



Cici's Journal: The Adventures of a Writer-In-Training

Joris Chamblain, Aurélie Neyret (Illustrations)

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Cici dreams of being a novelist. Her favorite subject: people, especially adults. She's been watching them and taking notes. Everybody has one special secret, Cici figures, and if you want to write about people, you need to understand what's hiding inside them. But now she's discovered something truly strange: an old man who disappears into the forest every Sunday with huge pots of paint in all sorts of colors. What is he up to? Why does he look so sad when he comes back?

In a graphic novel interwoven with journal notes, scrapbook pieces, and doodles, Cici assembles clues about the odd and wonderful people she's uncovered, even as she struggles to understand the mundane: her family and friends.

Cici's Journal: The Adventures of a Writer-In-Training Details

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Author : Joris Chamblain , Aurélie Neyret (Illustrations)

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From Reader Review Cici's Journal: The Adventures of a Writer-In-Training for online ebook

cookiemonger says

The art is lovely and it's a nice idea, but overall it lacks substance. The writing is only 'okay' and it manages to take a pretty basic premise and deliver a muddy execution.

While reading, I couldn't help wondering who this book is for. There are some things that seem like they might relate to girls this age in general, but they don't go deep enough to hit the mark. Difficulty getting along with parents? Cici lies to her mother for no reason beyond a frustratingly vague "It's too hard to talk to her" that explains nothing. So lazy. Fighting with friends? Her friends (eventually) express unhappiness with the disgraceful way Cici treats them, their attempts to make up are rebuffed, and yet she reconciles in a token effort a few pages from the end. There's no reason to side with Cici, and this kind of story really needs some bond between reader and protagonist.

The book doesn't seem to be for aspiring young writers, either. Unless maybe they're aspiring to be investigative journalists. Cici spies on people, lies to them, enlists others to lie for her, and keeps a journal. But the word 'journalist' isn't used, so I'm going to assume that isn't the intention. I picked this up thinking she wanted to be a novelist. She doesn't act like she even reads novels. In fact, Cici doesn't seem to have much of an imagination. She also never writes anything but her journal, and (supposedly) writing exercises given to her by the actual writer character Mrs Flores.

For me, the major giveaway that Cici doesn't actually want to be a novelist was when Mrs Flores took inspiration from Cici's first adventure and wrote and published a novel based on those events. Cici's reaction was to be honoured. Didn't Cici want to write it? Wouldn't that have been the point of investigating her mystery? Is she just a nosy person who digs into the painful pasts of the elderly because she doesn't have any other hobbies?

It's a shame, because the book looks fantastic. The art style is beautiful and full of energy. It imbues the characters with personality. The mix of comic panels and a journal with newspaper cutouts, photos, and stylised child drawings is fun to read and looks lovely.

Hilary says

I expected to like this more than I did. I liked the idea of an adventurous girl, investigating mysteries and keeping a journal in the hope of becoming a writer. There are two stories in this book, I felt the second story worked better. The graphic novel story parts of the book about Cici didn't seem to fit well with the pages that were her journal.

I didn't really like the relationship Cici had with her friends, it didn't seem a positive relationship which I agree not all friendships are. I felt slightly uncomfortable about some of the storyline about Cici and her mother. Several times Cici, lies to her mum about where she is going so she can go to lonely places to investigate odd happenings, she also gets her friends to lie about her whereabouts as she is putting herself in potentially dangerous situations that her mum wouldn't let her be in if she knew. I wondered if this was a good thing to portray in a story about a 10 yr old which will be read by similar aged girls?

Rod Brown says

I know I'm not the target audience, but, boy did this book actively annoy me.

Cici is an obnoxious little busybody who lies constantly, stalks elderly people, and treats her friends like crap or simply uses them in whatever way is convenient for her. As one of her friends sums up, "We don't matter to her...She spends all her time spying on people and meddling in their lives instead of playing with us..." There is an attempt to reform Cici by the end of the book, but it all comes off as too little too late.

And it is repetitive that both stories collected in this book rely on old people who are incredibly obsessed and abandoned areas that are nearly forgotten: a defunct zoo and a giant room in a library left untouched for 30 years because, you know, libraries are never hurting for space.

Not good.

Luki Susantini says

Cici's Journal by Jors Chamblain - Aurelie Neyret.

I am in love with this graphic novel!, ohh please do..recommend me another graphic novel, as now I am so in the mood for another one ❤️?. This graphic novel is about Cici, a ten and half years old, whom always dream to be a novelist. She love to write. So her mother give her a journal so she can keep her findings from her everyday advantures.

So Cici started to observe people, imagine their lives and maybe reveal their secrets. When she meet people, she always try to dig out that "thing". But digging to other people lives sometime put her in danger and not to forget, she has to lie to her mother about what she do everyday. Because, can even her mother understand that ?. I love the story, it is so deep, especially when you want to be a writer, this book is for you. 4???? read for me ❤️. #cicisjournal #graphicnovel #bookstagram #instabooks #booktography #bibliophile #booknerd #bookaholic #yabooks #yafiction #bookshelfie #booklover #bookish #bookworm #bookstagramfeature #bookishmerchandise#bookstagramindonesia #bookish_indonesia

Kailey (BooksforMKs) says

Cici loves a good mystery! When she and her friends see an old man lugging paint cans through the forest, Cici will do anything to unravel the enigma of the painter. But when she ignores her friends, lies to her mother, and takes advantage of her writing mentor, Cici could lose everyone she loves if she doesn't learn to curb her wild curiosity.

This edition includes volumes 1-2 of Cici's story.

I adore the beautiful illustrations with soft colors and clean lines. Every page is gorgeous, and I read it slowly so that I could enjoy each panel.

Cici's story is imaginative and whimsical. The plot is interesting and charming, with lots of varied characters. It's such a sweet story of friendship, reclaiming the past, and learning to trust.

I love that Cici is initially intrigued by the mystery, but then she truly wants to help people and make their lives better. She has a generous heart, but her actions are sometimes misplaced. She has such great character development!

Amanda says

Oh my, I loved this! I could tell it would be my type of book when I read the dedication "to the little hidden message that slept for fifty years in a treasure chest, before a little boy could discover it..." Makes me want to leave secret messages for my descendants to find, I love this kind of stuff! Plus Cici is an aspiring writer who ferrets out the mysteries around her like Harriet the Spy, and the second story involves a library and secrets from the past. It felt a little like The Shadow of the Wind for kids!

The art is so so pretty, with beautiful colors and picturesque landscapes of Cici's French village and countryside. The overall page layouts are very well-done, with innovative paneling and a mix of scrapbook and (drawn) photos giving it a handmade look. My favorite pieces are the chapter title pages, gorgeous summations of each story in one color theme.

It also made me so happy to be a librarian! I was practically bawling reading the story that revolved around a library book, it was so beautiful. ? (The young librarian in this was also my retro style ideal for the profession--such cute outfits and hair!) I sincerely hope First Second will continue to publish the other volumes of this French treasure, or I may need to try tackling the foreign editions with my rusty language skills!

Fran says

Cici loves to read novels, comics, and science magazines. She would like to be a writer. Mrs. Forbes, Cici's former teacher, is now a local author. Mrs. Forbes begins to mentor Cici with meet-ups and suggested writing exercises to fuel Cici's burgeoning interest.

Mrs. Forbes recommends that Cici start with a personal diary or journal. She is encouraged to observe people, imagine their lives, guess their innermost feelings, then create an adventure for them. First, however, one must conduct an investigation.

Mrs. Forbes explains that a writer must gather the facts, conduct interviews, then search for clues trying to find a lead, perhaps, something unexpected. Cici, with the help of friends and cohorts Erica and Lena, become sleuths. Cici records her observations in her journal, draws picture clues, lists the character traits of her two friends and discusses the spin she will concoct to get Mom's approval to conduct her queries. The tome consists of two tales. Every Sunday, an old man disappears into the woods with his parrot Captain Flint. He carries two heavy paint cans. Later, he returns covered in paint. In the second tale, an old lady visits the local library every week requesting the same book. Why doesn't she just buy the book? Cici will look for clues to discover the real person inside each of these characters.

Through the use of journal entries, drawings and newspaper clippings, alternating with a comic book presentation of Cici's interaction with her mom, Mrs. Forbes and friends Erica and Lena, the reader will catch a glimpse of the power of observation and the tricks involved in storytelling. Author Chamblain touches upon the importance of maintaining friendships and being truthful and forthright to parents and teachers.

"Cici's Journal: The Adventures of a Writer-In-Training" was a most enjoyable read. Author Joris Chamblain and illustrator Aurelie Neyret have created a magical learning experience for middle school readers and budding writers.

Thank you First Second Books and Net Galley for the opportunity to read and review "Cici's Journal".

Schizanthus says

I feel like cheating with this review and just telling you to check out the review Lola wrote, which you can find here: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...> Thank you Lola for already articulating so well what I wanted to say. ?

So, onto my ramble.

I quite liked the stories of Mr Mysterious in Part One and Ms Mysterious in Part Two. The initially unseen depth of their sweet but sad stories were unexpected, although to be completely honest I felt Cici had no business playing Nancy Drew and interfering in their lives in the first place.

I loved Cici's inquisitive nature but wasn't a fan of the sneaky way she went about her investigations. I loved that she cares about people and wants to help once she solves their 'mystery' and understands what she can do to help (not that she was asked to help in the first place) but I hated that she spends the rest of her time lying to her mother and using her friends.

Because Cici is so Cici-centric all we know about one of her friends until the very end is that they are a whinger. Seriously, would you want to be friends with someone who can only describe you as a complainer, even if they're right? It's not that I hated Cici. A lot of the time I found her endearing and sweet but she really irritated me too. Thankfully she does learn lessons along the way about the way she's treated her friends and mother.

My brain went a little nutty during the first story when all of the kids are lying to their parents and sneaking off to go hang out in the middle of the bush with a strange old man. Granted, he was a lovely but sad old man and I doubt he would slap a mosquito actively draining all of his blood. He could've been a creepy old man though. I know it's just a story but my adult brain is practically hyperventilating (no, I don't know how that's physically possible either) at the thought of sending a message that it's okay to lie to your parents to secretly meet a stranger in a remote location! Nuttiness aside, I adored the old man in the first story. He was an absolute sweetheart.

Naturally I loved that the scene of the second 'mystery' was the local library. Woohoo! Cici manages to solve Ms Mysterious' mystery the first time she checked out the book that Ms Mysterious has been checking out every week for many years (of course). There's no romantic hiding in the depths of my icy cold heart but I admit I really liked the love story of Ms Mysterious and her beau.

The illustrations were gorgeous and I loved the soft warm colours used throughout the book. The layout was really well done, with layers showing crayons, pencils (with pencil shavings) and pens laying on top of pages in Cici's journal that made it seem as though the reader is peeking over her shoulder at the page she's working on. She's also pasted in relevant bits and pieces, including postcards from her friends, newspaper articles, letters and photos. The creativity of telling the story through graphic novel format interspersed with journal entries and drawings makes this visually a really interesting book.

I wouldn't mind revisiting this book again in a few months. I wonder even as I'm writing this if I've been a bit harsh on Cici's Cici-centricity. I'm interested to know if I'll find her more endearing and less irritating next time. I hope so because the stories are quite good. I'd probably give the stories alone 3.5 stars but because I loved the illustrations so much I'm rounding up.

Melki says

Cici is a young, would-be writer who loves to solve mysteries . . . very mild mysteries like where does that man go everyday with all those paint cans, and why does the old lady keep checking the same book out of the library. I'm guessing some readers will find this rather dull, but I was hooked.

This was translated from a French series, and the artwork has a charming, very European feel to it.

Most enjoyable.

Alyson (Kid Lit Frenzy) says

Mystery, friendship, conflict resolution, writing....so much going on (in a good way) with this graphic novel.

Kim says

THIS is why I continue to read books out of my comfort zone. I am not a fan of either Middle-Grade books or Graphic novels and this book fits solidly in both of those categories, but it was a surprisingly moving and entertaining. The emotions illustrated on the faces were palpable. Of course I sympathized with the adults of the book, but unlike many MG novels I've read lately it doesn't paint the adults as bumbling idiots or unemotional authoritarians. It shows both sides of the story while still focusing on Cici and her adventures. It is a beautifully illustrated story inter-cut with Cici's journal pages. I cried--yes I cried reading this book. When I finished, I handed it to my 3rd grade daughter and said to her for the first time in my life, "You have to read this book! It's amazing!"

Lola says

3.5 stars.

A lovely book for young readers.

The illustrations are incredible. Actually, it's the colouring that makes them so exceptional. If they had been in black and white, they would still have been charming, but not this admirable, so the colours the colourist used made all the difference here.

Cici wants to become a writer, because she loves stories. She especially loves to find stories in people she doesn't know—people she describes as being “mysterious”. She's a young detective, but without the dangerous, reckless side.

There are two “mystery” cases in this graphic novel, as it combines the first two volumes in the *Les Carnets de Cerise* series, translated from French. The first one is the best. It is so unexpected and heart-warming that I have to applaud it. The second one, however, is less so. While still charming, it felt like the type of story I've heard many times before.

And I couldn't process why the sad old lady didn't just buy a copy of the book. Seems to me like she wouldn't have to take the bus so often or worry about the book ever leaving her side.

It has a “young vibe,” that's undeniable. I was bothered by the role Cici's friends played, and so were they by the way. Your friends shouldn't exist as planets to your sun. It shouldn't be all about Cici, but it is. Cici and her mystery cases, that is.

On the other hand, Cici is adventurous, creative, smart, warm and determined, qualities worth recognizing. She made the story interesting, because she herself was interested in the world around her and looked at it in a unique light.

So I enjoyed it, but I am expecting more teamwork in the future. After all, even the best of writers collaborate, don't they? And if her friends don't want to jump into her adventures all the time, perhaps she could meet someone who shares this passion of hers?

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Harker says

Cici dreams of being a famous writer someday, a novelist maybe! To start out, though, she's practicing by journaling like a reporter and finding mysteries in her small town.

The construction of the book was a fun amalgamation of comic book panels, handwritten journal entries, and photographs. Since this was an arc there were some panels that were harder to see than others, such as the photographs, but the general layout gave a good impression of what the book would look like in its final form. Neyret's artwork was very bright in its panels, eye catching and soft around the edges. My favorite scenes were the library panels from the second story. There was a magical quality to the different sections of the library, from the children's shelves to the history section.

As for the characters, Cici was difficult to like as a main character. As good as a spy as she thought she was, her skills of observation needed a lot of work. She wasn't trustworthy either, constantly lying to her mother and her friends and never suffering any consequences for those actions (another thing that frustrated me - Cici never got in trouble for anything).

Erica, one of Cici's best friends, seemed like the voice of reason in their small group. While Cici badmouthed her quite a bit, saying nearly every time she spoke about Erica that all she did was complain, Erica had good reason to say the things she did about Cici. How she kept asking them to lie, how she needed them as cover stories, things like that. I understood why she got angry at Cici and why they finally fought near the end of the book.

Cici doesn't always have the best decision making skills. Her friendship with Ms. Flores at the onset of the book from Cici's perspective is a close one, but in her own words she doesn't know much about Ms. Flores, her mother doesn't like that she hangs out with her so much, and she has to lie to her mother about the amount of time she spends at the Flores house. That struck me as really strange, especially since this book seems to take place in the present. I think the story as a whole, from the zoo in the first story onward, would have worked better in an earlier time period, perhaps in that of Kit the American Girl or Harriet the Spy. The liberties of their time periods would have melded better

There was something about Cici's voice that I found hard to really like. The way that she communicated throughout her journal entries, the way she thought, these passages all sounded like the way an adult thought a ten-year-old child would say things or think things rather than the way such a child would actually say or think. Her voice, the writing behind it, wasn't wholly believable. It wasn't a painful interpretation, but it wasn't as good as it could have been.

Cici's Journal might be suited to a young crowd that won't pick at the story lines as I have or character building, but I'm not sure they'll be wholly satisfied with the characters having little to no consequences and disregard for friendships.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

First Second Books says

Cici dreams of being a novelist. Her favorite subject: people, especially adults. She's been watching them and taking notes. Cici's Journal is interwoven with journal notes, scrapbook pieces, and doodles, Cici assembles clues about the odd and wonderful people she's uncovered, even as she struggles to understand the mundane: her family and friends.

Christoph says

Ooookay, gleich vorweg - das war so gar nicht mein Inhalt. Man möge mir den Vergleich verzeihen, aber mich erinnerte so manches hier an diese lieblichen Mädchenmagazine. Der Inhalt, also die Geschichte selbst war leichfüßig erzählt, die Charaktere sehr liebevoll gezeichnet und mit vereinzelten klischee-elementen gewürzt, wo es notwendig erschien um dem Publikum die Möglichkeit der Identifizierung zu geben ... und vielleicht bin's ich, aber mir kam es so vor, dass das gewünschte Publikum das Teenager-Mädchen ist.

Damit war ich draussen ... und mich hielt nur mehr aufrecht, dass die Gestaltung und die grafische Darbietung, so wie zu Beginn erkannt, sehr detailverliebt und verspielt gemacht wurde. Von Tagebuchseiten,

die an allen Ecken kleine Doodles hatten bis zu den schön gezeichneten Panels. Gestehe, dass ich mir gegen Ende mehr die Bilder als den Text reingezogen habe; was für mich eher untypisch ist.

Aus meiner Sicht eine ganz große Empfehlung für das jugendliche Zielpublikum. Schöne Geschichten, grafisch toll in Szene gesetzt und man darf diese leichfüßigen alltagstauglichen Abenteuer von Cici miterleben, wenn nicht sogar im eigenen Alltag nachspielen. :)
