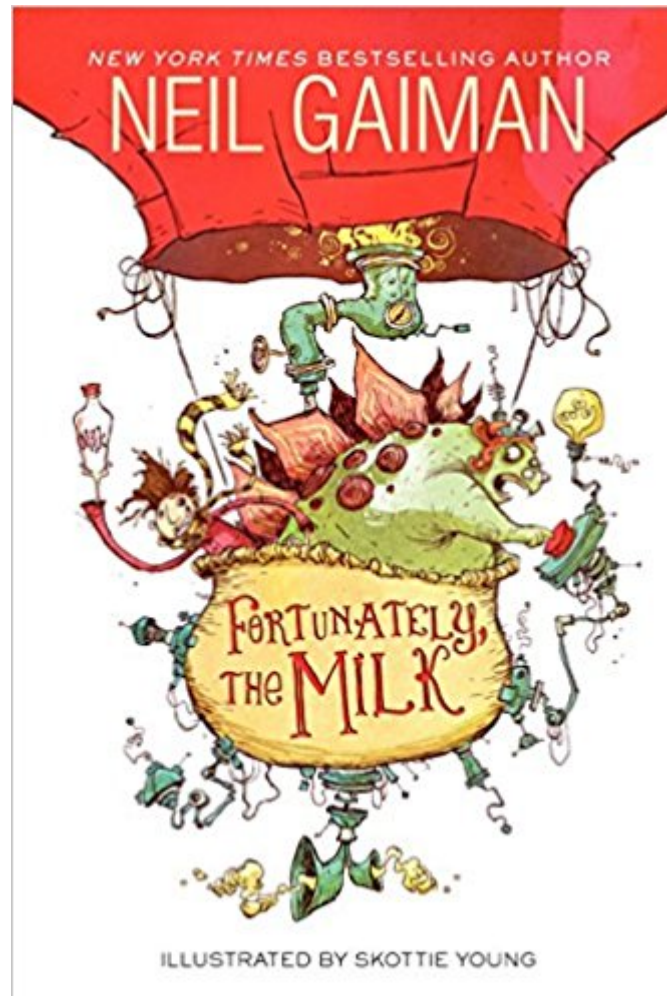




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Fortunately, The Milk



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Synopsis

"I bought the milk," said my father. "I walked out of the corner shop, and heard a noise like this: t h u m m t h u m m. I looked up and saw a huge silver disc hovering in the air above Marshall Road." "Hullo," I said to myself. "That's not something you see every day. And then something odd happened." Find out just how odd things get in this hilarious New York Times bestselling story of time travel and breakfast cereal, expertly told by Newbery Medalist and bestselling author Neil Gaiman and illustrated by Skottie Young.

Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Gr 3-6-A tale of the bravery and selflessness exhibited by a father taking care of his children while his wife is away. Despite Mom's advance warning, the family finds itself ready for breakfast but without milk for cereal and tea, so Dad takes a trip to the store to get some. Upon his long-awaited return, he gives the children a fantastical and descriptive explanation of the adventures he faced while trying to make it back home. Not only did he embark on a time-traveling hot-air balloon ride with a stegosaurus, but he also confronted pirates, aliens, wumpires, and a volcano god, never losing possession of the milk. Gaiman knocks it out of the park again with this imaginative story. His outrageous plot is perfectly paced to keep advanced and reluctant readers enthralled, and his use

of onomatopoeia and humorous descriptions will make the book hard to put down. Reminiscent of Roald Dahl's titles, it will sweep children away into an unimagined world and make them wonder if their own parents have ever had any secret adventures. Young's frequent black-and-white cartoons add to the wackiness of this tall tale. -Amy Shepherd, St. Anne's Episcopal School, Middleton, DE
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A little boy and his little sister awake one morning, milkless. Their mother is away on business, their father is buried in the paper, and their Toastios are dry. What are young siblings to do? They impress upon their father that his tea is also without milk and sit back to watch their plan take effect. But something goes amiss, and their father doesn't return and doesn't return some more. When he does, finally, he has a story to tell, a story involving aliens; pirates; ponies; wumpires (not the handsome, brooding kind); and a stegosaurus professor who pilots a Floaty-Ball-Person-Carrier (which looks suspiciously like a hot-air balloon). There is time travel, treachery, and ample adventure, and, fortunately, the milk he has procured is rescued at every turn. Gaiman's oversized, tongue-in-cheek narrative twists about like the impromptu nonsense it is, with quick turns, speed bumps, and one go-for-broke dairy deus ex machina. Young fills the pages with sketchy, highly stylized images, stretched and pointy, bringing the crazed imaginations to life with irrepressible energy. Children will devour this one, with or without milk. HIGH-DEMAND
BACKSTORY: A national media campaign and select author appearances are on the docket to celebrate the release of Newbery Award-winning Gaiman's latest. Grades 3-6. --Thom Barthelmess

A busy week had kept me from Gmail's PROMOTIONS section. The 100 messages it contained included one announcing a new Neil Gaiman book. I couldn't not look. For a lovely surprise, the Kindle edition (\$7.99, I think, in the announcement) showed up at \$4.49 today. I couldn't not buy. Quick summary: A story-in-a-story tall tale (think "To Think that I Saw it on Mulberry Street" for older kids (the publisher says ages 8-12; I'd guess that read-alouds could go to 6)), without rhyme, with a better resolution, and with dinosaurs, outer space snot-monsters, pirates, wumpires, a volcano god, cameos for pirahnas and horses with stars on their sides, and a giant-sized slew of temporo-spatial paradoxes. I read it 1 1/4 times, backing up to the start when Larry looked at my screen to see why I was laughing. (He laughed, too.) The narrator, a boy who's probably about 8 or 9 years old but is never identified by age or name (though we see his picture) and his kid sister are

home with their dad while their mom goes off on a trip to present a paper about lizards. The morning after her departure, they have a problem: "We can't eat our cereal," said my sister, sadly. "I don't see why not," said my father. "We've got plenty of cereal. There's Toastios and there's muesli. We have bowls. We have spoons. Spoons are excellent. Sort of like forks, only not as stabby." "No milk," I said. So he heads off to the corner store for milk. Most of the story is his explanation of why that takes ages and ages. As I mentioned, we both laughed. Many times. I haven't yet mentioned the lovely and intricate cartoons by Skottie Young that illustrate the book, or the occasionally intricate and almost always funny sentences, such as the opening "There was only orange juice in the fridge. Nothing else that you could put on cereal, unless you think that ketchup or mayonnaise or pickle juice would be nice on your Toastios, which I do not, and neither did my little sister, although she has eaten some pretty weird things in her day, like mushrooms in chocolate." *Not to mention simpler sentences such as "How does a volcano know so much about transtemporal meta-science?" asked one of the pale green aliens. So yeah, I liked it. Loved it. If I had relatives or friends with kids between 6 and 10, I'd buy it for them in a flash. *The real footnote got my first laugh.

I think the publisher should immediately print up some "Fortunately, the Milk" t-shirts with a logo and the quote, "Where There's Milk, There's Hope!" I only love me some Neil Gaiman (comics, novels, short stories AND, best of all, children's books -- prose type or picture books, doesn't matter). I enjoyed the hell out of OCEAN AT THE END OF THE LANE, and I thought CHU'S DAY OUT was so cute I bought a copy for a friend, but my pick for BEST NEIL GAIMAN BOOK OF 2013 (and maybe the best book of the century) is definitely, FORTUNATELY, THE MILK. Personally, I LOVE the Chris Riddell illustrations in the British edition the most (the U.S. version, I have a copy of each, is illustrated by Skottie Young, and those illustrations are wild and fun in their own right). This book has been on the (Middle age Children's) NYTimes bestseller list for two months and counting and deservedly so! It's just whimsical as hell, and does a great job displaying both the sense of wonder and the craft inherent in the act of story-telling. My daughter -- who read it after me -- swears Mr. Gaiman has been following me around for the last decade or so (apparently I, too, stop and talk to local shop persons and even strangers, often returning HOURS after I'm expected back; and I seem to have a propensity for telling whoppers). I don't want to dissect it any further, because that would be like pulling the wings off of a mayfly, but I would like to say that I only loved Prof. Steg and the Wumpires. And I only love those last lines from dad, about how he can prove it all really happened. :) Now, I must traverse the staircase in our home, past Australio-pithecine-like spiders, being careful not to awaken the six-foot plus Kangaroo which often sleeps near our doorstep at nights (we call

him Kongaroo) and go in search of something to drink. Fortunately, there's chocolate milk in the fridge.

My daughter calls this the "best book EVER!" and that's all I needed to know to want to read it myself. After I bought this from (she initially read it as a library book), she immediately started reading it again. After she was asleep, I started reading it, and I have to agree with her assessment. This is a lovely book. The characters' voices come through very well. (My daughter told me that you could tell they were English because they called their mother "Mum.") And, there are lots of great illustrations. (Another important factor for a 3rd/4th grader!) I bought several of Gaiman's other children's books because this one was so great!!

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