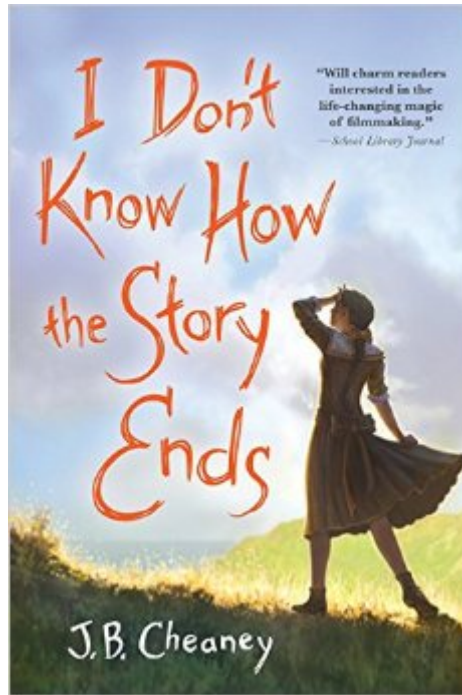


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I Don't Know How The Story Ends



Synopsis

Our story begins in a dusty little town in California, a bustling place called Hollywood... Isobel Ransom is anxious. Her father is away treating wounded soldiers in France, leaving Izzy to be the responsible one at home. But it's hard to be responsible when your little sister is chasing a fasttalking, movie-obsessed boy all over Hollywood! Ranger is directing his very own moving picture... and wants Izzy and Sylvie to be his stars. Izzy is sure Mother wouldn't approve, but scouting locations, scrounging film, and "borrowing" a camera turn out to be the perfect distractions from Izzy's worries. There's just one problem: their movie has no ending. And it has to be perfect – the kind of ending where the hero saves the day and returns home to his family. Safe and sound. It just has to. The Wild West atmosphere of early Hollywood and the home front of a country at war form a fascinating context to award-winning author J. B. Cheaney's new novel about the power of cinema in helping us make sense of an unexpected world. "I Don't Know How the Story Ends will grab you by your shirt and drop you right into the early days of Hollywood and movie making. Peopled with delightful characters who find that real life is not just like the movies, this is a funny, insightful, and touching celebration of friendship and family, the imagination, and the power of the movies." –Karen Cushman, Newbery Award-winning author of *The Midwife's Apprentice* "This book is a love letter to the art of storytelling, exploring how the creative process becomes something bigger than ourselves. It's a celebration of the way stories help us see our own lives more clearly." â • Caroline Starr Rose, author of *Blue Birds* "J. B. Cheaney masterfully combines a family's pathos in wartime, a vivid sense of old Hollywood (including appearances by the era's superstars), PLUS a suspenseful, creative adventure through an entirely new kind of storytelling: MOVING PICTURES!" –Cheryl Harness, acclaimed author of *Mary Walker Wears the Pants* and *The Literary Adventures of Washington Irving*

Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Sourcebooks Jabberwocky; Reprint edition (September 6, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1492631477

ISBN-13: 978-1492631477

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,016,665 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #79 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Performing Arts > Film #381 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 20th Century #646 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Parents

Customer Reviews

I had not heard anything about *I Don't Know How the Story Ends* before I received an opportunity, but as soon as I read a synopsis, I was intrigued. I grew up right outside Los Angeles in a Spanish style house built in 1924. I was born at Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center, and I spent six years at a girls' school in Los Feliz. Old Hollywood is part of my personal history, and I was very excited to read a story set during that formidable era. This story is a middle grade novel written by J.B. Cheaney. It takes place in 1918, and is narrated by young Isobel Ransom. Izzy travels with her mother and little sister from Washington to Hollywood to stay with her aunt while their father is serving his country as a doctor in the army. At first, Izzy is not sure what to make of her aunt's strange stepson. Ranger is full of energy, and obsessed with making movies. Filmmaking is in its infancy, and Ranger wants to be a part of it. He has a vision for a grand epic, and he has a friend who can "borrow" (a liberal use of the word) a camera. The only thing he needed was a cast, and he has his sights set on Izzy and her little sister. At first, Izzy is annoyed by Ranger's madcap ways and his persistent haranguing. But as she gives into his pleas and immerses herself in the world of filmmaking, she begins to realize what the fuss is all about. And helping Ranger provides a much-needed distraction from thinking about her father who is in France tending to injured soldiers brought back from the front. But it's difficult to think about sad things in her movie scenes when there is a very real possibility that her feigned sadness might become a reality. This was a simply marvelous book. Cheaney captures Old Hollywood perfectly. It is a bustling city that has prospered by the new movie studios, and it is mysterious and glamorous. The story is enhanced by cameos from some of the original Hollywood stars. Ranger adores D.W. Griffith and tries to emulate his filmmaking techniques. Isobel also has a chance to meet Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and even Charlie Chaplin. I would absolutely recommend *I Don't Know How the Story Ends*. This is a middle grade work of historical fiction, but there is so much that modern children can relate to, such as wanting to fit in and worrying about the future. The energetic Ranger is a nice foil for the more introspective Izzy. It was nice to see Izzy's personality change over the course of the book. I'm looking forward to sharing this book with my oldest daughter, who is just beginning to venture into the world of middle grade novels. I received a copy of

this book from the publisher in exchange for a fair/honest review

When people think of "Hollywood" these days, they think of glitz, glamour, and movie stars galore. There was a time, however, when Hollywood was a bit simpler of an operation, filled with ambitious actors/directors just looking to carve out a niche for this "newfangled device" called the motion picture. *Don't Know How The Story Ends* is a story about those times. For a basic plot summary, the book focuses on one season in the life of young Isobel Ransom. Izzy's father is off in France fighting in the Great War (WWI), so her mother decides to transplant the family closer to her roots in southern California. While there, Izzy (and younger sister Sylvie) make the acquaintance of Ranger, a boy who has big dreams of becoming a director. The gang (with the help of a semi-stolen camera from another friend) set up to create the "Great American Motion Picture" so that Ranger can (hopefully) impress his favorite director, D.W. Griffith. What they discover, however, is that life can imitate art as much as the other way around. This novel is a great YA read for two primary reasons: 1. Simply put, it's a good "dealing with war issues" read. It is very interesting to see how Izzy deals with having a parent on the front lines, as well as how it affects all the relationships around her. This plotline will immediately connect with young people who may have recently had a parent or two serving in a more current conflict. 2. Old-Hollywood is fascinating! Most of us love of a good movie, but most of us are always rather oblivious to how that movie-making process actually works. This book takes you back to the very beginning, where movies were made by scouting sets, splicing film, manual-induced sound effects (this is the Silent Era), and expressive acting. A movie set (and the process it entails) would make an exciting backdrop to nearly any story, and to see a rare glimpse into those "early years" truly is fascinating. Overall, I think that *Don't Know How The Story Ends* will be one of those rare titles that can capture a child's attention despite being set roughly 100 years in the past. Through the themes of film and war (two concepts that are just as relevant today as they were back then), author J.B. Cheaney crafts a tale that can be identified with despite that passage of time. Most of the characters are children in those book, so its primary audience will obviously be YA, but even adults can read and appreciate the deeper themes brought on by discussions of war and how it affects family life.

I really thought this was a pretty good little story for YA. It may be a little juvenile for adults, but I enjoyed it. Not only was it a story, but it taught a little lesson there at the end. And it name drops some of the biggest names prior to talkies that were icons of the big screen. It was written well and I

liked the characters. Someone should have hogtied that little sister though, boy is she a hand full. I am now kicking myself that I didn't request the other book this author wrote when I had the chance, something about someone will be famous on this bus or something like that. I won't be passing up anymore of this author's books in the future, that's for sure. I definitely recommend this one. Thanks Sourcebooks and Net Galley for the free e-galley in exchange for an honest review!

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