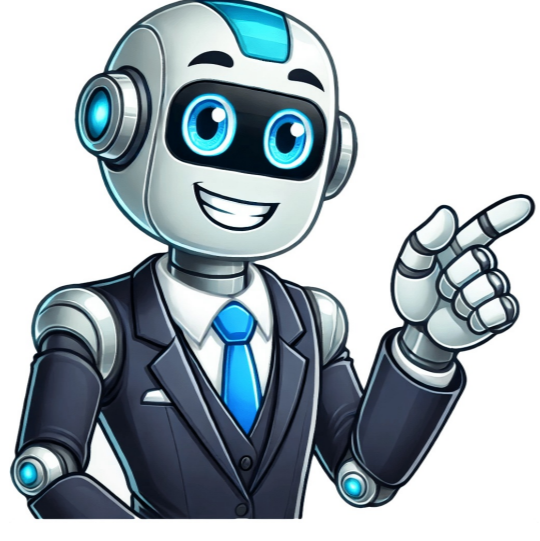


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## The land of stories an author's odyssey

Olivia's Review: Eagerly anticipated this installment, it did not disappoint. Characters were spot-on, with Connor's imagination bringing his stories to life and reflecting the Bailey twins' adventures. Humorous and fast-paced writing kept me engaged throughout. The plot was exciting and suspenseful, perfect for kids of all ages. Oscar's Review: This book is amazing! Every chapter had unexpected twists that made my heart sink. I loved this book so much but have little to say about it because I love it that much. Most readers will adore this series as they did the first four books. A huge twist increased suspense and excitement levels tenfold. Reluctant readers will also enjoy it as it's an action-packed fantasy story that pulls you in from the start. The fifth book in Chris Colfer's Land of Stories series, *An Author's Odyssey*, takes 15-year-old Conner on a journey into his own short stories to save the fairy tale world. With twin sister Alex, he encounters pirates, cyborgs, and superheroes. A race against time ensues as dark forces move to destroy everything in the fairy tale world. The series is perfect for fans of tales with a twist, offering a wonderful message about writing and creativity. Colfer's latest installment in the series is a masterclass in storytelling, weaving together humor, meta commentary, and heartwarming reflections on family dynamics. As Alex navigates her fictional world, she encounters a cast of characters both familiar and new, including a band of female pirates, a cyborg collector Queen, and a young archaeologist traveling by blimp. The story is filled with tropes, puns, and adventure, making it a delightful antidote to the darkness of our world. Colfer's writing shines in his portrayal of sibling relationships, parental worry, and the power of imagination. With nods to amateur theatrics and Conner's previous stories, this collection is both nostalgic and fresh. The fan-favorite Book Huggers return, adding their unique brand of obsession and affectionate teasing to the narrative. Ultimately, *An Author's Odyssey* is an inspiring message about embracing creativity and finding one's own voice as a writer. The fifth installment in Chris Colfer's #1 New York Times bestselling series *The Land of Stories* is a confident continuation that showcases the potential of Book 1 to develop into an epic fantasy adventure. With its meta twist, this book offers a masterclass in writing across different genres and prompts while providing supportive messages about self-confidence along the way. A treasure trove of creative and hilarious moments awaits readers as they embark on a thrilling journey with Alex and Conner. The twins discover that their own imaginations hold the key to defeating the Masked Man's sinister plan, which threatens the fairy-tale world and the Otherworld forever. With its explosive and magical conclusion, this book is sure to leave readers eagerly anticipating what's next. **WARNING:** Plot details follow. Prologue: Mrs. Peters retires as Principal and revisits her old classroom, where she reveals to Alex and Conner that she once met the Fairy Godmother. She gives them Conner's stories and shares her fondness for them. Chapter One: The Land of Stories is attacked by the Masked Man, who appoints himself Emperor and wants to execute the royal families. Goldilocks, Jack, and the Tin Woodman rescue them just in time, and they join refugees hiding in a cave. Chapter Two: Alex and Conner decide to keep literary characters from Conner's stories at their mom's house until they collect all of them. Their mom is upset about not being in touch but agrees to help once she comes home. Chapter Three: The Masked Man's armies return defeated without the royal families, and the Queen of Hearts, Captain Hook, and the Wicked Witch join hands to take over the Land of Stories. They drop the Masked Man into a forest, assuming him dead. Chapter Four: The Book Huggers are in a slump but then see Alex and Conner at the Storybook Grill. Charlotte is moved when Alex refuses to abandon their fairy tale friends. Alex and Conner explain what happened, and the Book Huggers agree to help. Chapter Five: Bree and the Sisters Grimm fly to Germany to investigate Emmerich's kidnapping. They learn that he was left at Neuschwanstein as a baby and conclude that he must be from the fairy tale world. Chapter Six: The Masked Man survives his fall and overhears the Queen of Hearts' plan, vowing to take revenge. Hook and Morina make a deal with the Wicked Witch of the West. She reveals a plan by the Snow Queen and Sea Witch to attack the Otherworld and offers to take over it afterwards. Meanwhile, the Masked Man learns he has a son named Emmerich, which sparks his desire for revenge. Conner and Alex enter Conner's short story Starboardia to seek help from pirate captain Auburn Sally. They resemble Goldilocks and become trapped by her crew. The British navy attacks, but the pirates win, and the twins are captured along with the sailors. Auburn Sally doesn't believe Conner when he tries to convince her of his connection to their world. Alex teases Conner about writing a love story between Auburn Sally and Admiral Jacobson, while Smokey-Sails Sam appears from Conner's story. Conner proves his knowledge of Starboardia to Auburn Sally, offering her help to defeat the villain in exchange for her aid in saving the Land of Stories. The British navy sailors join forces with them. As they head towards Starboardia, Alex uses magic to aid their journey and praises Conner's writing. They arrive at the fortress island, where Auburn Sally's crew fights Smokey-Sails Sam and his crew, aided by Alex and Conner. Eventually, they defeat the villains, and Auburn Sally and her pirates join forces with the twins. The Sea Witch and Snow Queen reveal their plan to bewitch Alex to other witches, putting a powerful spell on magic dust that will make Alex destructive like Ezmia was. Morina offers to find Alex in the Otherworld to ensure she ingests the dust. The twins bring the pirates to the Otherworld, where they "park" the Dolly Llama in Charlotte and Bob's swimming pool. In a distant future, the Galaxy Queen reigns supreme, collecting planets for her solar system. She meets Alex and Conner, who offer to help her obtain a special planet in exchange for her army's aid. Meanwhile, in the Land of Stories, Auburn Sally's pirates wreak havoc on Charlotte and Bob's house, prompting the twins to move them all to an empty wing in the hospital where they work. As tensions rise, Alex begins to reflect on his relationship with Arthur, while Conner thinks about Alex too. Mother Goose offers words of wisdom. The Galaxy Queen's army agrees to join forces with the twins, and together they battle the Polycrabs on the planet she desires. Along the way, they discover a blissworm that remains cheerful no matter what happens. The Masked Man frees Emmerich from the witches and pretends to be a friendly helper, but Emmerich believes him. As events unfold, Alex and Conner return to the Land of Stories to share their news and seek help babysitting the characters. However, they soon find themselves facing new challenges when they bring Conner's characters to Saint Andrew's Children's Hospital. The twins then venture into a new story, the Zibblings, which revolves around four children with superpowers and their father. They witness the heroes stopping a bank robbery and meet Bolt, the youngest Zibling, who feels belittled by his older siblings for trying to do things alone. This sparks concerns that Conner may have based the story on their own lives and how Alex used to make him feel. As they navigate this new world, Alex and Conner secretly visit Professor Wallet's Secret Laboratory, where they witness the Zibblings being called to action against the Snake Lord. The twins also learn about Bolt's feelings of isolation when his older siblings don't let him join them on their mission. This realization prompts Alex to apologize for not noticing how she may have treated Conner similarly in the past. The Snake Lord threatens to turn Paris into reptiles, prompting Conner to give Bolt a pep talk to help him tap into his superpowers. In contrast to the twins' storyline, which would require them to stay in the story for several days, Conner's approach works. Meanwhile, Emmerich helps the Masked Man open the portal to Neuschwanstein, but has reservations about the man's true intentions. Red notices that Conner's characters are inspired by her and Charlotte's co-workers from the hospital discover their unexpected guests. Charlotte must improvise an explanation for the characters' presence, convincing them it's a play for the hospital children. Trollbella volunteers to write, direct, and narrate a play about herself, while Alex helps out. Conner travels to another story, Blimp Boy, accompanied by his mother, who is eager to explore. In this new world, Conner meets Beau Rogers, an archaeologist searching for an Egyptian talisman that controls mummies. They agree to a race, and despite some initial disagreements, they share the talisman after Conner saves Beau from attack. The Book Huggers recover from their diner encounter, revealing everything to Dr. Jackson. Charlotte's play about Trollbella is a success, though it takes some creative liberties. Meanwhile, Goldilocks goes into labor, and Bree, Emmerich, Cornelia, and the Masked Man are present in the operating room. In another story, Alex is confronted by Morina, who unleashes cursed dust, causing her to become angry and see the world differently. The Masked Man's plan to steal Emmerich's blood and regain his magic is put into action, forcing Charlotte and Goldilocks to cooperate with him as he commandeers an ambulance from the hospital. However, Conner diverts their route, sending them instead into one of Bree's stories by mistake - a tale set in a public high school where students come alive at midnight to inhabit a cemetery of undead creatures. Charlotte cunningly administers a sedative during the transfusion, allowing them to escape. The Masked Man is eventually subdued by zombie Bo Peep, who orders her fellow zombies to attack, burying him underground. Meanwhile, Conner and his companions return to the hospital to find that all refugees from the Land of Stories have been petrified, with Alex's disappearance adding to their concerns. The president of the United States is briefed on a "situation" unfolding in New York. The Land of Stories series has received widespread acclaim for its unique blend of sincerity and playful humor. Reviewers have praised Colfer's ability to craft imaginative plots and multidimensional characters, with one reviewer noting that there's more magic in his kingdoms than Disney has ever dreamed of. The book had a significant impact, significantly enhancing tension and enthusiasm. I believe it would be appealing to reluctant readers due to its fast-paced, exciting storyline that immediately draws you into the story. A 9-year-old boy reviewed this book (Kid Book Reviewers, siblings ages 9 and 12 @ (...)). The Masked Man has got all the royal families from the Land of Stories with his army of literature's most infamous villains, like Wicked Witch of West, Queen of Heart, and Captain Hook. His sinister plan is now almost done, he wants to destroy the families and take his place as emperor. However, Alex and Conner realize they are no match against the Masked Man's legion of villains but they also know that they might be in possession of the greatest weapon: their own imaginations! Therefore, this begins twins' journey into Conner's very own stories to gather an army of pirates, cyborgs, superheroes, mummies as they join together for the final fight against the Masked Man. At the same time, another more dangerous plan is brewing that could alter the fate of both fairy-tale world and Otherworld forever.

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