

The Paradise Trap

by Catherine Jinks

Ages: 8-12

"A breathless escapade."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Jinks (the Evil Genius series) combines a plot filled with surreal twists and turns with a dash of Greek mythology in a novel that hits the mark on both the humor and horror fronts."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"Jinks deftly mixes mild horror with humor to give younger readers a few shivers and make older readers chuckle. Each dream/nightmare world sheds dramatic, sometimes touching, insight into the character whose hopes and fears create it, and the nonstop action will make for exciting read-alouds and book talks. Completely absorbing and totally fun."—*School Library Journal*

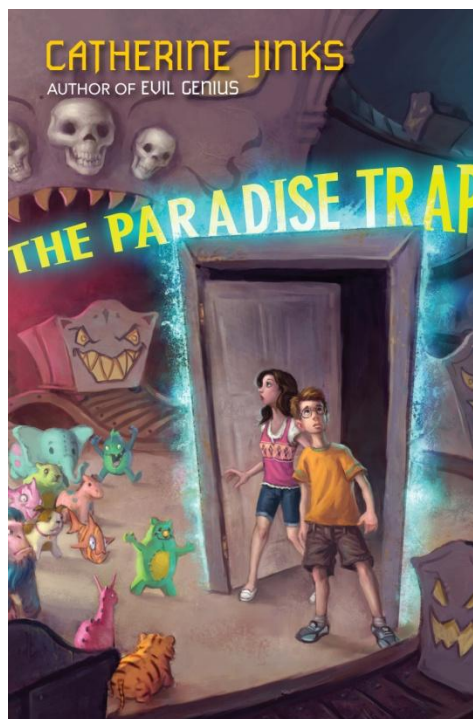
Summary:

A boy . . . a witch . . . and a *totally* sinister paradise: that's what Marcus gets when his mom rents a skuzzy trailer and parks it near a dirty, noisy beach. Some vacation! Marcus would rather play video games anyway, but when he discovers a staircase underneath the trailer, it looks as if he may be in for some kind of multilevel, multiplayer experience controlled by a complete nightmare of a witch. It's just like a game—except it's all too real.

The author of *Evil Genius* spins a brilliantly compelling yarn of a journey into a dark and twisted land—because once you enter the Paradise Trap, there's no guarantee that you'll ever leave!

Discussion Questions:

1. Marcus thinks video games are better than real life. Do you think he is right? Explain your answer.
2. On page 14 Coco calls Prot "more trouble than he's worth." Do you think by the end of the book she's changed her mind about him? Why or why not?
3. How do Marcus and Edison each react when they discover that Marcus's trailer has a cellar that leads to a different world? Compare and contrast each boy's reaction.



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4. When Marcus first tells Holly that Edison is trapped in his paradise, she just smiles and says, “that’s nice.” Why do you think she reacts this way? What motivates her into action the second time?
5. Unlike Edison and Newt, Marcus never enters his dream holiday. If he had, what do you think it would be? What would yours be? What would your nightmare holiday be?
6. Who is Miss Molpe? What do Marcus and his friends think that she is?
7. Why doesn’t Sterling freak out about the magic the way the other characters do? What is his explanation for what is happening?
8. How do Coco and Holly react upon seeing their younger selves? Why do you think they react this way?
9. What makes Jake’s suitcase and Prot’s arm so important? Why are they useful tools to have in Miss Molpe’s world?
10. What do you think happened to Miss Molpe at the end of the story?

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978-1-60684-273-7 * \$15.99

e-Book: 978-1-60684-283-6 * \$15.99



About the Author:

Catherine Jinks is the author of over 30 books for adults and children, including *Evil Genius*, *Genius Squad*, and *The Reformed Vampire Support Group*. She is a three-time winner of the Children’s Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Award. She lives with her husband and daughter in New South Wales.

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