



On the Jellicoe Road

By Melina Marchetta

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Taylor Markham is now a senior at the Jellicoe School, and has been made leader of the boarders. She is responsible for keeping the upper hand in the territory wars with the townies, and the cadets who camp on the edge of the school's property over summer. She has to keep her students safe and the territories enforced and to deal with Jonah Griggs - the leader of the cadets and someone she'd rather forget. But what she needs to do, more than anything, is unravel the mystery of her past and find her mother - who abandoned her on the Jellicoe Road six years before. The only connection to her past, Hannah, the woman who found her, has now disappeared, too, and the only clue Taylor has about Hannah and her mother's past is a partially written manuscript about a group of five kids from the Jellicoe School, twenty years ago.

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On the Jellicoe Road By Melina Marchetta Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 8 Up—For years, three factions—Townies, Cadets (city kids doing a six-week outdoor education program), and Jellicoe School students—have engaged in teen war games in the Australian countryside, defending territorial borders, negotiating for assets, and even taking hostages. Taylor Markham, a 17-year-old who was abandoned years ago by her mother, takes on leadership of the boarding school's six Houses. Plagued with doubts about being boss, she's not sure she can handle her Cadet counterpart, Jonah Griggs, whom she met several years before while running away to find her mother. When Hannah, a sort of house mother who has taken Taylor under her wing, disappears, Taylor puzzles over the book manuscript the woman left behind. Hannah's tale involves a tragic car accident on the Jellicoe Road more than 20 years earlier. Only three children survived, and Taylor discovers that this trio, plus a Cadet and a Townie, developed an epic friendship that was the foundation of the many mysteries in her life and identity, as well as of the war games. While the novel might put off casual readers, patient, thoughtful teens will remain to extract clues from the interwoven scraps of Hannah's narrative, just as Taylor does, all the while seeing the collapse of the barriers erected among the three groups over the years. Elegiac passages and a complex structure create a somewhat dense, melancholic narrative with elements of romance, mystery, and realistic fiction.—*Suzanne Gordon, Peachtree Ridge High School, Suwanee, GA*

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From [Booklist](#)

Taylor Markham isn't just one of the new student leaders of her boarding school, she's also the heir to the Underground Community, one of three battling school factions in her small Australian community (the others being the Cadets and the Townies). For a generation, these three camps have fought "the territory wars," a deadly serious negotiation of land and property rife with surprise attacks, diplomatic immunities, and physical violence. Only this year, it's complicated: Taylor might just have a thing for Cadet leader Jonah, and Jonah might just be the key to unlocking the secret identity of Taylor's mother, who abandoned her when she was 11. In fact, nearly every relationship in Taylor's life has unexpected ties to her past, and the continual series of revelations is both the book's strength and weakness; the melodrama can be trying, but when Marchetta isn't forcing epiphanies, she has a knack for nuanced characterizations and punchy dialogue. The complexity of the backstory will be offputting to younger readers, but those who stick it out will find rewards in the heartbreaking twists of Marchetta's saga. Grades 9-12. --Daniel Kraus

Review

This roller coaster ride of a novel grabs you from the first sentence and doesn't let go. You may not be sure where the ride will take you, but every detail from the complexities of the dual narrative to the pangs of first love is pitch perfect. --Printz Award Committee Chair Mary Arnold.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Meagan Shaffer:

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