



# The Gypsy Game

*Zilpha Keatley Snyder*

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## **The Gypsy Game** Zilpha Keatley Snyder

The kids from The Egypt Game are back. What game will they play next? The answer is Gypsies. While April plunges in with her usual enthusiasm, the more Melanie learns, the more something seems to be holding her back. But it's Toby who adds a really new wrinkle when he announces that he himself is a bona fide Gypsy. Plus he can get them some of his grandmother's things to use as real Gypsy props for the new game. What could be more thrilling? Then Toby suddenly and mysteriously disappears, and the kids discover that living as real-life Gypsies may not be as much fun as they thought. How will they find Toby and rescue him from the very real problems that are haunting his life?

## **The Gypsy Game Details**

Date : Published September 8th 1998 by Yearling (first published February 10th 1997)

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Author : Zilpha Keatley Snyder

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# From Reader Review The Gypsy Game for online ebook

## Sara Thompson says

I was a little disappointed with this book. It was obviously written long after the first book so some of the language had changed (the same language that had made the first one a little outdated) but there were also some subtle modernization. The first book was obviously set in time it was written so to have the book go from the 1960's to the 1990's was a little unsettling especially since I read them back to back. Most children may not pick up on these things but as an adult reader it was a little distracting.

With that said, however, the plot was still just as good. The Gypsy Game kind of faltered for the children as a real life drama took over but the book never let down the reader. I especially liked Ms. Snyder's discussion about what Gypsy life was like and the hardships that particular group of people have faced. I like the realism and the hidden education in the book. This would be a great book to talk about prejudice and oppression.

There are so many themes in this book that make it wonderful. This time you meet Toby's father who is a very eccentric artist. It's an interesting contrast to his best friend Ken who's parents are practical and well-to-do. The two ends of this spectrum are nicely balanced and really are more subtle. There is no beating the reader with a cause. Ms. Snyder talks about homelessness when Toby runs away and ends up living in an abandoned house with three homeless people.

This is a really powerful book and a great sequel.

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## Jasmine says

I didn't like this one as much as I liked *The Egypt Game*. It's much less "game" and much more a story about what happens to Toby. I wouldn't want it to be the same book, but it felt to me a little like the game bit could have played more of a role in the story.

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## Mary-Beth says

Too similar to its predecessor, but without the magic of the first book, this reads too much like an attempt to grasp at the popularity *The Egypt Game* must have enjoyed.

Because the book has the children helping their friend to run away from home, the book just seems a little absurd. I recommend skipping this one.

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## Ang says

I love the Egypt Game and I was amazed when after 15 plus years of rereading it, there has been a sequel all this time. I was VERY disappointed.

Things that irritated me:

- The characters went from being in the 1960s to the 1990s - the dialogue and word choices of the characters

were complete different.

-Toby clearly states in the first book that his parents are out at a party - pretty hard to do since according to this sequel, his mother has been dead since he was a baby.

-The characters all of the sudden start referring to each other by their last names. Yes, they did so in the middle of the Egypt Game, but that was before they got to know one another better.

-I realize why April was no longer the central character, however...it's April!!!!

-One of the coolest thing about the Egypt Game was them actually playing the game...there was little to no playing of gypsies.

Overall, unimpressed/annoyed/irritated.

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### **Tnguyen19 says**

The first book "Egypt Game," was incredible. The details where more to the point, and exact. Something that made you want to read more. Sadly this book i can't compare with it. I really hope to like this book, but it didn't attract me as much. Recommend this not to everyone. Since the ending for me was to weak. And the plot lack mystery.

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### **Michael Fitzgerald says**

Seems like the title just hangs on the coattails of The Egypt Game as the story isn't focused on the game this time around. It's really quite a different book, and I wonder if it could have been done with all new characters. You have to wonder about the huge gap between the publication of the books. Did the author got so much pressure to write a sequel that she just finally gave in and did this? It's an OK book, but maybe not such a worthy sequel.

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### **Katie Fitzgerald says**

This review also appears on my blog, Read-at-Home Mom.

Now that they have permission to play the Egypt Game, it doesn't seem as interesting to sixth graders April and Melanie. After some consideration, they decide it might be more exciting to shift their focus to gypsies instead. The trouble is, before the Gypsy Game can truly get underway, real-world problems intervene.

Toby, one of the Egyptians, has run away, supposedly to avoid being kidnapped by his gypsy grandparents. April, Melanie, and their friends do their best to remain loyal to their friend while also satisfying the questions and concerns raised by the adults in their lives who are concerned about Toby's well-being.

Though there are 30 years between the publication date of The Egypt Game and the release of The Gypsy Game, in this fictional universe, it is literally as though no time has passed at all. The second book picks up just where the first one leaves off, filling in the very next line of dialogue. By the end of the first page, the reader is once again completely immersed in April and Melanie's worlds - both the real one, and the one they imagine. For me, the time between books was only a couple of weeks, so I can't say for sure whether the ease with which I slipped into the second story is a credit to the author, or simply a benefit of reading the books one right after the other. Still, I felt a strong connection to the setting - and to each of the kids -

perhaps even more so than I did in their first story.

Though real-world conflicts do encroach upon the Egyptians' game in the first book, I think the problem presented in the second one is more pressing on the characters because this time they know the situation and the danger Toby might be in. The fact that the kids do have some information about Toby that they conceal from adults creates a sense of tension and suspense that keeps the story moving forward quickly, with many questions and answers following one after the other. I felt more strongly invested in the characters this time because they were much more invested in the real-world happenings around them, and not just in their make-believe.

The politically incorrect use of the term "gypsy" may pose a problem, but I think a little coaching from adults can help kids understand why this word is no longer used, and why it is more appropriate to refer to this group as "Roma." The use of "gypsy" in the title of the book and throughout the story is actually not used in an offensive way. The storyline itself works in many details about how the Roma people have been treated throughout history, and when the characters are well-informed, they do develop a stronger sense of respect that informs their plans for the Gypsy Game. The only thing I truly questioned was whether it was necessary for Toby to claim he is a gypsy, because it doesn't seem to add much to the story, and it kind of makes him into a token character, especially because we learn nothing of his racial background in the first book. Similarly, the homeless characters in the story are treated very stereotypically, with little to differentiate them from each other, or to develop them as characters rather than just a collection of homeless people inserted to further a plot.

Overall, I enjoyed this book, especially on the heels of *The Egypt Game*. *The Egypt Game* is the superior story, and I don't necessarily think readers will miss out if they never read *The Gypsy Game*, but it is nice to revisit the same characters and see where else the author's imagination can take them. There is a bit of a cheesy Lassie moment where a dog is able to lead the kids to Toby's location, which seems totally unbelievable and out of place, but there are just as many really lovely moments, including Marshall beginning to outgrow his need for Security, his stuffed octopus, and all the kids sneaking out to bring food to Toby while he is in hiding. If you're a fan of the first book, it's worth checking out the second, especially if you go in with no expectations and simply enjoy the story.

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### **Cindy says**

I didn't like this one nearly as much as *The Egypt Game*. It felt like the issues were too adult for kids this age. I mean, I know there are homeless kids out there. But they all seemed to handle this surprisingly well. And then at the end to come up with this new solution to turn the Gypsy Game into something else - I don't buy it. It's awful preachy.

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### **Jacob says**

Having read *The Egypt Game* in fifth grade, I was excited to read the sequel, and utterly disappointed. Decently written with a plot that occasionally manages to be engaging, but it never fully moves into the realm of the believable, or out of the (admittedly enormous) shadow of its predecessor.

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## **Daniella says**

I was tricked into thinking this would be like *The Egypt Game* and involve suspenseful, unexplainable events... instead it was just a story. I wanted to relive a bit of the supernatural thrill ZKS's books gave me when I read them as a child, but there wasn't any of that. Oh, well.

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## **Gale says**

Actually the story is not as grim as the review title implies, but one is reminded of the song, "Gypsies, tramps and thieves."

Anyway, soon after the *Egypt Game* has concluded the multi-ethnic gang is back, but things are deteriorating in Toby's home and soon he goes missing. Say, was he just pulling the kids' legs about his Gypsy ancestry or is he really in danger of being kidnapped? I felt the author was pulling one over on us; besides the use of chapter flip-flop, she filled out a skimpy plot with literary fluff.

Nevertheless, this is a very serious book in places, with themes of universal shunning and persecution. Focusing on the neglect of the underprivileged, she makes young readers aware of the plight of society's unwanted. The kids themselves face some ethical dilemmas and even wonder (how desperate can they be?) when to bring in adult aid! Snyder alternates between their pre-teen lifestyle and heavy themes with hints for social reform. I am not sure how much of the audience for whom this book was intended will enjoy this sequel. Is it meant to be entertainment or a political platform? Perhaps she just wants to point out the danger of an overactive imagination. Unfortunately this book does not live up to its Egyptian predecessor.

(May 9, 2012. I welcome dialogue with teachers.)

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## **Maanasa says**

Not nearly as good as its predecessor. *The Gypsy Game* lacks ingenuity, mystery, enchantment, character development, relationships and all those wonderful things about the first one. A tolerable read, but disappointing.

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## **Magda says**

I expect superlative children's fiction from Ms. Snyder, but this one was just okay. Maybe I'm too old for these "games"? I remember being entranced by *The Egypt Game*.

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## **Doreen says**

It's hard to follow up something as awesome as *The Egypt Game*, and to a certain extent, Ms Snyder doesn't try to copy the formula that made that book so well-cherished (by myself, at least.) She does take the familiar

characters and put them in a situation that sort of evolves naturally from April's final suggestion in TEG, and while it's good, solid story-telling, the magic of the previous book is missing. The story is still fairly compelling, but I think what this book mostly lacks is the charming characterization of TEG. Here, Ken comes across as dull and April as shrill, and you don't really learn anything new or surprising about the other kids; neither do any of them grow, as they almost all did in TEG. It's great to see what they're up to after the events of the other book, but I have the feeling that if you hadn't read it, you wouldn't really care about these characters.

On a minor though still important note, the drawings that so enlivened TEG were sorely missed. It would've been nice to see a line drawing of the kids trying to give Bear a bath, for example. I hate to sound so negative about an author I love, and while this is a good book, it's just not one of her best, and she's written some amazing stuff.

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### **Suzanneli4653 says**

The gypsy game was a good book, but it sort of dissapointed me a little. I expected it to be better than The Egypt Game but it wasn't in my opinion. It did continue the adventures of the Egypt Game when the kids created a new game, but it wasn't like anything that I had expected.

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