

★ Wizard for Hire: Magic Required

Obert Skye

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Obert Skye's *Wizard for Hire: Magic Required* concludes a rambunctious trilogy with wacky conversations and adventurous wizardry.

The story begins with Ozzy, whose early life was marked by tragedy and isolation, receiving his official wizard-in-training pants and locating his wizard friend, Rin, and Ozzy's magical pet bird, Clark. Ozzy and his friend Sigi (who is Rin's daughter) are in danger; Ray Dench wants to use Ozzy's powers to control the world. Meanwhile, the group is also under police surveillance, prompted because Sigi's mother worries that Rin is not a wizard, but is delusional.

The foursome set off on another adventure to learn the truth about what happened to Ozzy's parents and to defeat Ray once and for all. Their circumstances are perilous; Ray uses increasingly dangerous methods to get to Ozzy. Yet despite its high tension, the story is funny, often due to Rin's imperturbable spirit. The book's descriptions ("the fog, in a very unfoglike manner, began to pull itself apart") play with language; their levity is pleasant.

The possibility that Rin is not a wizard plagues Ozzy and Sigi; while Ozzy's power is based on scientific experimentation, Rin's power supposedly comes from another world. Is Sigi's mother right? Their confusion isn't helped by Rin's off-the-wall comments and wild conversational misdirections, nor by the fact that he's easy to distract.

The comfortable connection that Sigi and Ozzy established in earlier books is cemented here; all other relationships are tested. The flashy and fun conclusion, wherein magic is revealed at a crowded ComiCon, answers many questions about Ozzy's origins and Rin's power.

A fantastical magical adventure that never takes magic too seriously, *Wizard for Hire: Magic Required* resolves Ozzy's quest to find his parents.

LAURA LEAVITT (March / April 2020)

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