

A Series of Unfortunate Events

by Lemony Snicket



BOOK THE FOURTH

The Miserable Mill

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藏书章

BOOKS OF THE FOURTH

THE MISERABLE MILL

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Lemony Snicket

EGMONT

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We bring stories to life

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Our story began over a century ago, when seventeen-year-old Egmont Harald Petersen found a coin in the street.

He was on his way to buy a flyswatter, a small hand-operated printing machine that he then set up in his tiny apartment.

The coin brought him such good luck that today Egmont has offices in over 30 countries around the world. And that lucky coin is still kept at the company's head offices in Denmark.

BOOK THE FOURTH

THE MISERABLE MILL

A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

BOOK THE FIRST
THE BAD BEGINNING

BOOK THE SECOND
THE REPTILE ROOM

BOOK THE THIRD
THE WIDE WINDOW

BOOK THE FOURTH
THE MISERABLE MILL

BOOK THE FIFTH
THE AUSTERE ACADEMY

BOOK THE SIXTH
THE ERSATZ ELEVATOR

BOOK THE SEVENTH
THE VILE VILLAGE

BOOK THE EIGHTH
THE HOSTILE HOSPITAL

BOOK THE NINTH
THE CARNIVOROUS CARNIVAL

BOOK THE TENTH
THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

BOOK THE ELEVENTH
THE GRIM GROTTTO

BOOK THE TWELFTH
THE PENULTIMATE PERIL

BOOK THE THIRTEENTH
THE END

For Beatrice –
My love flew like a butterfly
Until death swooped down like a bat
As the poet Emma Montana McElroy said:
'That's the end of that.'



C H A P T E R

One

Sometime during your life—in fact, very soon—you may find yourself reading a book, and you may notice that a book's first sentence can often tell you what sort of story your book contains. For instance, a book that began with the sentence "Once upon a time there was a family of cunning little chipmunks who lived in a hollow tree" would probably contain a story full of talking animals who get into all sorts of mischief. A book that began with the sentence "Emily sat down and looked at the stack of blueberry pancakes her mother had prepared for her, but she was too nervous about Camp Timbertops to eat a bite" would probably contain a story full of

giggly girls who have a grand old time. And a book that began with the sentence “Gary smelled the leather of his brand-new catcher’s mitt and waited impatiently for his best friend Larry to come around the corner” would probably contain a story full of sweaty boys who win some sort of trophy. And if you liked mischief, a grand old time, or trophies, you would know which book to read, and you could throw the rest of them away.

But this book begins with the sentence “The Baudelaire orphans looked out the grimy window of the train and gazed at the gloomy blackness of the Finite Forest, wondering if their lives would ever get any better,” and you should be able to tell that the story that follows will be very different from the story of Gary or Emily or the family of cunning little chipmunks. And this is for the simple reason that the lives of Violet, Klaus, and Sunny Baudelaire are very different from most people’s lives, with the main difference being the amount of unhappiness,

horror, and despair. The three children have no time to get into all sorts of mischief, because misery follows them wherever they go. They have not had a grand old time since their parents died in a terrible fire. And the only trophy they would win would be some sort of First Prize for Wretchedness. It is atrociously unfair, of course, that the Baudelaires have so many troubles, but that is the way the story goes. So now that I've told you that the first sentence will be "The Baudelaire orphans looked out the grimy window of the train and gazed at the gloomy blackness of the Finite Forest, wondering if their lives would ever get any better," if you wish to avoid an unpleasant story you had best put this book down.

The Baudelaire orphans looked out the grimy window of the train and gazed at the gloomy blackness of the Finite Forest, wondering if their lives would ever get any better. An announcement over a crackly loudspeaker had just told them that in a few minutes they would

arrive in the town of Paltryville, where their new caretaker lived, and they couldn't help wondering who in the world would want to live in such dark and eerie countryside. Violet, who was fourteen and the eldest Baudelaire, looked out at the trees of the forest, which were very tall and had practically no branches, so they looked almost like metal pipes instead of trees. Violet was an inventor, and was always designing machines and devices in her head, with her hair tied up in a ribbon to help her think, and as she gazed out at the trees she began work on a mechanism that would allow you to climb to the top of any tree, even if it were completely bare. Klaus, who was twelve, looked down at the forest floor, which was covered in brown, patchy moss. Klaus liked to read more than anything else, and he tried to remember what he had read about Paltryville mosses and whether any of them were edible. And Sunny, who was just an infant, looked out at the smoky gray sky that hung over the forest like a damp sweater. Sunny

had four sharp teeth, and biting things with them was what interested her most, and she was eager to see what there was available to bite in the area. But even as Violet began planning her invention, and Klaus thought of his moss research, and Sunny opened and closed her mouth as a prebiting exercise, the Finite Forest looked so uninspiring that they couldn't help wondering if their new home would really be a pleasant one.

"What a lovely forest!" Mr. Poe remarked, and coughed into a white handkerchief. Mr. Poe was a banker who had been in charge of managing the Baudelaire affairs since the fire, and I must tell you that he was not doing a very good job. His two main duties were finding the orphans a good home and protecting the enormous fortune that the children's parents had left behind, and so far each home had been a catastrophe, a word which here means "an utter disaster involving tragedy, deception, and Count Olaf." Count Olaf was a terrible man who

wanted the Baudelaire fortune for himself, and tried every disgusting scheme he could think of to steal it. Time after time he had come very close to succeeding, and time after time the Baudelaire orphans had revealed his plan, and time after time he had escaped—and all Mr. Poe had ever done was cough. Now he was accompanying the children to Paltryville, and it pains me to tell you that once again Count Olaf would appear with yet another disgusting scheme, and that Mr. Poe would once again fail to do anything even remotely helpful. “What a lovely forest!” Mr. Poe said again, when he was done coughing. “I think you children will have a good home here. I hope you do, anyway, because I’ve just received a promotion at Mulctuary Money Management. I’m now the Vice President in Charge of Coins, and from now on I will be busier than ever. If anything goes wrong with you here, I will have to send you to boarding school until I have time to find you another home, so please be on your best behavior.”

"Of course, Mr. Poe," Violet said, not adding that she and her siblings had always been on their best behavior but that it hadn't done them any good.

"What is our new caretaker's name?" Klaus asked. "You haven't told us."

Mr. Poe took a piece of paper out of his pocket and squinted at it. "His name is Mr. Wuz— Mr. Qui— I can't pronounce it. It's very long and complicated."

"Can I see?" Klaus asked. "Maybe I can figure out how to pronounce it."

"No, no," Mr. Poe said, putting the paper away. "If it's too complicated for an adult, it's much too complicated for a child."

"Ghand!" Sunny shrieked. Like many infants, Sunny spoke mostly in sounds that were often difficult to translate. This time she probably meant something like "But Klaus reads many complicated books!"

"He'll tell you what to call him," Mr. Poe continued, as if Sunny had not spoken. "You'll

find him at the main office of the Lucky Smells Lumbermill, which I'm told is a short walk from the train station."

"Aren't you coming with us?" Violet asked.

"No," Mr. Poe said, and coughed again into his handkerchief. "The train only stops at Paltryville once a day, so if I got off the train I would have to stay overnight and I'd miss another day at the bank. I'm just dropping you off here and heading right back into the city."

The Baudelaire orphans looked worriedly out the window. They weren't very happy about just being dropped off in a strange place, as if they were a pizza being delivered instead of three children all alone in the world.

"What if Count Olaf shows up?" Klaus asked quietly. "He swore he'd find us again."

"I have given Mr. Bek— Mr. Duy— I have given your new caretaker a complete description of Count Olaf," said Mr. Poe. "So if by some stretch of the imagination he shows up

in Paltryville, Mr. Sho— Mr. Gek— will notify the authorities.”

“But Count Olaf is always in disguise,” Violet pointed out. “It’s often difficult to recognize him. Just about the only way you can tell it’s him is if you see that tattoo of an eye that he has on his ankle.”

“I included the tattoo in my description,” Mr. Poe said impatiently.

“But what about Count Olaf’s assistants?” Klaus asked. “He usually brings at least one of them with him, to help out with his treachery.”

“I described all of them to Mr.— I have described all of them to the owner of the mill,” Mr. Poe said, holding a finger up as he counted off Olaf’s horrible associates. “The hook-handed man. The bald man with the long nose. Two women with white powder all over their faces. And that rather chubby one who looks like neither a man nor a woman. Your new guardian is aware of them all, and if there’s any problem,

remember you can always contact me or any of my associates at Mulctuary Money Management.”

“Casca,” Sunny said glumly. She probably meant something like “That’s not very reassuring,” but nobody heard her over the sound of the train whistle as they arrived at Paltryville Station.

“Here we are,” Mr. Poe said, and before the children knew it they were standing in the station, watching the train pull away into the dark trees of the Finite Forest. The clattering noise of the train engine got softer and softer as the train raced out of sight, and soon the three siblings were all alone indeed.

“Well,” Violet said, picking up the small bag that contained the children’s few clothes, “let’s find the Lucky Smells Lumbermill. Then we can meet our new caretaker.”

“Or at least learn his name,” Klaus said glumly, and took Sunny’s hand.

If you are ever planning a vacation, you may