

Title: *Little Thieves*
Author: Margaret Owen
Genre: Fantasy

Reviewer Name and Grade: Shan (Niko) L., 9th Grade

Date Reviewed: May 31, 2022

This book is a plot-twist filled thriller, that takes place in a fantastical country called Minkja. This takes place in a medieval world, with mythical gods and creatures running amok. The main character, named Vanja, is the goddaughter of Death and Fortune, two powerful goddesses. As Vanja's godmothers send her to become the maid of a princess, she learns that she must become one of the god's servants. But Vanja doesn't want that so she learns about many things; including how to bluff, lie, and steal. The main story starts as a normal one would, from the point of view of the princess, Gisele, except the princess isn't really the princess. Vanja has stolen her identity, and is stealing from the nobles around the country. But she makes the wrong choice, and steals a token for one of the Low Gods. The God curses her to slowly turn into jewels from her greed, since she has stolen many things, including someone's life. Though she tries many things she can;t see to figure out how to break the curse yet.

Since Vanja was abused from a young age because the daughter of a countess didn't like her, she grew up to hate nobles and their stuck-up nature. She doesn't like being used, and uses fake personalities and identities to hide from the past. As Vanja acts as the princess, Gisele, a miad, Martha, and the thief, the Pennigeist, she does everything in her power to become independent from her godmothers. There are many obstacles in her path, such as Emeric, a prefect detective that is trying to hunt down the thief, and the princess' fiance, Adalbrecht. She almost gets caught by the prefect, and hates her fiance. Through the many hardships that Vanja faces, she learns more about how the world works, and how she affects it. The difficulties show how doing everything by yourself may not be the right option every time.

Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?

The plot of this book did keep me interested, but sometimes it got a bit boring as it goes into detail about the city details, random characters, and other things I usually find not as important as the author lays it out to be.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

The plot moved slowly, as the intricacies of the many different characters mindset's and personalities are exposed. Even though it takes place over the span of two weeks, it feels like it takes months as the emotions and thoughts are deeply explained and expressed.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

This book is appropriate for people above grade 7, since there is a lot of confusing language that you have to get used to, and the plot gets very confusing. It is very easy to get lost in what is happening during the duration of the story.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I recommend this book to readers who enjoy a long story that deeply involves the feelings and emotions of the characters, rather than the action points of a story. This isn't as much an action story as a drama, though there are quite a bit of eventful points.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

This book is a great read if you love fantasy drama's, but I wouldn't read it if you have trouble with vocabulary or a hard-to-follow plot.

Rating:

4 stars. I think this was a great book with an interesting plot, but there was almost too much detail in the settings as opposed to the plot, especially in the beginning. It was also a bit confusing at times, if you've just started and don't know the background of the characters.

Reviewer Name and Grade: Amanda L., 8th Grade

Date Reviewed: January 13, 2023

The novel *Little Thieves* takes place in a magical land that houses many creatures and gods. The cunning and independent main character Vanja Schidmt was abandoned by her mother when she was young and taken in by the gods Death and Fortune. After realizing a human could not survive in their world, they sent her to become a servant for Princess Gisele. During her time there Vanja was abused by Gisele's parents and developed a deep hatred for the wealthy. Then on her 13th birthday Gisele is betrothed to the tyrant Reignbarg and Vanja is told she must go with Gisele. In an effort to escape from another cruel master she steals Princess Gisele's identity using an enchanted pearl necklace, leaving Gisele on the streets. She also becomes the Penny Phantom, a notorious jewel thief. Using the money gained by her thefts, she plans to move far away and start a new life.

The book begins when Vanja is nearly 17. She has almost accumulated enough money to run away. Then one day she steals a ring made by the god Eiswald and is cursed to slowly turn into gemstones as punishment for her greed. The only way to break this curse is to "make up for what you have stolen" before the full moon rises. Eiswald also sends her shapeshifter daughter Ragne to assist Vanja. In an effort to break the curse, Vanja seeks out Gisele to give her identity back. At the same time Prefect Emeric (who works as a detective) is investigating the Penny Phantom and is getting dangerously close to exposing Vanja. Furthermore, Vanja discovers a sinister plan engineered by Reignbarg. With Emeric, Ragne, Gisele, and a little help from Death and Fortune, Vanja must overthrow Reignbarg and break the curse. Along the way she learns what it means to be selfless and kind.

Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?

Yes, the plot was action packed and interesting. There were a lot of mini plots and conflicts that kept me captivated while still furthering the plot.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

I think the pace of the book was a little too slow. The author sometimes included confusing information or words that could have been simplified, however this book was still a good read.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

I would recommend this book to high schoolers, or grades 9-12.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this to people who like fantasy or romance novels.

5 stars

Even though it was a bit confusing at first, I thought this was a really good read and I enjoyed the plot. I liked the character development of all the characters and how they learned from each other as each person had very different backgrounds.