

DORKO

THE MAGNIFICENT

A NOVEL BY ANDREA BEATY



AMULET BOOKS



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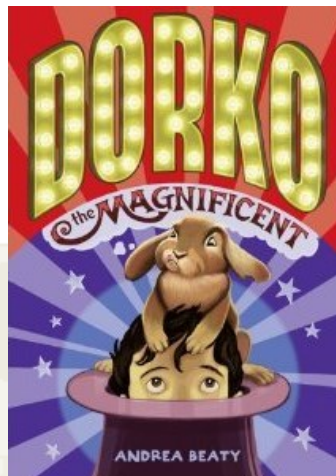
FROM THE PUBLISHER:

Robbie Darko is a magician. An old-school, pull-a-rabbit-out-of-your-hat-style magician. Robbie loves magic and he's good at it—sort of. Despite his best efforts, passion, and practice, something always goes wrong with his tricks, landing Robbie in trouble. Enter crotchety Grandma Melvyn, who calls everyone "Trixie" and complains about everything. When Grandma Melvyn moves in and takes over his room, Robbie discovers that she was once an internationally renowned magician and learns about the heartache that turned her into a bitter woman.

Against all odds, Robbie and Grandma Melvyn form an uneasy alliance to show the world—or at least the kids of Hobson Elementary School—that he is a true magician. Shortly after a successful talent show, Grandma Melvyn performs a final disappearing act, and Robbie learns a little about the true meaning of magic.

Written with pitch-perfect middle-grade humor and unforgettable characters, this gem of a novel will stay with readers long after Dorko the Magnificent has taken his final bow.

Grades 3-6, AR Level 4.7



FROM THE CRITICS:

"... an authentic middle-grade voice that will have readers laughing out loud. The moments where Robbie takes responsibility for his mistakes and shows vulnerability will serve as positive examples for young audiences. Satisfying and enjoyable, Dorko will engage reluctant and voracious readers alike." -- School Library Journal ★ **Starred Review**

I paused for effect. Then I grabbed the edge of the red tablecloth and, with a snap of my wrists, jerked it toward the floor. Like magic, it slid under the gold-rimmed plates and the cake. In a heartbeat, I was standing before the amazed crowd with the cloth in my hands and the bare wood of the table gleaming in the candlelight. I did it!

I dropped the tablecloth on the floor and raised my hands over my head. Then I leaned over and took the biggest bow of my life.

"Ta-daaaaa!"

And that was my first mistake.

—Dorko The Magnificent, p. 20

THE READER'S GUIDE

GUIDED READING QUESTIONS

- ★ Life isn't exactly calm in Robbie's household when this story takes place. What are some new developments in his life? Which changes do you think are hardest for him? Which would be hardest for you?
- ★ Robbie has a unique personality that gets a lot of attention: some good, and some bad. What parts of his personality are positive? Which traits get him negative attention? Do any of his traits draw both negative and positive attention? Which personality traits eventually help him triumph over his challenges?
- ★ When the book opens, Robbie is trying to describe that moment when a magician performs a trick and the audience hasn't yet had time to react. By the end of the book, Grandma Melvyn helps him realize what that word is and what it really means. What is the word? What's most important for that to happen — the audience or the performer? Explain your opinion.
- ★ Grandma Melvyn is a bit of a mystery to Robbie even after he spends a lot of time with her. When is the moment that he realizes she is more complicated than he imagined? How does that change the way he thinks about her? Does it change his behavior?
- ★ Why do you think it was so hard for Robbie to apologize to Grandma Melvyn when things go wrong? How would you behave in the same situation?

CURRICULAR EXTENSIONS

- ★ **Wordplay:** Robbie is a colorful talker. He claims he is suffering from *tuberculimpis*; he says his principal suffers from *amphibia-phobia*. What do these made-up words mean? Make up words to describe your own fake illnesses and ailments: things like a headache that can only be cured by chocolate chip cookies; arms too tired to help your parents bring the groceries in from the car; a crazy reason you can't clean your room. *Phobia* means *fear*. Make up your own phobia names using scientific sounding terms. Fear of nose pickers, for example; fear of someone eating all your candy; fear of getting bubble gum stuck in your hair; fear of being embarrassed.
- ★ **Math & Science:** Robbie says he's good at science because it's like magic. What is the "science" behind the tablecloth trick? Explain the science, math, or art behind other common magic tricks.
- ★ **Speaking Skills:** Robbie is good at magic. What is something you are good at? Make a 3-minute how-to speech to teach your skill to others.
- ★ **Compare and Contrast:** Robbie makes a chart to explain the difference between Magicians and Wizards. Make your own chart explaining the similarities and differences between things people might confuse. Here are some ideas: Bigfoot and Sasquatch; tigers and leopards; reptiles and amphibians; football and rugby; etc.