

RAVE REVIEWS by Jean E. Eustance

I had heard that Andrew Clements was a great author for children's books in the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade range. In the Pine Bush Library we have a lot of books by him. I read **Things Not Seen** and then its sequel, **Things Hoped For**, and found that "great" is a good word for this author. These two short novels zip right along, and they draw you in. The situations are wild, but the books feel real.

**Things Not Seen** is probably meant for the sixth-grade level but certainly would be fun for older readers too. I know I loved it, and it's been a **long** time since I was in high school.

In that book, Bobby Phillips is a normal teenager who wakes up one morning, and finds that he is invisible. Why and how, and what now?! His parents are a scientist and a college professor, so the answer, when it arrives, is based on science (or pseudo-science) and not on magic. This isn't Hogwarts, this is Chicago. Bobby does not sit at home, worrying. He does his worrying on the move, and he bumps into the one person who can help him. She's about his age, and she is blind. So Alicia doesn't notice that he's invisible.

Soon, she and her parents are clued into the problem, and are working on it with Bobby and his family when Social Services gets involved and wants to know why Bobby hasn't attended school in three weeks. I can't tell you the ending, but it's not the parents who solve the problems.

**Things Hoped For** involves Gwendolyn Page, who is 17 and has been practicing steadily to play her violin and audition for a place at a prestigious music school. She has been living in New York City with her Grandfather, when her Great Uncle Hank shows up and raises ruction. He wants to sell Grampa's house right out from underneath him, and disrupt Gwen's life at the absolutely critical moment. Then Grampa disappears. A new friend, named Robert, shows up. His girlfriend is named Alicia. Do these names sound familiar?

Speaking of names, where did **Things Not Seen** and **Things Hoped For** come from? Andrew Clements got the titles of his books from the Letter to the Hebrews, in the New Testament of the Bible. Hebrews 11:1 reads "Now faith is the assurance of **things hoped for**, the conviction of **things not seen.**" Andrew Clements creates characters whom you hope for and makes you believe in things you can't see.