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# Serafina And The Black Cloak



## Synopsis

A brave and unusual girl named Serafina lives secretly in the basement of the grand Biltmore Estate amidst the splendor of the Gilded Age. Serafina's pa, the estate's maintenance man, has warned her to keep herself hidden from the fancy folk who live on the floors above, but when children at the estate start disappearing, Serafina and her friend Braeden Vanderbilt must work together to solve a dark and dangerous mystery. This page-turning thriller from Disney-Hyperion is a #1 New York Times Bestseller, has been on the bestsellers list for more than 50 weeks, and is already being taught in over a thousand classrooms nationwide. It also won the prestigious 2016 Pat Conroy Southern Book Prize for "representing the best in Southern literature." A blend of history, mystery, and magic, this new series has become a favorite for both adults and young readers (8+). Be sure to watch the book trailer in the media section below. "Never go into the forest, for there are many dangers there, and they will ensnare your soul." Serafina has never had a reason to disobey her pa and venture beyond the grounds of Biltmore Estate. There's plenty to explore in Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt's vast and opulent home, but she must take care to never be seen. None of the rich folk upstairs know that Serafina exists; she and her pa have lived in the basement for as long as Serafina can remember. She has learned to prowl through the darkened corridors at night, to sneak and hide, using the mansion's hidden doors and secret passageways. But when children at the estate start disappearing, only Serafina knows the clues to follow. A mysterious man in a black cloak stalks Biltmore's corridors at night. Following her own harrowing escape, Serafina risks everything by joining forces with Braeden Vanderbilt, the young nephew of Biltmore's owners. Braeden and Serafina must uncover the Man in the Black Cloak's true identity before all of the children vanish one by one. Serafina's hunt leads her into the very forest that she has been taught to fear, where she discovers a forgotten legacy of magic. In order to save the children of Biltmore, Serafina must not only face her darkest enemy, but delve into the strange mystery of her own identity.

## Customer Reviews

Gr 5-7 • A mystery set at a sumptuous estate, featuring a courageous female protagonist entangled in a hair-raising adventure. It is 1899 and 12-year-old Serafina lives with her Pa in the basement of the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC. Pa had come to Asheville years ago to help with construction and stayed on as a fixer of all things mechanical in the 250-room mansion. For reasons unknown to Serafina, they must keep their nightly lodgings in the basement a secret as

well as the existence of Serafina herself. She has developed catlike skills in exploring the vast Biltmore estate and enjoys sneaking through heating vents and other small spaces in order to eavesdrop on staff and inhabitants. Her quiet existence is shattered when she witnesses a strange man dragging a tearful young girl down into the bowels of the vast home. The man is wearing a large black cloak and reassures the young girl that everything is okay. Suddenly, the captive struggles to get away from the man and his cloak appears to come alive. It wraps itself around the terrified child as she calls out for help. Serafina is frozen with fear and before she can react, the girl has vanished. Serafina escapes, thanks to her agility, and discovers the next day that a visitor of the Vanderbilts by the name of Clara has disappeared during the night. More children disappear and it becomes increasingly obvious that Serafina's new best friend, Braeden, is the man in the black cloak's newest target. The story drips with suspense, wrapping readers into the narrative just as easily as the man in the black cloak binds his young victims. Serafina's friendship with Braeden is heartfelt and believable. The ending is tied up too neatly, but that's a minor quibble; most horror and mystery fans will enjoy this book. VERDICT A creepy, suspenseful read that's not quite as dark as the works of Neil Gaiman or Adam Gidwitz. —Julie Shatterly, W. A. Bess Elementary School, Gastonia, NC --This text refers to the Unknown Binding edition.

Winner of the 2016 Pat Conroy Southern Book Prize for representing "the best in Southern Literature." Winner of the 2016 Pat Conroy Southern Book Prize for "the best in Southern literature." #1 NEW YORK TIMES Bestseller 2016 OKRA Pick from the Southern Independent Booksellers Association (SIBA) #1 Middle Grade novel of 2015 on Goodreads.com #5 Readers Choice Award for "Best Debut Novel of 2015" Finalist for the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award, which is given to books that best exemplify the spirit of Tolkien and C.S. Lewis Recommended by A Mighty Girl, Learning Ally, School Library Journal, and many other organizations. Awarded "Best of 2015" by Powell's Bookstore Selected for "Battle of the Books" in many states. Beatty spins an enchanting mystery through lonely Serafina's golden eyes. Each new clue adds another brush stroke to this keenly perceptive portrait of a young girl searching for answers about herself and the world around her. The book leaves readers satisfied with the plot but hungry for more about its unusual heroine. Adults and children will eagerly follow Serafina from the basement into a world of self-discovery, justice, and new friendships. —Kirkus "Serafina narrates with an engaging voice that draws the reader into her world. The setting is just as engaging: the Biltmore drips with opulence and the surrounding forest with sufficient eeriness Serafina has enough mystery and fantasy (with a fair amount of creepiness) to satisfy young readers." —Historical Novel

Society

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