



Audacity Jones to the Rescue

Kirby Larson

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An irrepressible orphan named Audacity Jones is headed on an adventure of historic proportions! The first book in a brand-new series from beloved Newbery Honor author Kirby Larson!

Audacity Jones is an eleven-year-old orphan who aches for adventure, a challenge to break up the monotony of her life at Miss Maisie's School for Wayward Girls. Life as a wayward girl isn't so bad; Audie has the best of friends, a clever cat companion, and plenty of books to read. Still, she longs for some excitement, like the characters in the novels she so loves encounter.

So when the mysterious Commodore Crutchfield visits the school and whisks Audie off to Washington, DC, she knows she's in for the journey of a lifetime. But soon, it becomes clear that the Commodore has unsavory plans for Audie--plans that involve the president of the United States and a sinister kidnapping plot. Before she knows it, Audie winds up in the White House kitchens, where she's determined to stop the Commodore dead in his tracks. Can Audie save the day before it's too late?

Audacity Jones to the Rescue Details

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Author : Kirby Larson

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From Reader Review Audacity Jones to the Rescue for online ebook

Maggie Elizabeth says

Audacity Jones is a historical fiction novel written by Kirby Larson. Larson has received a Newbery Honor and the Scott O'Dell award for her historical fiction books. I found this book in my library.

The story begins in 1910 with Audacity Jones, or Audi, an orphan living in Miss Maisie's School for Wayward Girls. As a smart and clever 11 year old girl, she craves for an adventure that will take her away from her simple, boring life with Miss Maisie. Her dream comes true when mysterious Commodore Crutchfield appears at Audi's school and declares that he needs her for a secret mission. As the story unfolds, Audi figures out the Commodore's sinister plot against the president of the United States, President William Howard Taft.

This book is very interesting and suspenseful. It keeps the reader on their toes and turning the page at cliff hangers. The language used to tell the story is filled with idioms and language used in the early 1900s that many students may find difficult to understand. Therefore, I recommend this book for guided reading groups where the teacher can provide some background information about the historical events as well as guidance in understanding the literary devices used.

Kristen says

Audacity Jones is a fabulous character--I love her bravery and intelligence and...well...her audacity! I like that Larson has taken a genre that is hard to get my students excited about (historical fiction) and has combined it with a genre they love (mystery). Unfortunately, the slow pace of the story and the rather high vocabulary may make many of my students disinclined to finish. It was even hard for me to engage at first--setting up Audie's life and recruitment into a "mission" seemed particularly drawn out--but once I reached the midway point I found myself sucked into the adventure.

Laura says

Really not sure what to think here - at times I admired it, but most of the time I was just confused about what the Big Caper was, why Audacity was part of it and how the other Wayward Girls fit in.

ARC provided by publisher.

Bridget says

I gave up on this pretty quickly because I really dislike when *fat* is used as a shorthand for *bad* or *greedy* or *stupid* and it felt like the author managed a trifecta. Audacity seemed like a fun character, smart, cheerful, and resourceful. But each description of Miss Maisie's "piggy eyes" or flapping arm skin etc. etc. etc. wore on me a little more until I decided there were better ways to spend my time. I also found (slightly spoilery-->)

this reader's take on the framing of race relations in the book, and overall I think there are better historical fiction choices out there for me to bring into schools.

Anastasia Tuckness says

Audacity's stuck in an orphanage (or home for wayward girls) until a mysterious man offers her a way out-- and she jumps at it. She and her magical cat drive across the States to be part of the 1910 presidential inauguration, where she will make the president's favorite turtle/terrapin soup. But maybe those adults in charge of her aren't quite as virtuous as they claim to be??

This book combines adventure, mystery, and history in a pretty fun way.

Margaux says

One thing I will say is that this cover does this story a disservice. I loved the story, but wouldn't pick it up for the longest time because from the cover, I judged that it took place in the 60's (I'm not interested in recent history). Nope. I shouldn't be surprised because Scholastic has been disappointing me a lot lately.

Kristal says

I liked this book, but I'm not sure the diction and rhythm would appeal to younger readers. I will have some of my school kids try it and see what they think.

Audacity is an orphan with dreams of changing the world. The opportunity comes to her and involves the President of the United States, Teddy Roosevelt! Audacity doesn't always see through deception, but with the help of the twisting of her insides, her devoted cat, and a new friend, she might just come out on top.

Cathy says

I loved Audie and her adventures. The interweaving of period phrases (bees and bonnets!) and vocabulary reminded me a bit of Lemony Snicket's *Series of Unfortunate Events*, and the fact that Audie is an orphan lent to the connection as well. It was fun and entertaining, and I recommend it highly to anyone who is in the mood for a fun read.

Debbie says

I enjoyed this light-hearted adventure story set in 1910. Audacity wanted an adventure, so she agrees to help a long-time donor to the school with a mission. Only he isn't telling her what it is, and something smells fishy. While she notices when things are off, she doesn't discover what's going on until she's already fully in the middle of it. Luckily, she has friends to help her when she needs it.

Her philosophy is, "Everything will turn out splendid in the end. If it's not splendid, it's not the end." She also tends to say simple, true things like, "A friend makes life so much easier to bear."

There were historical tidbits throughout the story, but it's not heavy on the history aspects. There was no bad language. Overall, Audacity, her cat, and her friends were great fun to read about.

I received this review copy from the publisher through Amazon Vine.

Elise says

This is a tough one for me to review. The writing is solid, I love the main character, and I love that it's historical fiction. The vocabulary used is very high level...it was a read aloud with my 11-year-old daughter, who I think has a good vocabulary, but she often had to stop me to ask what a word meant. That's not a bad thing, necessarily, but it did slow down the reading of it.

Speaking of slow...the plot was extremely slow in progressing. My daughter would have willingly stopped with the book multiple times along the way because it was taking too long for anything much to happen or to figure out what exactly Audie was doing. We stuck with it, and it finally paid off when the pace picked up significantly in the last third or so of the book.

I'm hoping that since this appears to be the first book in a series, there was extra work required to set up the concept, and maybe in future books the pace will be a little more captivating.

Tj Shay says

"Everything will turn out splendid in the end. If it's not splendid, it's not the end." Kirby Larson is a master storyteller and this book proves that point. Audacity or "Audie" is a precocious young girl who reads and is always ready for adventure. As she is residing at Miss Maisie's School for Wayward Girls, someone stops by and a great mystery begins.

I was taken in by this story from the very beginning and couldn't put it down in the end. Nobody writes better historical fiction than Kirby. This is a great book with an authentic strong female lead that will capture your attention and your heart. Put this on your calendar for January 26, 2016

Review based on an uncorrected proof

Ms. Kelly says

Ok, there is a LOT I am going to touch on, so bear with me here...
(AUDIOBOOK REVIEW - not sure on the spelling of some names)

THE GOOD

I really enjoyed the writing style. The author is a solid writer with a wonderful grasp of language. She made me laugh out loud at the beginning with turns of phrase like "All was as calm as a Presbyterian Potluck." I

am putting this in the GOOD even though I think it is a little advanced for much of the intended audience. Although it would probably fit the bill for young readers who read far above their "level" as it were.

Also good, the main character. Audacity is pretty well thought out and, as every one else says, spunky. Likewise, her friends in the Wayward school have a nice secondary story arc. I thoroughly enjoy books that don't completely forget where the main character comes from.

The voice artist had clear voices for each of her characters. Never once did I confuse one person with another. Easy to listen to and follow.

THE BAD

The magical kitten and the buzzing ear. These devices were used as a way to give Audacity magical knowledge of things. It felt very lazy and unnecessary. Audacity is established as an extremely smart, very well read girl with a seemingly photographic memory. She could have been more of a budding Sherlock Holmes using her observational skills. As her first "case" there would naturally have been a learning curve, and that would have propelled much of the "danger" as written, i.e. Her misjudgment of the Commodore and Cipher.

Also, the parallels to Little Orphan Annie drove me crazy.

Orphan. Adopted by stray pet. Home for girls with an oblivious and selfish head mistress. Taken away from said home by a rich man (who consistently called her Annie). Rich man has an ethnic chauffeur. There is a plot to kidnap a girl for ransom. The other "orphan" girls know something is wrong and do what they can to help. Yup. Little Orphan Annie.

THE VERY VERY UGLY

The dangerous whitewashing of history.

But wait, you say, this book is EXTREMELY diverse! There are non-white characters all OVER the place! Bimi, Juice, Daddy Dub, and Cipher! They are important characters who really have presence and impact the story!

Yes, they are and they do. The HUGE problem with this, is that they interact with their world like white people would have in the early 1900s. NOT AT ALL like people of color in a decidedly racist world.

Cipher is, perhaps, the least problematic in that regards. The author establishes a letter from a Shah (A sheik?). He also does not get into his desired Secret Service position right away, but is given a chauffeur job. Mildly believable. The mistrust of him by the service is glossed over, but it is mentioned.

Bimi. Her ethnicity isn't mentioned at all until late in the book when the girls reflect on how Audacity's friendship has helped each of them. Audi is, apparently, a very 21st century girl at the turn of the 20th century. Living in Indiana (the place where the KKK was strongest in the early 1900s) somehow, this brown girl (Indian?) is dropped off. First, that assumes that her parents trusted a white society woman enough to not...I don't know...press their daughter into servitude or something. Second, Audi is SO progressive, her first comment about the first brown person she sees is that she is a south paw. Very 21st century indeed of Audi, *and* of Miss Maisie to take in a non-white girl as an actual student. I just didn't believe it to be historically plausible. Her ethnicity was NEVER discussed by any other character - only in her own memories.

Juice & Daddy Dub. Wow. These black folks would have been killed, all the stuff they did that was TOTALLY a no-no for black people in the early 1900s. Anti miscegenation laws were being put on the books or reinstated all over the country, Jim Crow laws relating to schools and separate restrooms and other facilities were spreading like wildfire. Taft, as Vice President in 1907, said that even though he upheld the 14th & 15th amendments, the enforcement of said amendments need not "involve the amalgamation of the race - nor involve social association or equality" for black people. He also expressly thought blacks inferior except for a handful that should be fed a real education. All the rest should be given only industrial and vocational training.

All of this is to set the stage. Juice would NEVER have been so familiar with Audi. He is described as a tall black boy (who towered over his grandfather). They would not have been able to walk down the street together without Juice shucking and jiving, acting like her servant. People would have SERIOUSLY questioned the safety of this 11 year old white girl with what would have looked like a black man. Not allowed. He might be trying to rape her! Black boys and men were CONSISTENTLY lynched for looking sideways at white women, much less walking with them. He REALLY would not have touched Dorothy Taft on the arm after saving her.

They would NEVER have had Audi in their barn unsupervised. They didn't know her. She could have accused them of anything and the white folks would believe her.

Daddy Dub would NEVER have been able to just "go down the street and use the telephone" at a business.

And they NEVER NEVER would have taken a hacksaw to a locked building and broken in. Not without white people with them to tell the police that they were not thieves.

These are all HUGE problems.

When writing a historical fiction novel, the author has some responsibility to the era they portray in addition to the facts that inspire their tale. The author acknowledges the changes made to the story of Dorothy Taft in an authors note and she lists basic facts of history and where she got information from. Daddy Dub (W.W. Brown) is acknowledged as a real livery driver who worked at the White House for 50+ years. But the author makes zero mention of the historical realities of race relations. If this were my first exposure to this time period, I would think that it wasn't so bad for black people and what was the fuss all about and why did we even need a civil rights movement sixty years later?

This is the epitome of oblivious white privilege. I do not think the author a bad, mean, racist, or otherwise nefarious person. In fact, based on her pointed inclusion of non white main characters, I believe the author to be the OPPOSITE of those things.

But by not at all addressing the reality of life for people of color during the chosen time period, the author is making a choice to erase the true experiences of people of color - which is a very irresponsible, short sighted, and dangerous thing.

THIS REVIEW IS NOT TO BE CONFUSED with the also dangerously terrible excuse of "historical accuracy" as a way to keep characters of color out of historically based books, movies, and other stories.

Instead of keeping them out, this author did a GREAT job including the people who REALLY WERE THERE. She acknowledges that Daddy Dub was a real person, although probably not called Daddy Dub. This is great. But by not even *touching* on any of the racial issues surrounding everyday life for these

people, it ignores something that is (still) a huge part of race relations.

White people often wonder why POC bring up race so much. It is simply because race has (and continues) to color every single interaction. But POC *have* to notice it as part of life, while non-POC's do not.

Suzanne Maley says

Though historical fiction, the characters in this book would be delightful in any time period. Every single character in this book is well developed, especially Audacity. More stories about Audacity and her friends please!

Carol says

I listened to most of this as an audiobook with my girls, but I just couldn't finish it. The pace dragged and the author used a lot of big words. I have no problem with big words, but she used complicated ones too many times when simpler ones would do.

Annette says

AUDACITY JONES TO THE RESCUE by Kirby Larson is the first book in a new historical mystery series.

Set in the early 1900s, Audacity is a witty orphan who enjoys reading and adventure. She yearns to explore life outside the Miss Maisie's School for Wayward Girls. When Commodore Crutchfield shows up at the school looking for an orphan, she immediately volunteers. However Audie soon realizes that Crutchfield and his colleagues are up to no good and she must save the day.

Although there are many middle grade books about orphans and boarding schools, librarians will find that the combination of adventure and mystery will be appeal to a broad cross section of readers. The historical context, particularly the White House setting make the book even more fun

To learn more about the author, go to <http://www.kirbylarson.com/>.

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