

SEQUEL TO THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

The MISTFITS

A COPYCAT CONUNDRUM



NEWBERY HONOR WINNER AND
NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST

LISA YEE

ART BY CALDECOTT MEDALIST AND
NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER

DAN SANTAT

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

RHTeachersLibrarians.com



RHCBS

ABOUT THE BOOK

When San Francisco is barraged with strange attacks—like earthquakes affecting only two city blocks at a time—who're you gonna call? An elite team of crime-fighting underdogs, that's who! The Misfits are on the case in this hilarious illustrated series!

Oof! After solving the case of the Royal Rumpus, Olive Cobin Zang and her elite team of underdogs are on top of the world. As the awkward, crime-fighting Misfits, they're acing every mission thrown at them from NOCK (aka No One Can Know, the covert agency they work for).

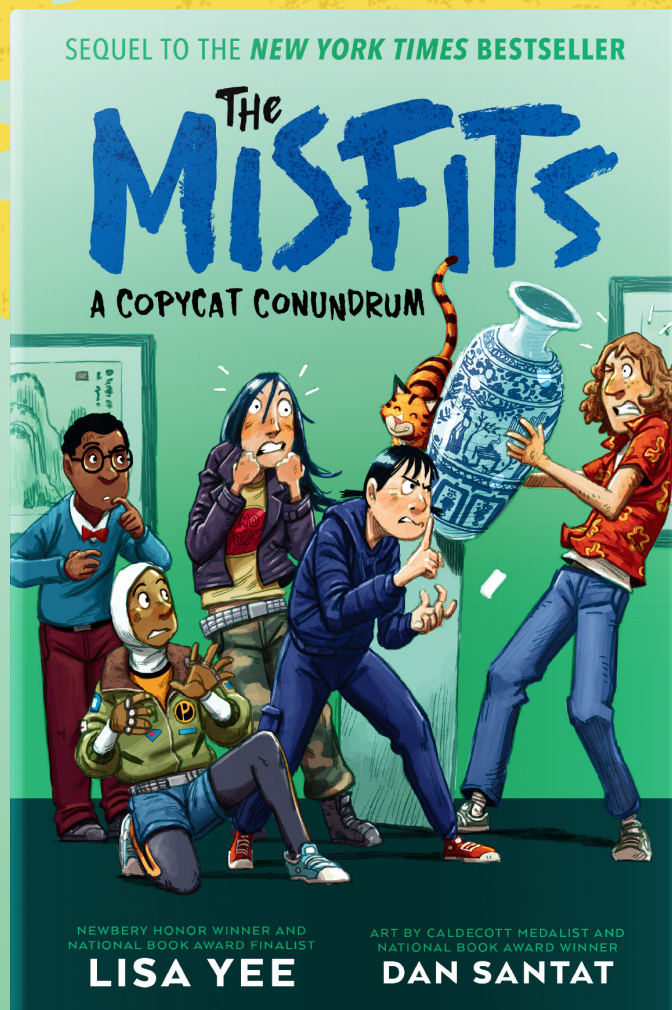
But when their classmate Zeke starts receiving threatening notes, the Misfits are stumped. They're no strangers to danger, but this case is a total head-scratcher. Who would target kind, friendly Zeke . . . unless he's not what he seems to be?

At the same time unusual earthquakes start shaking up San Francisco, priceless art goes missing, and the Misfits are called to investigate. Is it a coincidence that the city is under attack while Zeke is getting mysterious messages? Or is it all just a cover for a scheme bigger than any they've faced before?

For other Misfit adventures from Newbery Honoree Lisa Yee and Caldecott Medalist Dan Santat, don't miss *The Misfits #1: A Royal Conundrum*!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lisa Yee has taken a private-investigator course, and it's slightly possible that she's a secret undercover operative. She's also a Newbery Honoree and a National Book Award finalist for *Maizy Chen's Last Chance*. Some of her other twenty-one novels include the groundbreaking *Millicent Min*, *Girl Genius*; *Stanford Wong Flunks Big-Time*; and the DC Super Hero Girls series. A frequent contributor to NPR's "Books We Love," she divides her time between Western Massachusetts and Los Angeles.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Dan Santat is a #1 *New York Times* bestselling author and illustrator of over a hundred books. His picture book *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend* received the Caldecott Medal. He also illustrated *The Blur*, *Lift*, and *Drawn Together*, all written by Minh Lê, and all of which received critical acclaim. Dan is also the creator of the Disney animated hit *The Replacements*. He lives in Southern California with his family. Learn more at dansantatbooks.com or visit him on Instagram and X at @dsantat.

PRAISE FOR THE SERIES

“Full of heart and humor with twisty turns and unforgettable underdogs.

Just like the priceless jewels the team is trying to protect, this book is a total gem. You’ll wish you were a misfit too.”

—JAMES PONTI, *New York Times* bestselling author of *City Spies*

“There are hilarious high jinks and outlandish plot points aplenty, plus an astonishingly inventive array of technology that **WOULD MAKE EVEN JAMES BOND JEALOUS.**”

—BOOKLIST

“A fantastical blend of **QUIRKY CHARACTERS AND GOOFY ADVENTURES.**”

—KIRKUS REVIEWS

“A **RAPIDLY PACED** narrative.”

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

“**CLEVER AND FUNNY**, this rousing mystery-adventure will be a hit with a wide audience.”

—SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

“A *Royal Conundrum* . . . is action, adventure, and fun with a group of young underdogs worth rooting for.

THE MISFITS ARE A TEAM OF HEROES FOR THE OUTCAST IN EVERYONE.”

—SHELF AWARENESS

“**AN ENTERTAINING MYSTERY**

with good kids working together to defeat the bad guys and, in the process, finding their place in the world.”

—THE HORN BOOK



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Ironically, Olive finds a sense of freedom at the Reforming Arts School (RASCH), formerly a maximum security prison. “Olive sometimes felt like a prisoner at her old school. Yet here at RASCH, she’d never felt freer” (p. 13). Why do you think she feels this way? Have you ever felt trapped or limited in your school? Why or why not?
- Olive appreciates many aspects of her new school, including its efforts to cultivate a more accepting and independent school environment. She notes that “because RASCH celebrated unique, creative people, it made this unconventional academy the perfect cover for covert training activities” (p. 15). What kind of activities and skills could be cultivated in a place like RASCH? What qualities of RASCH make creative youth feel more at home?
- When Zeke goes to Olive with the mysterious letters he’s been receiving, explaining, “You always seem like you’ve got things figured out” (p. 16), she’s amazed that he views her in such a way. Have you ever been surprised by another person’s perception of you? Have you ever been surprised by another person’s perception of themselves?
- The Misfits spend time learning and training at school but also regularly take time to explore San Francisco. Monica tells the group, “Being out and about in the real world keeps you on your toes!” (p. 30) What does she mean by this? What can you learn in the real world versus in the classroom?
- Theo realizes the earthquakes hitting San Francisco are *anomalies* because they are limited to a specific radius in the city. An anomaly is something that deviates from what is expected or that doesn’t fit a pattern. Can you think of examples of anomalies? While the word *anomaly* is often used to describe unusual phenomena in nature, a personal can also feel like they are an anomaly. Have you ever felt like an anomaly? Why?
- Chapter 24 takes place at Blight Beach, an artists’ colony. What is an artists’ colony, and what characteristics make Blight Beach one? What is needed to make a place into a refuge for artists?
- When Olive discovers Theo surrounded by a dangerous motorcycle gang, she notices he doesn’t look scared. However, she knows that “the Misfits were trained to hide their emotions in dire circumstances” (p. 154). Why do you think putting on a blank face is a necessary part of the Misfits’ training? Have you ever had to hide your emotions? Was there a time when you wished you hadn’t?
- Primrose and her friends continue to taunt and insult the Misfits (p. 178). What characterizes Primrose as a bully? How do Olive, Phil, and the other Misfits handle Primrose’s bullying tactics? What are other actions they could take to confront bullying?
- While planning the break-in at the *Karbon Museum of Arts and Antiquities*, Olive begins to have doubts about the Misfits’ gadgets as well as her own skills and abilities. She reminds herself that “Modest always said that worry, in the right amount, was a good thing” (p. 197). Modest also had a similar saying about fear. How can worry or fear be a good thing? When do worry and fear become detrimental?
- Phil is the “tech wizard” of the group and leader of the Misfits’ Command Central. Her inventions include Puke Pellets, Super Slick, Stink Spray, FoggyGogs, and the Ultra Stick. Phil also specially programs technology for the group, designing their ComChoms for quick communication and their self-driving vehicle Vana to be shock absorbent. Which invention of Phil’s do you find most useful, and what could you use it for?



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

DIVE INTO HISTORY

- *California Gold Rush*: As Zeke begins exploring his family history, he learns his great-great-uncle was a first mate on a merchant ship that sailed between the United States and China during the California Gold Rush of the mid-1800s. The gold rush is an important piece of the state's history. Conduct research on this period and present your findings in a brochure. Start by exploring the history introduced in the story, including the entry of thousands of Chinese immigrants, abandoned ships, and life in mining camps.

ART EXPLORATION

- *Foggy Island Map*: Explore a key setting of the book and the home of RASCH by creating a map of Foggy Island. Using the descriptions in chapter 1, draw a map that includes as many of the island's landmarks as you can, including Foggy Manor, Butter Bakery, the lighthouse, and the DONUT TRESPASS! sign. As a challenge, use chapter 9 as a guide and add the underground tunnels and bunkers discovered by Olive and James.
- *Make Your Own Forgery*: The Misfits quickly learn that the arts and antiques world is full of fakes and mysteries. Try creating your own forgery by choosing a famous work of art to replicate. Be creative and think about how to paint in the style of the original or how you might age a substance, as Birdie did in the story.

CREATE AN ESCAPE ROOM

The Misfits love going to escape rooms and are often required to work with SUCCESS—speed, unity, confidence, creativity, endurance, strength, smarts—Simulators. These immersive simulations help them hone their intuitive and intellectual skills, allow them to identify traps, and encourage them to solve complex mysteries.

Use creative and outside-the-box thinking to plan an adventure for your friends or classmates that would engage their SUCCESS skills.

Objective: You receive a tip-off that there will be a break-in at the local museum. You must go to the museum and identify the work being targeted, bypass the security system, and grab the artwork before the thieves do.

1. **Set Up the Escape Room:** Choose a room in your house or school and decorate it with props or drawings that make it resemble a museum. Plant pieces of art and select which one will be the target piece that the group will be working to identify (the other pieces will act as decoys).
2. **Plan Out the Clue Path:** The group should be directed to the first puzzle. The answer to the puzzle will lead them to the next clue, and so on. The final clue should be a number lock or combination that acts as the code for unlocking the artwork's security system. You can use a numerical padlock or simply seal the artwork in an envelope that can only be opened with the correct code.



3. Prepare Clues:

- a. Hide puzzle pieces around the room as clues to identifying the target artwork. The pieces can be slips of paper that form a map or a picture of the artwork. The group must find the hidden pieces to solve the puzzle.
 - b. Write a secret message that the group must find or decipher that will lead them to the next clue. It can be written in invisible ink (or lemon juice) or in code using a simple method such as a Caesar cipher (the letters of the alphabet are shifted).
 - c. Embed some physical challenges for your group. Tape can be used to create a balance beam on the floor or clues may be hidden under a table or chair.
 - d. Create a number lock to act as the art's security system. This puzzle should lead to a correct set of numbers to solve the problem. For example, you can write a complex math problem or create a pattern. This should be the final clue.
4. Test your escape room and check to see if the puzzles make sense and the clues are in the right order.
 5. Invite your friends to play and have fun completing your original simulation.



Educator's Guide prepared by Joanne Yi, PhD. Joanne is a former elementary teacher and an adjunct assistant professor of curriculum and instruction at Indiana University. She researches diversity and inclusion issues in children's literature.



Visit [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](https://www.rhteacherslibrarians.com), your online destination for all the resources you need for your school or library!



@RHCBEducators



@RHCBTeachersLibrarians