



HOCUS POCUS HOTEL

by Michael Dahl

Illustrations by Lisa K. Weber

**Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Nominee 2015
Grades 3-5**

*Submitted by Ned Denby, student worker,
State Library of Louisiana, Baton Rouge, LA*

Title: *Hocus Pocus Hotel*

Author: Michael Dahl

Illustrator: Lisa K. Weber

Publisher: Stone Arch Books

Pages: 216

SUMMARY

Tyler Yu, the school bully, lives in a hotel full of magic and ghosts, but the magic is getting out of control. He enlists the help of Charlie Hitchcock to get to the bottom of the magical mysteries that fill his home, but Charlie is more afraid of Ty than he is of the things they're investigating—at least at first. The two become unlikely friends and have numerous adventures in the rest of the *Hocus Pocus Hotel* series.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Michael Dahl is the author of more than 100 books for children and young adults. He has written *The Everything Kid's Joke Book* and *Gotcha Covered!* (with Kathleen Baxter for Libraries Unlimited) on nonfiction books that get kids excited about reading. His Finnegan Zwake mystery series published by Simon & Schuster won rave reviews and two of its titles were shortlisted for the Edgar and the Anthony Mystery Awards. His nonfiction has won the AEP Distinguished Achievement Award three times. Dahl has spoken at numerous schools, libraries, and conferences across the country on graphic novels and books for boys, and has been a featured speaker at ALA, AASL, NYAEC, TLA, NOLA, EncycloMedia and IRA.

Biographical information taken from the book's website at

<http://www.hocuspocushotel.com/author.html>,

Accessed August 28, 2014.



ILLUSTRATOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Lisa K. Weber is an illustrator currently living in Oakland, California. She graduated from Parsons School of Design in 2000 and then began freelancing. Since then, she has completed many print, animation, and design projects, including graphic novelizations of classic literature, character and background designs for children's cartoons, and textiles for dog clothing.

Biographical information taken from the illustrator's website at <http://www.lisakweber.com/about.html>,
Accessed August 28, 2014.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Book's website <http://www.hocuspocushotel.com/index.html>

OTHER TITLES BY AUTHOR

Series: Finnegan Zwake, Monster Street, Princess Candy, Return to the Library of Doom, Super Funny Joke Books

OTHER TITLES BY ILLUSTRATOR

Island of the Aunts by Eva Ibbotson (2001)
The Ogre of Oglefort by Eva Ibbotson (2011)
Pecos Bill, Colossal Cowboy by Sean Tulien (2010)

RELATED TITLES (Students may also enjoy these titles)

Card Tricks for Beginners by Wilfrid Johnson
Harry Houdini for Kids: His Life and Adventures with 21 Magic Tricks and Illusions by Laurie Carlson
Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling
Kids' Magic Secrets: Simple Magic Tricks & Why They Work by Lois Bree and Martin Bree
The Klutz Book of Magic by Michael Stroud et al.
Scary Tales series by James Preller
Titles by Bruce Coville

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Writing:

How the magician introduces the trick is almost as important as the trick itself. Write an introduction to a magic show that will make people want to pay to see it.

Art:

- Charlie draws diagrams of the tricks he learns about so he can understand them better. Have students find a magic trick and draw a diagram of it.
- Put on a magic show with, or for, your class. Here is a site with instructions on easy magic tricks for kids: <http://www.kidzone.ws/magic/>

Science:

- Charlie and Ty pass secret notes to each other in school. One way to send secret messages is to use invisible ink, which can be as simple as writing the message in

lemon juice and having the recipient hold it up to a heat source, such as a light bulb (the lemon juice turns brown):

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/experiments/invisibleink.html>. The class can send secret messages to each other using invisible ink. For a more advanced activity, have different groups try different types of invisible ink and compare their effectiveness: <http://hubpages.com/hub/how-to-make-invisible-ink>.

- Magic tricks are based on illusions, usually with mirrors. Discuss how mirrors work and how light can be used to confuse the eyes:
 - <https://perspective.pearsonaccess.com/content/resources/teachingresources/unitplans/then.light/plan.html> Basic lesson plan.
 - <http://www.uen.org/core/displayLessonPlans.do;jsessionId=68911FF794B34CC6B3D83A07DFE9017D?courseNumber=3060&standardId=1258&objectiveId=1260> Several lesson plans on various aspects of light, good for older students.
 - <http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/games/illusions/> A page on optical illusions.

Social Studies:

- Magic, illusions, and sleight-of-hand have been part of human history for a long time. Have students break into groups and choose a point on the following timeline to research: <http://www.all-about-magicians.com/history-of-magicians.html>
 - Alternately, have them choose a particular magician, such as The Great Houdini: <http://www.thegreatharryhoudini.com/>
- Many of the plantations in Louisiana are known to be haunted. The Myrtles is one of the most famous haunted houses in the United States. Students can research the legends and visitor experiences at the Myrtles and decide for themselves whether or not they believe. If possible, this would be an interesting field trip. <http://www.myrtlesplantation.com/>
 - <http://www.louisianatravel.com/attractions/haunted-louisiana> Other haunted places in Louisiana.

Vocabulary:

Illusion	Reputation	Fuse
Suspense	Bizarre	Props
Genuine	Misdirection	
Acute	Phantom	

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Ty wants Charlie's help, but he doesn't want anyone at school to know they speak. Is this fair to Charlie? Have you ever been "secret friends" with someone?
2. Are ghosts real? Why do you think so (or why not)?
3. What was your favorite magic trick from the book?
4. Who is Mr. Brack? Why is he hiding?
5. Why are the magicians in the hotel keeping secrets from Ty and his parents? Does their reason make it okay to lie to them?
6. Does knowing how the trick is done mean it isn't magic?

RELATED WEBSITES

Funology

<http://www.funology.com/magic-tricks/>

Magic Tricks for Kids

Haunted House Ideas

<http://www.momswhothink.com/halloween/haunted-house-ideas.html>

<http://www.marthastewart.com/275522/haunted-house-party/@center/1006806/halloween-parties>

Ideas for decorating the classroom like the Hocus Pocus Hotel.