



Trouble Next Door

Books Reviewed:

[Trouble Next Door](#) [1]

Issue:

[222](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Lucy Staines](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Chris Higgins writes with a relaxed, friendly style that is wonderfully easy to read, and really difficult to master. Her stories are rooted in children's ordinary lives and, while completely contemporary, share those characteristics that have long been favourites in children's fiction.

Bella, the central character in this new series is feeling a bit lost and lonely. Her family have just moved to a new house in the country and Bella is surprised both at how old this 'new' house is, and how quiet it is in the country. She cheers up when she discovers that there's a girl her own age living in the house next door and soon she and Magda are spending lots of time together. Magda is exciting, full of ideas and great fun to be with and Bella is delighted when Magda declares they are best friends. But Magda has a knack for causing trouble too and young readers, particularly those that like Bella are generally quiet and well behaved, will be fascinated by the things she gets up to. They'll also be amazed, and probably a bit outraged on Bella's behalf, at the way Magda cannily avoids any of the blame for the chaos she causes, most of which is attributed to Bella. Fortunately all ends on a happy and peaceful note, as Mum realises that Magda is the kind of girl who attracts trouble wherever she goes: just as well she's got Bella to look after her. Lively, funny and full of insight into people and the nature of our friendships this will thoroughly entertain its readers who will be delighted to hear that Bella and Magda will be back in the summer for a new adventure. Emily MacKenzie's black and white illustrations are full of life too, the perfect accompaniment to the story.

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Links:

[1] <http://w2w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/trouble-next-door>

[2] <http://w2w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/222>

[3] <http://w2w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/lucy-staines>