

The Invention of Hugo Cabret – Book Review

Author: Brian Selznick
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Genre: Historical Fiction
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Introduction

Hugo is a really poor boy. His parents are dead, and he is fixing the clocks in alley. He lives on a train station in Paris, where he barely can stay alive. He has to steal food to stay alive but that's easier said than done. That's because the inspector is always looking for kids, who steals or and doesn't have any parents. Brian uses a unique method to tell the story, where he uses well-drawn pictures and text. He is very original and it's entertaining to read/watch.

Before reading

The book is based on the 1930's Paris, on the train station Gare Montparnasse. The book has 526 pages, where 284 of them are drawn illustrations. This book is based on Hugo and George Méliès where Hugo is fictional, and George is genuine (Papa Georges is George Méliès). I recommend you to do some research about automatons, stop motion, Georges Méliès and Gare Montparnasse. In our class we saw some videos about automatons and stop motions, before we began to read and watch the movie. This was really good help to understand the book better. The themes are: isolation, family, memory, transformation, Hugo, Georges, magic, movies and the past. In arts and crafts we have worked a bit with stop-motions and I will just say that it takes some time and it's really funny.



The characters

Hugo: Hugo lives on the loft of the well know train station Gare Montparnasse. Hugo is 11 years, his parents are dead, and it is his uncle that “takes care” of him. He was really close to his father, before he died. Before Hugo's father died they used to fix an automaton (a automaton is a wind-up robot that can draw or write, made of metal and used to have some kind of decoration, and always super creepy). He said that this automaton is the most advanced automaton he had ever seen. He gave the automaton to a museum that didn't care about it at all.

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It was hidid away, and tragically enough the museum burned down, where Hugo found the automaton, and started to fix it. Hugo believes that his father has hidden a message in it, and by finding this message everything would be all right.

Georges: Georges Méliès is the owner of the toy booth on the train station. He wants to cover his past, if you want to know why, read the book yourself. Georges are truly the first ever to use the movie method: stop-motion (movie method very often used to bring anything alive). Georges made over 100 movies; he loved to use the method to do magic things like disappearing.

Isabelle: Georges is Isabelle's godfather, she's the girl in the toy booth. Isabelle is not on Georges' side or on Hugo's but she wants to help Hugo to get back his notebook. She loves adventures, but she has a secret a big secret. She has a jewelry that Hugo is very interested in, if you want to know why, read the book yourself.



The book review

The setting is in the 1930's Paris, on the train station Gare Montparnasse, where Hugo lives. The mix between illustrations and text is really good at this point. You can see a bit of the stop motion technique now. The book is in two parts, the first part is about Hugo, and the other one is about Georges. The text and illustrations style is really fresh and cool; I've never seen anything like this before. You maybe think that this book is super boring, because you don't care about Paris or clocks, but let me tell you that the book/movie is more about action that it is about anything else. The Invention of Hugo Cabret is the title on the book, it doesn't give so much sense first time reading the book, but around the end it does, because Hugo invented his, and Georges' future.

Point of view: But who is the narrator you may think, I know who it is because at the end of the story he says who he is, but It can be a bit confusing when you starts, because it is in first person view and 3rd here are some examples: Once upon a time it was a boy named, and Hugo could see everything. So the narrator has to be involved in the setting.

Imagery

The author uses many imageries in the book here are some examples: "You don't want ghost to chase you" – Georges says that, because he have been witnessed to a tragic accident, where his best friend died.

“Hope the snow covers my footsteps” – Georges says that, because he want to cover his past.

When Hugo follows Georges home, at that moment Hugo makes a future, because he open his doors for his life. Hugo doesn't just fix the future for himself but for Papa Georges.

Movie review

I liked the book better than the movie, because it had more details about the characters and actions. It was just over all better, because you could create your own pictures about how you think it was. The pictures in the book, made me make my own pictures in my head. That's maybe because the film disappointed me. The settings, feelings and pictures are just given to you. It destroyed everything for me. It's almost impossible to put a 526 pages long story into a 2 hours long movie. You will lose so many details and facts. This long story just doesn't really fit in a movie on 2 hours, but that's just my opinion tough.

The conclusion

The book uses pretty advanced English. I recommend you to be 10 years or older if you are going to read it. It's a bit difficult to read it has some advanced words and can be a bit hard. The author's style is pretty unique where he uses text and illustrations to tell a story, and it works very well. “Not exactly a novel, not quite a picture book, not really a graphic novel, or a flip book or a movie, but a combination of all these things” says the author. I agree with him.

The book is pretty unusual and you shall think about reading it. I recommend you to read this book because it's pretty exiting to read, and it's so unique in every way. It has some cool mysteries at the start where you wonder why and how, for example why Georges wants to cover up his past or why it stands Georges Méliès on the drawing the automaton made.

I give this book score:

7.8/10 Could maybe have more details about Hugo's uncle, and the inspector.

Sources

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The Invention of Hugo Cabret and Hugo (the movie).

