



Sarah Jean Horwitz *on writing* CARMER & GRIT, BOOK ONE **THE WINGSNATCHERS**

Let's talk about BFFs.

The Wingsnatchers, along with magic contests and electricity and all manner of other exciting things, is about finding the one person with whom you can be your true self, unfiltered and maybe a little bit crazy. The person in whom you can confide your purest feelings of joy and fear. The person you know will understand. My best friend, Brooke, and I call it the person you don't have to put on your "human face" for. It's the person who accepts you for exactly who you are; the person who thinks the freckles you're embarrassed about are the most beautiful part of your face; the person who might not have a crafty bone in their body but thinks your papier-mâché hobby is *awesome*; the person who knows when you need a hug but also when you need a moment alone. And the best part of the deal? You're that person's person, too.

There is a quote from the Sherlock Holmes-inspired show *Elementary* that sums up the essence of what I tried to capture with *The Wingsnatchers*: "Friendship, I've come to believe, is most accurately defined as two people moving towards the best aspects of one another. It is a relationship of mutual benefit, mutual gain."

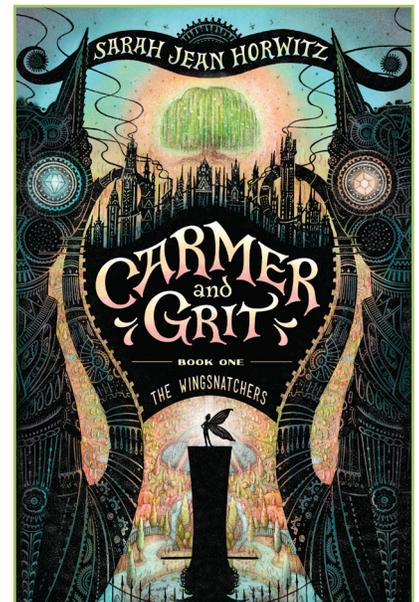
Carmer and Grit don't have a lot in common on the surface. They don't always get along. Heck, they don't even start out as *friends*! But still, they see the good in each other that many others don't. Carmer is just about the least magical magician's apprentice ever. In an industry that values flash and charisma, he is quiet and scholarly and much more comfortable behind the scenes. His social skills aren't the strongest, and constantly traveling from town to town doesn't help when it comes to making friends. Though he has wonderful, supportive people in his life, no one quite "gets" him . . . no one, that is, until a certain one-winged faerie princess comes along.

No one seems to "get" Grit, either. In her small faerie kingdom, Grit doesn't even have the option of being unobtrusive. Not only is she separated from her peers by her status as a princess, but her single wing has defined her as an "impossible thing"—a faerie without flight—since she was born. Grit chafes under expectations both too low and too high, limited by people's assumptions about her health, but also pressured to conform to royal standards of behavior and dress that come far from naturally to her. She longs for adventure in a life that literally keeps her locked behind iron bars, the gates of her kingdom both a haven and a prison.

“

*She longs for adventure
in a life that literally
keeps her locked behind
iron bars, the gates of her
kingdom both a haven
and a prison.*

”



MIDDLE GRADE FICTION
AGES 10-14, GRADES 5-9

Though their relationship begins as an alliance of convenience, it quickly blossoms into a transformative friendship. Carmer and Grit accept each other, and that’s an important part of friendship, it’s true. But perhaps even more importantly, they find the good in each other. They challenge each other to explore new skills and even new worlds, and to question their ideas of right and wrong. It’s not always easy. They don’t always trust each other, and they don’t always succeed. But in the end, they find talents and strength they didn’t know they possessed, and they use that strength to keep evil at bay.

I hope that somewhere out there, if there is a reader who feels like Carmer or Grit does at the start of the novel—lonely, unaccepted, or misunderstood—they’ll take heart in the unlikely friendship within its pages. Because the best of friends can appear anywhere, at any time—especially when you least expect them. Your “person” might be just around the corner, ready to crash into your life at any moment. And the result of such a collision?

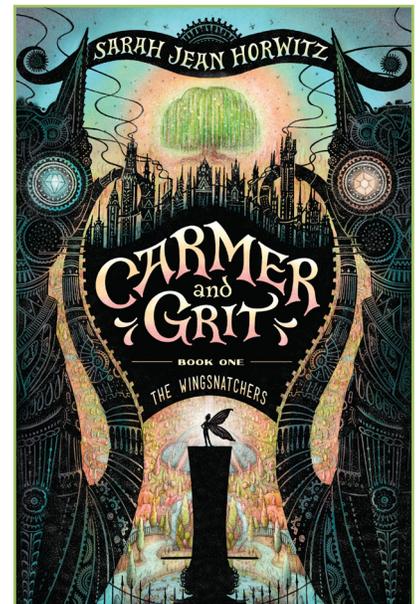
Well, it just might be magical.

“

Because the best of friends can appear anywhere, at any time—especially when you least expect them.

”

SARAH JEAN HORWITZ was raised in suburban New Jersey where her love of storytelling grew from listening to her mother’s original “fractured fairy tales.” She lives in Boston, Massachusetts. *Carmer and Grit: The Wingsnatchers* is her first novel. You can visit her online at sarahjeanhorwitz.com and on Twitter: [@sunshineJHwitz](https://twitter.com/sunshineJHwitz).



MIDDLE GRADE FICTION
AGES 10-14, GRADES 5-9