



The Tunnels Below

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[Matthew Martin](#) [3]

Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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A brilliantly imagined other-world adventure that pitches a young girl into a very strange place, and up against a dangerous tyrant, **The Tunnels Below** is an impressive debut.

Cecilia Hudson-Gray is out celebrating her twelfth birthday with her family on a day trip to London ? so far, so ordinary, though there?s clearly something unusual about the marble her little sister gives her as a present. When it rolls onto the tube train she?s just got off, Cecilia steps back to retrieve it, only for the doors to shut. Separated from her family, the train whisks her away into the darkness. Emerging from ?the black of beyond?, she finds a whole new world, very different to the one she knows. The first friend she makes for example, is Kuffi, tall, friendly, human looking except for the fact that he has the face of a fox. The more she discovers in the tunnels below, the stranger it all is ? this is a place where music has a taste, and where things are often deliciously literal (you can actually live in the lime-light, ie. a district lit by neon lime-green light). Ruling it all though, through a mixture of intimidation and brutality, is the Corvus Community, under the leadership of the brutal Jacques d?Or. As in the best fantasy adventures, Cecilia?s challenge is to save her new friends from the enemy and, as we suspected, that marble might just have a part to play.

It?s hugely imaginative, and Wild-Palmer manages to keep the plot moving alongside intriguing descriptions of bizarre, quirky characters and customs. A message about the importance of standing up to oppression is delivered with a light touch and this is a fresh, original and enjoyable addition to the canon of hidden-world adventures.

Read our [Q&A interview with Nadine Wild-Palmer](#) [4].

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