything...and it was only 6 years ago that the new king finally made it officially illegal for the very rare non-magical humans (Ords) to be bought and sold.

Unfortunately, he wasn't able to make bigotry illegal, and a lot of criminal adventurers have no interest in the law, and plenty of motivation for kidnapping child Ords. So, when a twelve-year-old's magic is officially Judged, on his or her twelfth birthday, if they're found to be an Ord, they're viewed by the majority of society with distrust and horror. A lot of parents give them away (or sell them, despite the law), they're all in immense danger...

...and so a new school has been set up to try to keep them safe and teach them life skills - both marketable skills, for trying to find real jobs as adults, and self-defense skills, to protect them against kidnappers and the various terrifying magical creatures, like red cap goblins, who consider Ords to be their favorite snack.

Rubino-Bradway does a great job working with the awful realities of how social bigotry works, using a fantasy setting - without ever making it a direct parallel to any real-world bigotry, she makes the way people behave very emotionally true, and the danger is intense and real.

But what makes this book, and what made me LOVE it from page one, is the voice, combined with the fabulous characters and the sheer charm and fun of it all.

Abby Hale is a 12-year-old who finds out in Chapter One, with shock and horror, that she's an Ord. So, that's the fantasy element to her character. However, and more importantly, she's also the youngest in a big, noisy, loving, annoying, wonderful family, all of whom - combative though they might be in other circumstances - come together in her defense when her magical Judgment puts her in real life-threatening danger.

The family members are all just fabulous, every one of them distinct and funny and great, and the dynamics are spot-on perfect. I loved them all so much, I wondered if it would be disappointing when she headed off to school...

...but it totally wasn't, because I loved her school, and much more than that, I LOVED the characters there, including Peter, an extremely smart, grumpy, stand-offish boy (for completely understandable reasons) who becomes the perfect focus for a very, very sweet romance subplot. (It's muted, as is totally appropriate for their age, but still totally sigh-worthy, and I can't wait to see it develop in later books.)

This book is just plain fun to read in every way, and that includes fabulous magical action scenes, intense excitement - and simple charm, which it has in spades.

Ordinary Magic comes out on May 8th of this year. I read an e-ARC through Netgalley, but I will DEFINITELY be buying a published paper copy to read and re-read, and I cannot wait for its sequels. I have no idea how many there will be - selfishly, I hope for TONS. This is my very favorite MG fantasy discovery in a very long time, and so far, this and Jenn Reese's Above World are my two very favorite MG novels of 2012.

I LOVED it.

Danielle Smiley says

Genre: Middle Grade Fantasy

Publisher Type: Traditional

My Rating: * * * * *

My Review:

Ever since Harry Potter, readers of all ages have been scouring bookstores' middle grade shelves looking for the next great magical adventure and Ordinary Magic is it! Two words to describe it? Crazy Fun!

I really can't help but continue on the Harry Potter thread here because if you took HP and turned it inside out and upside down, the results would be Ordinary Magic. Here we are introduced to a world spilling over

with magic. So common is it that people don't know how to function without it. Magic can negatively affect children, so families are careful to avoid their children being touched by magic until they are twelve. At that point their level of magic is tested. And the worst thing ever is discovered. Abby is without magic. She is labeled an Ordinary. With the social stigmatization of being diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic, Abby's family is encouraged to toss Abby out like trash or sell her like property. She is considered a curse, less than human, maybe dangerous, treated as contagious. Luckily, much unlike the Durselys, Abby's family loves her and views her as they always have, an adored daughter and sister.

It would be easy for me to continue on telling you of the plot. It's such a fantastic story!!! Alas, this is a review not an extended synopsis. Sigh.

So onto the review...

Incredibly well written, the OM world is vividly described and every character has depth and personality. Even our antagonists are well-rounded and not merely BAD. I love, love, love Abby's family. Each member is unique and special and I really want to know them more. Abby is a brave and tough, but in a very twelve-year-old way. There's lots of adventure and suspense and a few hints of romance. I enjoyed every moment of this book and would happily stand in line (as I did for Harry Potter) for the sequel.

Cover Art:

I'm sort of indifferent to this cover. I don't know that it would grab my attention enough to pick it up at a bookstore. I was actually drawn to the title most of all.

See more of my reviews at: <http://knowntoread.blogspot.com>

TheBookSmugglers says

Originally reviewed on The Book Smugglers

Abby Hale leads a happy and normal life for a twelve year old - she goes to school every day and she's lucky enough to have a large, loving family and plenty of friends. And, just like anyone else her age, Abby cannot wait to be Judged, because Judgement means she will finally be an Adult and that she'll FINALLY be able to use magic (just like everyone else in the world). On the day of her Judgement, Abby is an excited mess of nerves and she wonders what rating she'll receive - most kids get a Judgement of 5 or so (although Abby's eldest sister, Alexa, got a nearly unheard-of 9 rating!). But Abby doesn't even pass her first test, and she is Judged as having absolutely *zero* magical potential.

In other words, Abby is an Ord - that is, she's "Ordinary" therefore impervious to magic and anathema to society.

You see, in Abby's world, *everything* relies on magic, from the rooms in her family's house to the shortcake that Abby's mother conjures in her bakery. Ords are a danger because they can see through any spells and cannot be affected by magic, and reviled - they are treated as though their Ord-ness is a contagious disease (it's not), and their basic human rights are stripped away. For instance Ords, especially Ord children, are often sold as slaves to traveling Adventurers (who find it useful to have someone impervious to magic on hand to walk through magical booby traps in the pursuit of treasure).

Abby soon learns all of this, as she's kicked out of school, her supposed friends keep their distance, and a pair of brutal Adventurers show up at her family's doorstep looking to purchase Abby for their next adventure. At least Abby has her family who stand by her and love her just as much as if she had been

proclaimed an immensely powerful young mage. And just when all seems lost, Abby learns that her life is not without hope and opportunity - her eldest sister, Alexa, works a top secret job in Education for the kingdom, and it turns out she (and newly coronated King Stephen) has been a champion for Ords for years, protecting a school for Ordinary children in the heart of the kingdom's capitol city. Soon enough, Abby is whisked away to Margaret Green School in Rothmere, where she learns that she is one of many Ords, where she makes new friends, and learns how to protect herself and use her Ordinarity to her advantage. Of course, danger abounds (what with redcaps and desperate Adventurers about), but with the help of her family and her friends, Abby may just be able to make it through her first year of school alive.

Well, thank you Stephanie Burgis! *Ordinary Magic* is EVERY bit as wonderful as promised - there's nothing *ordinary* about it. The core premise of the book is simple, but brilliant in its simplicity; Abby's world is like a reverse Harry Potter, in which the entire universe is magical, except for a very small subset of folks that are despised for their non-magical-ness. Instead of going to a school for the gifted, Abby goes to a school where she can be safe and where she can learn how to live life in a world built for others (really, upon reflection, "Ords" and "Ordinary" seems a misnomer because Abby and her fellow Ords are not average or typical in the slightest - in fact they are very OUT of the ordinary). The revulsion that other characters feel for Abby and her new friends is a searing, believable examination of xenophobia, of racism, of the despicable fear of those who are different. I *love* the careful, considered examination of these issues in the book, in a way that never feels didactic or exploitative, and is seamlessly integral to the story.

I also love the consideration of the world itself, too. While I wonder where the fear and hatred for Ords came from (fodder for future books, right?), I love the distinction between ords being impervious to magic, but NOT impervious to normal things that would kill anyone. As one of Abby's teachers points out, ords are impervious to magical fire, but they will burn just like anyone else if a spell is cast that creates a non-magical, regular fire. We also get to see just how ingrained magic is in this world, as when Abby volunteers for kitchen duty, she - for the very first time in her life! - has to wash a dish (dirty dishes in the Hale household are magicked away and back into existence, clean as ever).

But you know what I loved most of all about this book? The characters, and the relationships between the characters. I adored the family dynamic between Abby, her sisters Olivia and Alexa, and her protective brothers Gil and Jeremy, and especially her parents. Instead of absentee parents, or cruel siblings, the Hale family is a tight-knit bunch that unconditionally loves its youngest member, Abby. I even love the realistic tension that emerges at Abby's school - because unlike other Ords, Abby is incredibly lucky to have a supportive family (so many other family's turn their children out or sell them when they are Judged to be Ords), to the resentment of other characters.

And then there's our heroine Abby, herself. Like Stephanie Burgis' Kat Stephenson books, I love that the novel follows Abby and not her older siblings - let's face it, the story of Alexa, who is a level 9 mage (that's 9 out of a possible - or rather, impossible - 10!) and selflessly devoted to improving the law and living conditions for Ords even *before* her sister was claimed one is an easy shoe-in for heroine of a YA or older fantasy series. That said, how predictable would that have been? I LOVE the perspective we get from Abby who is NOT powerful or particularly ingenious, but who has guts and the love of her family and friends to guide her. She's brave and resourceful, but the thing that is so awesome about Abby is her belief and trust in those she cares for. And that's just Abby! The other characters in this book are brilliantly detailed and fleshed out, from the curmudgeonly Peter (there's a sweet beginning of a romance here, handled beautifully) to the passionate ord self-defense teacher Becky.

What else can I say about *Ordinary Magic*? This is a fantastic book in a richly imagined and fascinating world. I loved *Ordinary Magic* very, very much, and I sincerely hope there will be more adventures of Abby and her fellow Ords in the very near future.

Kim says

Okay so I was intrigued by the other reviews, which is why I picked this book up. A fan girl of Harry Potter, it was an interesting comparison to read the reviews calling it, "Harry Potter in reverse". That was the first mistake.

While it is, indeed, a story about a magical world dealing with modern social undercurrents, I felt like the story itself lacked something. I could never really pin it down to just one thing. Character development could definitely be meatier. I understand why it couldn't be, what with the first person limited narrative from an angsty preteen girl, but I was hoping for a bit more from characters like Peter and Becky. We need to connect with the characters for them to really be sympathetic ones, even a character seemingly as important to the mood of the ending as Fran was.

Speaking of ending, I wasn't a big fan of it. I get that it had to end on a happier note (especially with the YA genre), but it felt forced and a little awkward to me. I got the feeling that, like movies that basically tell you there will be a sequel, this book could potentially become a series? But I prefer something more final in a story. Though HP was a series, the endings of each book were at least a finale of that particular story.

To offer more comparisons to HP would be an injustice to this story and Rowling's. Is it in "reverse"? If by reverse, you mean a far cry from the HP story you would be correct. Proceed with caution...but since we're just ORDS, I think the magic of this book might not affect us.
