



Haphaven

Norm Harper

Louie Joyce, Illustrator

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Traditional superstitions are the inspiration for a rich, fully imagined fantasy world in the graphic novel *Haphaven*.

Alex, a girl who's about to turn thirteen, is captive to her superstitions. From the stories of her long dead great-great-grandfather searching for a real "Lady Luck" to the baseball bat her father engraved with various "lucky" symbols, her life is dominated by her belief in specific behaviors that can bring about—or stave off—improbable events.

Prompted by her mother to abandon her superstitions, Alex steps on a sidewalk crack, which immediately sends her mother to the hospital with a broken back. Seeking salvation for her mother, Alex meets a leprechaun and embarks on a magical adventure to the world of Haphaven, where Earth's superstitions draw their power from. There, she encounters a talking black cat and a talking white rabbit and discovers the truth behind her family legends.

Superstitions, less commonly mined than the fairy tales that form the foundation of so many modern fantasies, offer a well-established starting point for *Haphaven*. Elements such as throwing salt over one's shoulder and the luck of a rabbit's foot are combined and embellished in interesting ways, while Alex, a memorable character faced with several surprisingly stark moral dilemmas throughout the story, makes *Haphaven* much more than a mere checklist of superstitions.

The book's art is an appealing mix of realism and cartoony exaggeration. A fast-moving tale with a satisfying conclusion, *Haphaven* is sure to please fans of unique fantasies.

PETER DABBENE (March/April 2019)

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