

Grady Whill and the Templeton Codex: A Superhero High School Adventure

Carole P. Roman

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Teenagers discover the power of friendship in Grady Whill and the Templeton Codex, an exciting young adult novel.

Carole P. Roman's spirited young adult adventure *Grady Whill and the Templeton Codex* merges mystical and scientific approaches to superpowers.

Grady is an orphan who lives with his uncle. In middle school, he faces bullying because he chooses to stay friends with Aarush, who has been diagnosed with autism. And both boys yearn to enroll in the prestigious yet secretive Templeton Academy. Though Grady has low self-esteem and asthma, and he fears that his opportunities are limited, both he and Aarush are admitted to the school. So too is their bully and tormentor, Elwood.

Enrolling in Templeton means traveling to a secret island and giving up their cell phones. Grady is allowed to keep his deceased father's ring, which behaves in mysterious ways, heating up or cooling down in response to touch.

At the peculiar school, Grady and Aarush make both friends and enemies. Aarush's cousin joins their group, catching Grady's eye and inspiring a crush. Dr. Templeton, who runs the school, is rarely seen, but his daughter takes Elwood under her wing. Grady's main teacher is distant, leaving Grady unsure of whom he can trust.

As the students attempt to master the first few words of the Templeton Codex, a newly discovered artifact that promises to grant transcendent powers to those who interpret it the right way, some students begin to transform their physiques into rock-like or animal-like forms. Others show signs of empathy so accurate that it resembles telepathy.

Grady's dilemmas are described in vibrant terms. His experiences of being bullied are captured with sensory details about being pushed into trash cans and locked into lockers. He is indignant over how others treat Aarush too. But kindness prevails: Grady forms alliances with fellow students who are misunderstood and comes to the rescue when others are bullied. Having experienced loneliness and persecution, he is sympathetic to underdogs. Still, the temptation of unlocking considerable powers and learning about his parents' lives threatens to obscure his moral code.

The book's conversations are direct and effective, with the teenagers communicating information that both furthers the plot and conveys their emotional states. The resolution helps to answer questions about Grady's heritage, though some mysteries are maintained for later tales, including about the nature of the the Codex and its connection to Grady's parents.

Packed with mysteries, camaraderie, and metaphysical powers, *Grady Whill and the Templeton Codex* is an exciting young adult novel set at a magical island school.

JEANA JORGENSEN (July 26, 2022)

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