



The Cavendish Home for Boys and Girls

By Claire Legrand

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At the Cavendish Home for Boys and Girls, you will definitely learn your lesson. An atmospheric, heartfelt, and delightfully spooky novel for fans of *Coraline*, *Splendors and Glooms*, and *The Mysterious Benedict Society*.

Victoria hates nonsense. There is no need for it when your life is perfect. The only smudge on her pristine life is her best friend Lawrence. He is a disaster—lazy and dreamy, shirt always untucked, obsessed with his silly piano. Victoria often wonders why she ever bothered being his friend. (Lawrence does, too.)

But then Lawrence goes missing. And he's not the only one. Victoria soon discovers that The Cavendish Home for Boys and Girls is not what it appears to be. Kids go in but come out...different. Or they don't come out at all.

If anyone can sort this out, it's Victoria—even if it means getting a little messy.

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The Cavendish Home for Boys and Girls By Claire Legrand Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 5-8-A paradigm of perfection—with straight As, gleaming blond curls, and an unshakable sense of purpose—12-year-old Victoria expects everything and everyone to be just so. Friends are particularly messy, so she has opted to have only one. Lawrence is a disheveled, music-loving dreamer whom she views as a "personal project" in need of fixing. When Lawrence goes missing, Victoria investigates and soon unearths dreadful secrets lurking beneath the surface of her picture-perfect community. The adults are behaving oddly, numerous children have disappeared, and nasty creepy-crawlies are popping up everywhere. Victoria's sleuthing leads her to the local orphanage and into the flawlessly manicured grasps of Mrs. Cavendish, the malevolent, magic-using headmistress who snatches less-than-perfect children from their homes and reforms them through a nightmare-inducing regime of physical and psychological punishments. Once Victoria uncovers the awful truth, she must face her own greatest fears—and also learn to reach out to others—to save the day. Beginning with the uneasy realization that things are not quite right, gradually incorporating disquieting discoveries, and escalating into full-out horror (the children are fed chopped-up body-part casseroles), the suspense and sense of dread build to the satisfying (and also unsettling) conclusion. Shadow-filled black-and-white illustrations and the occasional bug scampering across the text intensify the eeriness. Insidiously creepy, searingly sinister, and spine-tinglingly fun, this book also presents a powerful message about friendship and the value of individuality.—Joy Fleishhacker, School Library Journal
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From [Booklist](#)

The town of Belleville likes things to be perfect, and no one is more in agreement than 12-year-old Victoria: perfect student, perfect daughter. She takes on a fellow classmate—the imperfect Lawrence—as a project, but he's also her only friend, so when he disappears, the determined Victoria sets out to find him. She knows where to look, too: the home for orphan boys and girls run by the seemingly sweet but truly diabolical Mrs. Cavendish. First-time author Legrand sets everything up beautifully, but once Victoria gets scooped up by Mrs. Cavendish, the story descends into something more ugly than scary, especially when Victoria is thrown into the "hanger" to be assaulted with disgusting bugs and sad visions. Nor do the reasons for Mrs. Cavendish's actions ever make much sense. Even sadists usually have a story they tell to justify themselves. Still, this has many of the elements that endeared readers to books like Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988) and Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* titles. It's also a handsome piece of bookmaking, with the art adding much to the package. Grades 4-7. --Ilene Cooper

Review

"The combination of the Stepford-like town and the atmospheric home provide a deliciously creepy backdrop to this precise blend of dark humor and genuine horror. . . . Victoria is . . . oddly endearing, and readers with their own color-coordinated planners will thrill to see her leadership skills and sheer determination save the day." (*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*)

The Cavendish Home for Boys and Girls is weirdly charming and creepy. I loved the intrepid girl hero Victoria and her determination to save her best friend from the scariest Home ever. An enormously fun--and shivery--read. (Sarah Prineas, author of *The Magic Thief* series)

"A heartwarming friendship tale—played out amid carpets of chittering insects, torture both corporal and psychological, the odd bit of cannibalism and like ghoulish delights. A thoroughgoing ickfest, elevated by vulnerable but resilient young characters and capped by a righteously ominous closing twist." (*Kirkus*,

starred review)

" The too-serene-to-be-true town of Belleville harbors some creepy secrets in Legrand's debut, a sinister and occasionally playful tale of suspense. Legrand gives Victoria's mission a prickly energy, and her descriptions of the sighing, heaving home—a character in itself—are the stuff of bad dreams. Watts's b&w illustrations of spindly characters, cryptic shadows, and cramped corridors amplify the unsettling ambiance, and her roach motif may have readers checking their arms." (*Publisher's Weekly*)

"Insidiously creepy, searingly sinister, and spine-tinglingly fun, this book also presents a powerful message about friendship and the value of individuality." (*Joy Fleishhacker School Library Journal*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Steven Maravilla:

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Janet Magnuson:

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Virginia Combs:

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