



Adventures of a Cat-Whiskered Girl

Daniel Pinkwater, Calef Brown (Illustrations)

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Big Audrey is a girl . . .
with cat s whiskers . . .
and sort of cat s eyes.
But, is there an other cat-whiskered, sort of cat-eyed girl?

Big Audrey waves goodbye to her friends Iggy and Neddie, Seamus, and Crazy Wig, in Los Angeles and hitches a ride with bongo-playing-while-driving Marlon Brando across the country to Poughkeepsie, New York, city of mystery. She finds she has questions needing answers and a bit of inter-plane-of-existence traveling to do.

Big Audrey and her telepathic friend Molly zigzag off on an incredibly strange and kooky adventure, and solve the mystery of the cat-whiskered doppelganger."

Adventures of a Cat-Whiskered Girl Details

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Author : Daniel Pinkwater , Calef Brown (Illustrations)

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From Reader Review Adventures of a Cat-Whiskered Girl for online ebook

Beth says

UFO's, apple fritters, a cat-whiskered girl, and different planes of existence. Pinkwater is a sure fire guarantee for smart silly fun.

Victoria Whipple says

How does one describe this book? This is a companion book to *The Neddiad* and *The Yggysy*, where we first met Audrey, the cat-whiskered girl. Audrey arrived in Los Angeles through a portal from another dimension, then hitched a ride to Poughkeepsie, NY with Marlon Brando. Once in Poughkeepsie, Audrey befriends some interesting characters, some with questionable sanity. One of the things I love about Pinkwater's books is not only that his characters are so odd (yet so familiar) but that they are not afraid to talk about their differences. If only everyone could so openly discuss differences and why we have them. Audrey goes on an adventure with her new friend who is part mountain dwarf to an island where they meet some trolls and the horrible Wulluf. All the strange and wonderful characters she meets help lead her to finding out who she really is. Pinkwater's characters are, as always, endearingly quirky. He tells the story in a way that makes alternate realities seem plausible, and he leaves an opening for another spinoff, to tell the story of another character. This is not a book for everyone, but for those who can appreciate the humor, as well as the humanity, it is a book not to be missed. Once a reader is hooked on Pinkwater, they want more and more.

Allie says

Daniel Pinkwater is a genius!

Amy L. Campbell says

Note: Free Advanced Reader Copy received at ALA 2010 from publisher.

For a fairly lighthearted adventure, this story packs some pretty heavy concepts. I appreciate that Pinkwater is both willing and able to expose young minds to concepts like alternate planes of existence, destiny, and existentialism without dumbing it down OR making it boring is downright incredible. And this is exactly the right age to expose people to these concepts, as their brains have not hardened into tight little balls of what is and isn't conceivable.

In addition to this, the story is remarkably compelling with bits of humor and absurdity thrown in. For instance, I loved the Trial of Hot, it had me laughing loud enough to worry my family in the other room. Audrey is obviously a very intelligent girl, and despite her cat whiskers, is more or less treated as a normal person. While this might not be realistic, it's a nice change from being the sole focus of a YA novel. It might

even be a better example of how children should treat people with differences as opposed to having those characters abused before being redeemed in the eyes of "normal" people.

Although this is targeted for a younger audience, I think older teens and adults with a good temper will enjoy it too. The oddball kids should definitely be pushed towards this, if possible.

The reviewer is the author of the blog [A Librarian's Life in Books](#).

Priya Sridhar says

I think this book is for the people that recall the nonsense of Alice in Wonderland and The Phantom Tollbooth. Daniel Pinkwater then mixes in mythology, folklore, and cinema history to make for a whirlwind of a ride. I definitely recommend reading it. :)

Cheryl says

Pinkwater is one-of-a-kind. I love his work in small doses - especially his picturebooks about Irving and Muktuk. His novels for young teens, well, I dunno. I couldn't get into the first book of this series, The Neddiad: How Neddie Took the Train, Went to Hollywood, and Saved Civilization, but since this one starts with a recap explanation and so does stand alone, I decided to try it. Anyway, I've not much to say. I like & admire but won't remember & don't want more. :shrug:

Oh, except I do like the tributes to other cultural references, esp. to Where the Wild Things Are. And I think I want to retire to Poughkeepsie.

Dianna says

if i am very, very good, then someday when i die i will be reincarnated inside a daniel pinkwater book. as one of the odd characters, of course, not the dreaded normal ones.

Sarah Sammis says

"Incidentally, I don't know how late you were planning to stay, but there is an excellent film this evening The Snake Pit. It's a wonderful comedy. I've seen it several times." p. 40.

Big Audrey has her own quest in Adventures of a Cat-Whiskered Girl by Daniel Pinkwater. She hitches a ride from Los Angeles to Poughkeepsie, New York and there she finds clues to her true identity.

This book is like the Shutter Island for middle graders and tweens. What appears to be real isn't necessarily real and what appears to be a hallucination might actually be the real deal. And it was for this back and forth between the real and unreal that I so love the book.

Audrey meets a professor who has voluntarily checked himself into the local insane assylum because it seemed like the thing to do. She also meets Molly, the psychic who can see things for what they really are. Molly ends up being her best source of clues for learning her true identity.

The search though takes her up river to see a scary monster, through time to the town's past and to a parallel plane of existence. It would take too long to explain everything.

It was a fun read and made me laugh as much as *The Neddiad* did.

Dan says

Note: This review concerns an advanced reading copy. There may have been changes made to the published version.

This is maybe the dumbest book I have ever read. Normally when starting off a review with a statement like that, this would be the point where I explain why being dumb is actually a good thing, but in this case, it isn't. This novel is simply pointless and, in my estimation, poorly written.

I will give it one point of praise: despite this being apparently the third in a series I have no experience with, it was easy to enter and follow. The first two books are, I assume, summed up in the introduction, and from there everything else stands alone. So that, at least, did not affect my enjoyment of this work.

To the writing. I assume that this is meant as a YA novel, but even had I read it while still a young adult, I doubt I would have not have found it to my taste as I did not have ADHD. The short, choppy sentences show nothing and tell all. Worse, the dialogue tends toward being explainy, and none of the characters talk the way real people do. The plot consists of Big Audrey being led by the nose from one "wacky" character or happenstance to the next, and the big reveal at the end of the book was something I figured out the moment the mystery entered the story.

The rest of it is just a mishmash of trying too hard. Characters are dubbed insane to keep them from needing personalities. Allusions to pop culture are tossed in needlessly; by the time I reached "follow the mellow click road", I was wishing physical ill upon the author. What makes this worse are the blurbs on the outside of the book praising Pinkwater for being "nutty" and "weird", and mentioning the "of course, ample apple fritters", because the presence of apple fritters is high comedy or something. I laughed at precisely one gag in the book, and that was the main character expressing her distaste for a set of rather irritating side characters.

One of those blurbs, thankfully slightly more eloquent, is from Neil Gaiman, an author I quite respect, and having him there leads me to what bothered me most about this novel: Pinkwater comes off as a Gaiman admirer and imitator with precisely none of the skill. This story has a Gaimanesque setup -- young girl, slightly odd, cast of colorful characters, strange rubbing elbows with the mundane -- but there is nothing graceful or elegant about it. Most of the goings-on happen for no reason, and many of them appear only to be discarded immediately afterward.

By the end of the book, I was just glad to have reached the end. It was a quick read, and that is perhaps the nicest thing I can really say about it. I will be avoiding Pinkwater from now on.

Shel says

Pinkwater, D. (2010). Adventures of a Cat-Whiskered Girl. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

268 pages.

Appetizer: Big Audrey is from another plane of existence. She had been visiting Los Angeles but has since relocated to Poughkeepsie, where she works at a UFO bookshop.

While visiting the local insane asylum, she befriends a girl named Molly who has a tendency to notice things that others don't. They go in search to find aliens and while meeting a number of quirky characters (including an old wise woman, a giant, a family of trolls a wolluf and the much-dreaded Muffin Man), they wind-up on the path to their destinies and to Audrey learning more about where she comes from.

The best way to sum up this book: Weeeeeeeeird.

It plays with absurdism and as I read I felt myself being pushed to question the way reality is constructed, to question the way that the insane are often perceived, to see the outsiders of society in a new way.

And while all of that is nice...this book was maybe a little too weird for me.

It is also worth noting for the overprotective parents out there, there is mention of getting high toward the end of the book. Several characters ingest magic bean soup that leaves them in altered states for a time. (I didn't find this scene in any way offensive. But it did make me start to wonder whether Pinkwater himself was high while writing.)

I kept trying to figure out if I would like this when I was a middle grade student. My conclusion is that younger (often impatient) me probably would have put this book back on the shelf after reading the first few pages.

Adult me probably would have done the same if I didn't feel obligated to finish due to everyone everywhere raving about how humorous Pinkwater's books are.

I guess I just don't find the humor in this book. One of the five or six moments I kinda-sorta found amusing was:

"But it's spooky and scary."

"We'll go in the daytime. It's not so scary then, is it?"

"Maybe not as" (p. 56)

That made me go "ha." Silently. In my head. Not out loud. Even after a glass of wine, I still wasn't laughing. And now, rereading it out of context, I realize you **TOTALLY** need the context to get anything out of that. Sigh.

I was amused with the Harold the Giant character who is a short giant, standing at only 5'7". But then, it's not polite to draw attention to a person's physical deficits.

I also liked a reference to the classic version of The Day the Earth Stood Still. Pinkwater quotes my dad's favorite scene. So I actually had to call my dad and read aloud a portion of chapter 61 (very short chapters!).

Logically, I did know that the book was playing with some excellent concepts (like finding a sense of belonging) and the book remixed some folkstories and touches on American history in inventive ways. And trying to explain the content of the book is a humorous endeavor all its own. I can see why someone could fall in love with this book or other of Pinkwater's 100-ish publications. His writing just doesn't seem to be for me.

And now I'll be forced to feel like an outside among all my peers and teachers because I may be the only one whose immediate reaction to Pinkwater's books is WTF instead of YAYZ!

Dinner Conversation:

"It surprises me how many people don't know there are different planes of existence. Well, it's not really surprising that you don't know if no one ever explained it to you, so I will do that now" (p. ix).

"I myself came from another plane of existence to this one...Well, it's true that I can't absolutely prove I come from another plane. However, if you go to the library and get ahold of encyclopedias and National Geographics and certain books, you can find an article with pictures of a typical-looking Inuit, a typical-looking Northern European, a typical-looking Mongolian, a typical-looking Banut, Korean, Australian, Moroccan, and so on...all different types. All different in minor ways, and all similar in most ways. It is interesting. What you will not find is a picture of a girl with cat whiskers and sort of catlike eyes. That is, until they take a picture of me" (pp. x-xi).

"...Did they make you come to this hospital because you notice things other people don't?"

"No. I'm actually nuts," she said. "They put me here hoping to cure me of it."

"And are they doing you any good?" I asked.

"Not really. I'm hoping it goes away by itself. My name is Molly" (p. 11).

"Now, it is a fact that even if you have worked out logically that the odds are vastly in favor of life on other planets, even if you have had experience that supports the idea that travel between worlds is not only possible but common, and even if you have actually seen or otherwise had personal experience of spacecraft or flying saucers, when someone else claims to have had an encounter your first thought is to check out whether they are crazy" (p. 32).

Tasty Rating: !!

Aiyana says

An enjoyable surrealistic adventure story, by turns touching, comedic, and downright odd. If you enjoyed The Phantom Tollbooth and the works of Douglas Adams and Lemony Snicket, chances are you'll like this too. It had been quite a while since I had read the previous books in this series, so it took me a little while to catch on to who some of the characters were.

The story has a sort-of dreamlike quality, rambling and illogical, borrowing snatches of fairy tales and other tropes as it goes. But how can you resist a book containing a character called The Golden Gooser? (And yes, it does go around pinching people's bottoms).

Rebecca McNutt says

This book is nothing short of diverse and unique, but I honestly thought it went a little too far in its oddities - and I love weird books.

Kelly says

Weird. Random. Strange.

K.C. says

Pinkwater, Daniel. (2010). Adventures of a cat-whiskered girl. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Category: Science fiction, humorous stories

Big Audrey has cat-like whiskers and cat-shaped eyes and comes from a different "plane of existence". She travels cross country with Marlon Brando (one of the few clues that this story is set in the 1950's) from Los Angeles. She gets out randomly in Poughkeepsie, NY, not being able to tak Brando's bongo playing. She gets a job at a UFO bookstore and stays with owners, the Gleybners. She befriends Professor Tag, a regular customer in the store who checks himself in and out of the insane asylum. When she visits him there, Audrey meets Molly, a telepathic dwerg, and the three set off for an adventure to investigate the UFO sightings behind the Old Stone Barn. They visit Chicken Nancy, a wise old woman who shows Audrey a picture of a girl who looks just like her, and whom the others seem to believe is her. Chicken Nancy sends Audrey and Molly off on an incredible journey where one thing leads to the next as if it were destined to be. It is only at the end that they solve the mystery, free a prisoner and Audrey discovers more about herself. Only to lead them to a future adventure.....

Themes: extra terrestrial beings, cats, humor

Classroom uses: Read-aloud

Kelly McCubbin says

Let me start by saying that Daniel Pinkwater is a national treasure. Funny, absurd, nostalgic and ridiculous (in the best way), he is a writer that speaks to much of the best of what is unique about this country. That said, this loose sequel to his Yggyssey and Nediad is a little too disjointed for my tastes. It's not that it isn't funny, it has a good laugh on almost every page, but without ever really settling in on a through line other than that we don't know what the Cat-Whiskered Girl really is, the whole thing becomes exhausting. Best

taken in small doses, this is not one of my favorite Pinkwaters.
