

## The Extraordinary Curiosities of Ixworth and Maddox

**J. D. Grolic**

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In J. D. Grolic's charming fantasy novel *The Extraordinary Curiosities of Ixworth and Maddox*, an eleven-year-old ducks into a London shop to escape the rain and encounters an intriguing new world.

After entering the shop, wherein brownies build magical items for Maddox and Ixworth (the magicians who run it), Chloe becomes fast friends with the owners. She also begins learning magic herself. When Ixworth goes missing, she and Maddox use their powers, facing evil, ancient magic in order to save him.

Spunky and curious, Chloe is an inspirational lead. She has moments of fear—as when she is shadowed by a mysterious figure—but perseveres nonetheless. She is determined to find Ixworth, no matter the danger. And Ixworth and Maddox are an eccentric, entertaining pair, always offering up new curiosities like self-fluffing pillows. Both magicians adore Chloe, giving her much-needed space to feel accepted.

Though several issues are unresolved at the book's end (including Chloe's grief over her parents being too busy for her and the tension between her and her best friend, Iris), this is a story with potent lessons on courage, sacrifice, and forgiveness. Maddox tells Chloe that saving his best friend is worth losing his life; Chloe wrestles with betrayal and risks her safety to stop a magic-stealing mask from hurting Maddox. Vibrant descriptions of the London streets help to move the story along, and Chloe's point-of-view is both humorous (as when her magic goes wrong and turns a tree to ash) and somber.

A determined girl confronts a mysterious disappearance with a splash of magic in *The Extraordinary Curiosities of Ixworth and Maddox*, a delightful fantasy novel.

VIVIAN TURNBULL (May / June 2023)

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