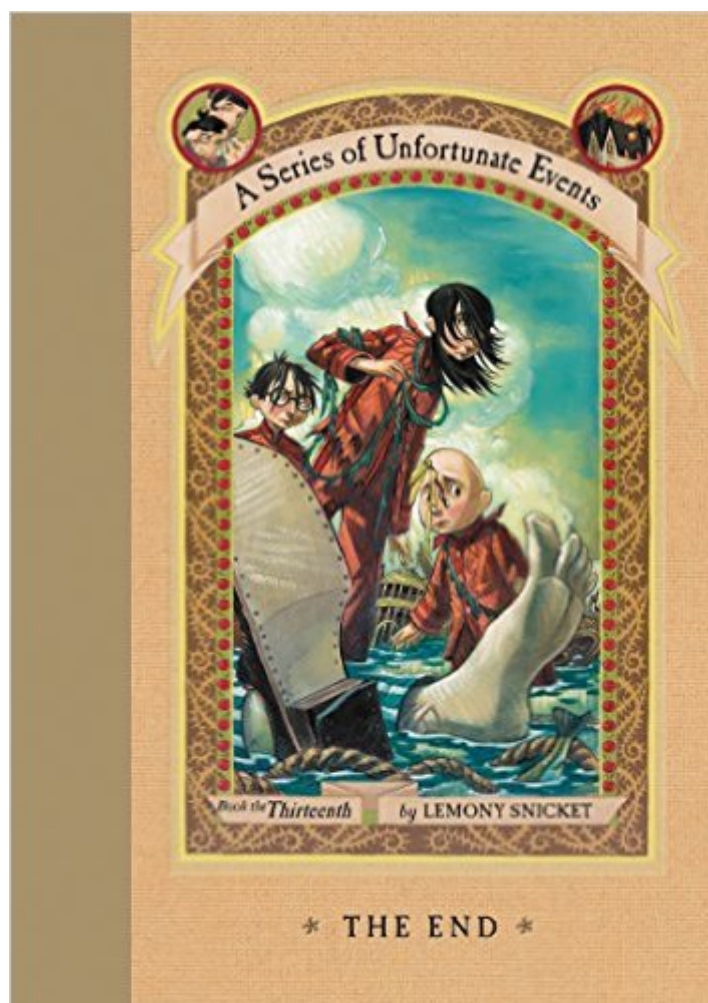


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The End (A Series Of Unfortunate Events, Book 13)



Synopsis

Like an off-key violin concert, the Roman Empire, or food poisoning, all things must come to an end. Thankfully, this includes *A Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket. The thirteenth and final installment in the groundbreaking series will answer readers' most burning questions: Will Count Olaf prevail? Will the Baudelaires survive? Will the series end happily? If there's nothing out there, what was that noise? Then again, why trouble yourself with unfortunate resolutions? Avoid the thirteenth and final book of Lemony Snicket's international bestselling series and you'll never have to know what happens. Ages 10+

Book Information

Lexile Measure: NC1370L (What's this?)

Series: *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, Book 13 (Book 13)

Hardcover: 368 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins; First Edition edition (October 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0064410161

ISBN-13: 978-0064410168

Product Dimensions: 5 x 1.3 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (480 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #11,905 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #43 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Orphans & Foster Homes #104 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Siblings #763 in Books > Children's Books > Action & Adventure

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

If you are interested in book reviews that have happy endings, you would be better off reading some other review. Because this review, like so many others, is more likely to make you hide in your cellar than prompt you to give your credit card number to complete strangers to order a copy of "The End." Unfortunately, like other series of books that start out splendidly, a word which here means "with interesting characters and fascinating plots," the last book in the chronicle of the Baudelaire's lives ends not with a bang but a whimper. The phrase "not with a bang but a whimper" was penned

by a man named Thomas, who was a close associate of mine until he left one day for New Guinea in a generically-fueled speed boat, all because of a note left in a cookie jar by a hotel concierge. The exact meaning of the phrase is ambiguous to some and downright confusing to others, but to my way of thinking, the best manner in which to use "not with a bang but a whimper" is in reference to an entertaining series of books that end not with plot resolution but with more unanswered questions. Unfortunately, that is how "The End" ends - with more unfortunate happenings that leave the unfortunate reader with the unfortunate sensation of having unfortunately wasted his or her time reading an unfortunate ending, unfortunately. That brings me to a problem that plagues the whole series of unfortunate events, and that is the repetitive nature of the books, a word which here means "Lemony Snicket deems it necessary to repeat the same sentence structure and subtle jokes ad infinitum throughout the series." This literary technique, a word which here means "way of writing a book," is novel the first few times it is tried, but after reading through 170 chapters filled with repetitive phrases, a word which here means "the same phrases over and over again," one tends to become disinterested, a word which here means "bored," or downright angry, a word which here means "why am I reading this book?" Mr. Snicket's stories also tend to fall into abject pessimism, a word which here means "a depressing view of the world," which might make good reading for hermits and old maids but not high-spirited little children. If you have read this much of my review - which I certainly hope you have not - then you must be wondering what redeeming qualities Lemony Snicket's unfortunate series of unfortunate books may have. While it is true that "The End" leaves one whimpering, it is equally untrue that the series should not be read. Books one through 11 are quite entertaining, a word which here means "worthy of being read." Unfortunately, Mr. Snicket begins to wax philosophical in the two closing books of the series. By "wax philosophical" I do not mean that Mr. Snicket uses a putrid smelling and oily substance to buff and shine his automobile, which he has nicknamed "philosophical." Rather, "wax philosophical" means that Mr. Snicket attempts to examine the nature of good and evil, often with rather embarrassing results. Mr. Snicket's liberal views on politics, morality, religion, and "pelosi" (a word which, when translated, means "his choice to live in San Francisco rather than Vermillion, South Dakota") may be interesting in a debate, but they serve as a mere annoyance in a children's yarn. That being said, the first eleven books are entertaining and enjoyable, words which here mean "worthy of being read, even if the last two books are horrid." There are some books, of course, that are better left unread, and I am sorry to say that "The End" is one of those. While it is wise to avoid "The End," it is definitely unwise to avoid many of the other books in the series. So, if you can look past the repetitive prose and odd humor, pick up the first few books in the series, but expecting a decent resolution to the storyline

would be an unfortunate event indeed.

I realize it's easy to be a critic, not being a "literary" person myself, but I feel this book can legitimately be called a disappointment nonetheless--even by me. I'll keep it as short as I can. First, I feel the quality of the series began to decline at about the halfway point; not sure if the author set 13 as an appealing goal and just ran out of material before getting there, or what. The fact is, the narrative style, so original and funny to begin with, wore itself out, and what had previously been a refreshing voice (with which the reader was only too happy to chuckle and shake her head), became dull, predictable, and annoying. Secondly, I realize that the author seems to have intended a "real" life lesson to come out of these satirical "fake morality tales," but the buildup into that conclusion is shaky, poorly planned, and feels contrived. What I mean is, the books begin as fairly transparent sketches of a villainous (and funny) Count Olaf, and the three clever orphans who escape him only to fall into difficulty again very soon. That's a clear outline, and, while old as the hills and somewhat unimaginative, still useful. But then the author seems to devolve into an unplanned and somewhat preachy exploration of existentialism by way of much equivocation in character description/motivation and muddying of the plotline. Finally, and here is the end of my review of *The End* (to borrow an obnoxious habit of the author's that pops up in several places in this book ...), the utter lack of resolution of the mysteries posed previously in the series does serve to drive home the point that we (readers, orphans, humans, whatever) do not know everything there is to know, and hence judgment is best practiced warily if at all. But this incredibly exasperating decision not to wrap up some of the major questions also insults the reader for having invested so much time in the story, cheapens the entire series by stripping its details and events of any ultimate meaning, serves to give further evidence of a lack of overall theme and poor planning evident for at least the last 5 or 6 books, AND, I would argue, is unnecessary as the same point could have been made merely by adjusting the narrative voice (or using any of a variety of literary "tools" the author seems to be completely inept at). I give it 2 stars only because the author at least bothered to finish (if only in name) this little misadventure, rather than abandoning his readers when his muse evidently abandoned him. Although one must speculate as to the nature of the contractual terms that might indeed have wrung the latter half of the series out of his unwilling pen. At least it's all over.

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