



The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place

By E.L. Konigsburg

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I Prefer Not To....

That's Margaret Rose Kane's response to every activity she's asked to participate in at the summer camp to which she's been exiled while her parents are in Peru. So Margaret Rose is delighted when her beloved uncles rescue her from Camp Talequa, with its uptight camp director and cruel cabinmates, and bring her to stay with them at their wonderful house at 19 Schuyler Place.

But Margaret Rose soon discovers that something is terribly wrong at 19 Schuyler Place. People in their newly gentrified neighborhood want to get rid of the three magnificent towers the uncles have spent forty-five years lovingly constructing of scrap metal and shards of glass and porcelain. Margaret Rose is outraged, and determined to strike a blow for art, for history, and for individuality...and no one is more surprised than Margaret Rose at the allies she finds for her mission.

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The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place By E.L. Konigsburg Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Twelve year old Margaret Rose Kane is incorrigible. Not only does she refuse to bend to the will of her manipulative cabin mates at Camp Talequa, she stands up to and inadvertently insults the camp director and Queen-in-residence, Mrs. Kaplan. The intimidating and cruel confrontations that threaten to break Margaret's spirit only serve to strengthen her resolve, and everyone is happy when Margaret is finally banished/rescued from Camp Talequa. Luckily for her, with her parents in Peru, this means she can spend the rest of the summer with her delightfully eccentric Hungarian great-uncles, Alexander and Morris Rose. Margaret adores her great-uncles, and loves the house at 19 Schuyler Place--especially the three peculiar clock towers (tall painted structures covered in pendants made from broken china, crystal, bottles, jars, and clock parts) that the Rose brothers have been building for as long as she can remember. For Margaret and the Rose brothers, the towers represent beauty for beauty's sake--they sparkle in the sun and sing in the wind--they exist only to spread joy. Not everyone loves the towers however, and forty-five years after the birth of the project, the city council declares the towers "unsafe," and demands that they be dismantled and destroyed. Filled with the same fiery resolve that helped her survive Camp Talequa, Margaret (with the help of a handyman named Jake, a loyal dog named Tartufo, and few other unexpected allies) launches a plan to save the towers in the name of art, history, and beauty.

A companion novel to the award-winning author's acclaimed *Silent to the Bone*, *Outcasts* is strikingly unique, incredibly interesting, and, with references to "Bartleby the Scrivener", and the rose windows of Notre Dame, exceptionally literary. In other words, *The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place* is vintage Konigsburg. This quirky masterpiece will be enjoyed by young fans of Konigsburg's other erudite works, and Polly Horvath's *The Canning Season*. (Ages 10 and older)

From School Library Journal

Grade 6-9-In *Silent to the Bone* (Atheneum, 2000), a grown-up Margaret Rose Kane helps her half brother, Connor, solve the mystery of why his best friend can't speak. *Outcasts* is her remembrance of her 12th summer. Pitched into camp by her parents while they travel in Peru, she is tormented by cliquish cabin mates and adopts a passive-aggressive stance that infuriates the overly rigid and money-grasping camp director. Rescued by her beloved elderly uncles and taken to their home, Margaret is appalled to discover that the city has ordered the soaring, artistic towers they have created in the backyard to be taken down because they don't adhere to the strictures of the now-historic district. Stung by the idea that real history and a work of art could be destroyed by profit-seeking interest groups manipulating governmental regulations, Margaret swings into action to fight an even larger tyranny than the one she had encountered at camp. Delicious irony permeates the story, with Margaret citing words from idealistic documents and then relating the reality. The plot is well paced and has excellent foreshadowing. Konigsburg's characters are particularly well motivated, from the camp director who gives herself airs to hide well-earned insecurities to her seemingly mentally challenged son who is actually an intellectual as well as an artist. Most wonderfully rendered through dialogue are the Hungarian-American Jewish uncles, crotchety with age, but full of love and life and a sure understanding of what it means to be an individual American. Funny and thought-provoking by turns, this is Konigsburg at her masterful best.

Cindy Darling Codell, Clark Middle School, Winchester, KY

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 4-8. Dumped at summer camp while her parents travel abroad, 12-year-old Margaret Rose Kane, whom

readers first met as Connor's half-sister in *Silent to the Bone* (2000), opts out of activities by quoting Melville ("I prefer not to") and is quickly labeled "incurable." When her two doting, elderly uncles whisk her away from the hated camp, she blissfully anticipates helping to build and maintain "the towers," sculptures her uncles have constructed in their garden. But Margaret soon learns that yuppie neighbors want the 45-year-old towers demolished. Appalled, she and a network of warm, smart, slightly kooky adults, characters as markedly Konigsburgian as the precocious urban preteen herself, hatch an ingenious plan to prevent the "cultural Armageddon." Konigsburg yields too much of the stage to adult characters and their views on creeping homogenization and suburban sprawl, and many readers will never feel fully convinced by Margaret's quirky erudition. But this intelligently structured, humorously told, and richly observant story weaves two clichés of middle-grade fiction--the David-and-Goliath scenario and the bad summer camp experience--into a bracing, contemporary tall tale. Readers will root for Margaret's success, admire her determination, and applaud her abhorrence of conformity wherever she finds it. *Jennifer Mattson*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Eula Hunter:

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Steven Thomas:

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