

# THE MARVELS

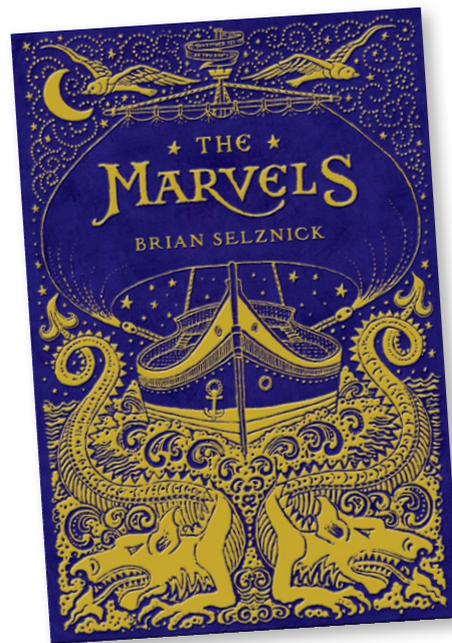
by Brian Selznick

Scholastic

Shortlisted for the 2017 Kate Greenaway Medal  
and the Amnesty CILIP Honour

*'The whole production is a work of art that is outstanding  
on every level... an innovative and fully immersive experience'*

– Judging panel



## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHT

**Article 16: Every grown up has the right to marry and have a family if they want to.**

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

The Marvels leaves few heartstrings untugged in this saga about love, loss, family, truth and fiction, and history such as the AIDS epidemic.

It's two stories – one told in pencil drawings, the other in words – which come together at the end. It begins in 1766 with around 390 pages of pictures telling the adventures of Billy Marvel and his family of actors over five generations. Leaping to 1990, the prose story follows Joseph escaping school to find refuge with his mysterious Uncle.

The book encourages children to understand that they have the right to belong, and that all families are unique. Billy loses his brother but finds a family in the theatre to raise him. One baby is abandoned and loved while another is left with his father who later banishes him. Joseph has two parents but feels more connection with his Uncle Albert.

Love is also essential to the story. Joseph heads into the unknown out of love for Blink and Albert weaves stories about the man he loves which he is unable to finish after Billy has died. It celebrates the right to choose our partners but in some countries the right to marry is denied to gay and lesbian couples.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrines our right to healthcare. Both Billy and Albert receive treatment they need thanks to people like Barbara. Not all men, women and children who are living with HIV around the world receive what they are entitled to.

## HUMAN RIGHTS THEMES IN THIS STORY

Right to a family, home, privacy, healthcare; freedom of expression; right to marry; LGBTI rights.

## QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE HUMAN RIGHTS

- What do you think about how all the parents behave?
- How do you feel when Leo writes 'I hope one day I will find where I belong too'?
- What does it mean to be courageous?
- Do you have any family legends?
- Do you like books that tell stories in just pictures, and jump around in time?

## ACTIVITY

Imagine the next generation of occupants to live in Billy and Albert's house after Joseph and Blink. Write a story about them in words or pictures or both.

## RESEARCH

Find out when and why women were allowed to become professional actors.



## We are all born free and equal

The atrocities of World War II sparked a determination to protect the rights of all human beings, everywhere. On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The preamble says it must be shared, learned by children and be a part of all our lives.

For a simplified version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights go to [www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr)

For more free educational resources from Amnesty International go to [www.amnesty.org.uk/education](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/education)



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