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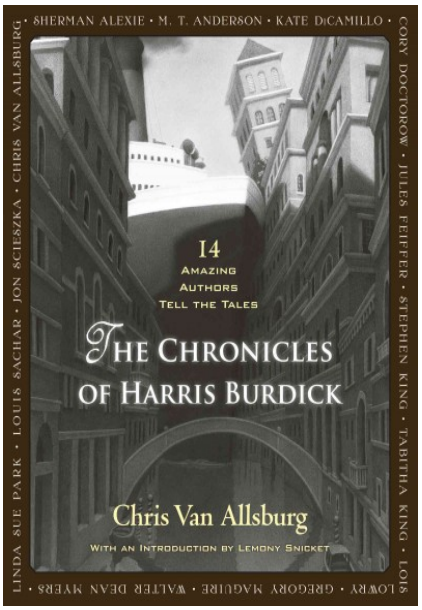
The Chronicles of Harris Burdick



In 1984, *Jumanji* author Chris Van Allsburg compiled a storybook made up only of images with captions that hint at the fantastical and the scary, the strange and the beautiful. These mysterious illustrations were said to come straight from a man named Harris Burdick and, in the years since the pictures reached the public, the illustrations in *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* [1] have been used as a storytelling guide and even a jumping off point to help kids to their own fiction.

More recently, Van Allsburg hired a list of favorite children?s authors to interpret the images from Van Allsburg?s popular work. The result is *The Chronicles of Harris Burdick* [2], a 221 page compilation of short stories that flesh out the weird and fantastical elements present in Van Allsburg?s original images. Authors ranging from Sherman Alexie to Stephen King, from Walter Dean Myers to Kate DiCamillo and many, many more all lend their voices to very different types of stories. The compilation also features an introduction from favorite, but oddball, author Lemony Snicket.

The Chronicles of Harris Burdick has been recommended for grades 5-9 while *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* is suitable for kids of all ages. Though *The Chronicles of Harris Burdick* features one set of stories to go along with each of the illustrations, the mysteries live on through readers imaginations, everywhere. Readers can even create their own interpretations of the stories and post them online via Harris Burdick?s website [3], created for devoted young writers. Let your imagination run wild!

- Guest Review by Jessica Grabert, MLS Candidate at IU School of Library and Information Science

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Posted by Ellen A. on Mar 5, 2012

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