


Invisible Lines

Mary Amato , Antonio Caparo (Illustrator)

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If there's one thing I'm good at it's making people laugh because when I'm standing up I'm what you call a stand-up comedian, and when I'm sitting down, I'm just plain funny.

Trevor is just plain funny, and he's lucky he is. Because this year he needs a sense of humor. Moving to a new home is hard enough—the sign reads Hedley Gardens, but everyone calls these projects Deadly Gardens. And the move to a fancy new school is even harder—all the kids from Deadly Gardens seem to be in the same classes and keep to themselves, but somehow Trevor's ended up in an advanced science class with kids who seem to have everything, and know everything, including how to please their strange new teacher.

Someone else might just give up, but Trevor has plans. This is going to be his year. And he is going to use whatever he has, do whatever it takes, to make it at this new school. He may not have what these other kids have, but Trevor knows he's got some stuff to show. No one is better at juggling in soccer, and he knows he can draw—he calls himself the Graffiti Guy.

But Xander, a star in the classroom and on the soccer field, has other plans for Trevor. He doesn't like anyone trespassing on his turf and begins to sabotage Trevor at every opportunity. Who is going to believe Trevor over the school star? Is there any way that Trevor can achieve his goals against a guy who is as good at bullying as he is at everything else he does?

Invisible Lines Details

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From Reader Review Invisible Lines for online ebook

Maia Ciambriello says

At first, I wasn't honestly thrilled to read this book. But once I got into it, it became one of my favorite books of all time. Although some parts got me confused, once I reread them, I understood. While reading this book, you can really relate to Trevor's (main character) feelings. I felt as if I were him, living in some dump, having a hard time in school. This book makes you realize how lucky we are for technology, food on our plate and a nice stable home. I recommend this book to anyone at all; even teachers! This book is very much in my top favorites!

Ian Smith says

I thought Invisible Lines was awesome. It is about a boy who is poor and wants to play soccer but he can't afford to play for the cool team. The story starts off with the family being really unhappy but it has a good ending. I would recommend reading it.

Kim says

Grades 6-8

Trevor's used to hardship: his dad is in jail, and his mom relies on him to watch his little brother and sister while she moves from job to job. But when they move to an even shabbier housing project and he starts at a new school, it's hard to keep his trademark sense of humor. Things seem to be looking up when he hits it off with some guys on the soccer team—even though he's never played on a formal team, he has always had a natural flair for the game. But these guys are from Buckingham Heights, where wealth is taken for granted, and when they invite him along to a high end soccer store, there's no way he can tell them that the only cleats he can afford will have to come from a thrift store. As he tries unsuccessfully to convince his mom that he can juggle soccer and homework and babysitting, his one saving grace comes from an unlikely source. Accidentally enrolled in a "gifted" science course, Trevor meets Mr. Ferguson. The teacher's knowledge of mushrooms and fungi is surpassed only by his skill at sparking curiosity. The scheduling error is soon discovered and Trevor is placed in the "correct" science class—but Mr. Ferguson, recognizing Trevor's disappointment, encourages him to challenge the rules and submit an application for the gifted program: "If you want something badly enough, you owe it to yourself to try to get it." In this story about overcoming obstacles, Amato shows a real flair for middle school voices. She does not back away from tough issues: abandoned children, abusive parents, and kids who steal are all part of daily life in Trevor's housing project. While the "invisible lines" of the title could refer to class and racial barriers, Amato's subtle sense of humor is at work, and the wordplay is her nod to the theme of connectedness among family and friends—not unlike that found in mycelia in the fungal kingdom. This fresh story is enhanced by notes and drawings from Trevor's "Kingdom of Fungi Identification Notebook." It should find a wide audience with its short chapters, snappy dialog, and scientific extras.

Bianca says

I haven't read a MG book in so long and I'm so glad that I got the chance to read this one!

Mary Amato writes in a way that captures the voice of a preteen boy so well that it feels as if you are witnessing the real thing. I absolutely loved reading about Trevor. He's living with his younger brother & sister and mother. They live in these bad apartments and don't have a lot of money. I loved that this book dealt with real life issues and all of which were written in a way that a younger audience can deal with.

One of the issues in the book is Trevor doesn't have enough money to be on a club soccer team. You can tell that he has a passion for the sport and as I was reading the book, I just felt bad for him and the things he went through. Also, I envied Trevor's artistic talents. Drawing was another passion of his and he used it wisely. He started his own little business around school and drew stuff for his little brother. And at the start of each chapter there are illustrations and I thought those were nice!

Another big aspect of the book is Trevor's science class. He is put in Summit Science -an advanced class- by mistake. His science teacher is one of those teachers that always keeps the class interesting and fun instead of the more common reading out of the textbook type as well as being a teacher that really cared about his students.

I really enjoyed the character of Diamond. She lives in the same apartment building as Trevor and is always singing throughout the book as she has dreams of becoming a famous singer one day. Amato does a great job describing a situation that Diamond and Trevor face. My only problem is I wished there had been more of this character!

Leslie (That Chick That Reads) says

Invisible Lines is centered around a boy named Trevor Musgrove. He's in middle school, has a younger brother and sister, a single mother, and a whole different world ahead of him. They move to a really tough housing project that everyone refers to as the "Deadly Gardens". His school is filled with rich kids mixed in with the lower class ones. He wants to fit in so badly with the rich popular kids that he does everything in his power to impress them. He's mistakenly enrolled in an AP or Pre-AP science class with a completely wacky teacher. Suddenly it feels as if his whole world is crashing down. Will it get better, or worse?

I picked up this novel the other night and completely devoured it! I found that I could relate to Trevor completely because I had a similar life to his when I was about his age. The different characters touched me so much! From Langston to his mother; they were just so passionate and heartwarming. I loved the fact that he had Mr. Ferguson because he was just the kind of teacher that I would've loved to have when I was growing up in Dallas before I moved to Frisco. He was one that actually cared about his students; he made learning so much fun! Especially since all he could seem to talk about would be Fungus or Mushrooms actually. It's so awesome the way the author mixed in the mushrooms to relate to everyday life. Like his Mycelium notes, he states that the universe talks like that; they don't talk with words but with actions in a sort. Maybe everyone's and everything is connected together in some way. His love for soccer was like my love for cross country; he would do anything for it and he was talented. There were moments in this novel where I like cried my heart out because what the conversations were about just hit a little too close to home. Heartwarming, funny and very touching; I have to give this novel 4 out of 5 paws.

Reed Grenager says

Good cool

Good good good good good good good good Good good good good good good good good Good good good
good good good good good Good good good good good good good good

Great awesome fun amazing
Really cool

Good good good good good good good good Good good good good good good good good Good good good
good good good good good

Ms.Gaye says

Invisible Lines, I thought about how things tie together so seamlessly sometimes, both above and below ground.

I'm always delighted at the connections in life. Last Thursday I opened up the New York Times to find a large headline in the home section titled "Mushrooming?" (available through KCLS databases) Having already decided to blog about Mary Amato's latest book Invisible Lines, I thought about how things tie together so seamlessly sometimes, both above and below ground.

Last year at the American Library Association conference I was chatting with several folks at a publishing reception. I don't remember exactly how mushrooms came up in the conversation (maybe it was the hors d'oeuvre) but I shared some very amazing facts I learned about the way mushrooms communicate. Another person in the group piped up with "I know! Isn't it fascinating?" I soon discovered that this charming, knowledgeable person was Mary Amato. She told me about the mushroom expert, Paul Stamets, she consulted at Evergreen State College - here in Washington State! - while doing research for her new book. Having just learned this stuff herself, Mary and I had a lively discussion about plant behavior; about the "invisible lines" mushrooms create as a form of communication, helping not only themselves but the plants around them.

I could hardly wait to read Invisible Lines. When it arrived, I started right in but I almost thought about not finishing it because it was so heartbreaking at times. While mushrooms are a topic in the book, that's not the real subject. It's really about Trevor, a boy with hopes and dreams; a talented boy growing up in a tough situation. At times I actually winced while reading, realizing Trevor's plans to "fit in" would obviously lead to disappointment; but Trevor had enough luck, spunk, and intelligence to make a success of his first year at yet another new school.

Amato has written a thought-provoking tale with believable characters and a compelling storyline. If you're looking for a good middle grade fiction book, try this one!

Cindy says

This is another one of the CYRM nominees. This book is going against Wild Things and Out of My Mind. I'm having a hard time choosing between Out of My Mind and this book. Both is very well-written. And both is very written very deeply. But I think I would choose this book despite everything. It connects to me the most. Even though Out of My Mind connects to me a lot too, I didn't cry as much in that book. Yeah. I grade how connected I am to a book by my crying. LOL. Jk.

The Cover:

I think this book cover is really bright an eye-catchy. And I totally get how it connects to the story.

The Characters/Plot:

The main character is named Trevor Musgrove. He is an awesome artist and plays soccer really well. He's pretty cool as a person. But the only thing that holds him back is that his family is poor. His mother is a single mother who also have two more kids. Trevor has one little brother whose five and a little sister whose two.

Trevor had just moved to another new place even worse than the last place he lived in. This new apartment is called Deadly Gardens where all the poor kids in his school lived. Trying to have a new start, Trevor tries to blend in with the popular, rich kids. He fits in all right. He;s pretty funny, he's cool, and he's talented. But he has to hide how poor he is.

Immediately, Trevor begins to hang out with the most popular boys in the school, Xander and Langley. Langley pretty cool and awesome despite how rich he is. If I was in the book, I'll probably start liking Langley.

Everything was cool when Trevor begins to show others his skills. Of course other people were like "Cool You're better than Xander!" And Xander who is the conceited, soccer star got jealous of Trevor and does his best to bring Trevor down.

In the end, Xander almost succeeded, but with his wits, Trevor outwits Xander without making Xander more mad at him.

And you're probably wondering what the heck there is to cry about in this book. Well, I was crying because of Trevor's argument with his mom. It's just sad. Okay. Or maybe I cry too easily.

The Extras:

So yeah. I'm choosing this book for the Middle School section!

And just in case you want to see the CYRM list, here it is:
<http://californiayoungreadermedal.org/Nominees2012-2013.pdf>

The Rating: (1-10): 9

More reviews @ <http://bookaholicfaggots.blogspot.com>

Rush says

The book "Invisible Lines" by Mary Amato is a amazing book from start to finish. This book falls into the genre of realistic fiction, which happens to be my favorite one. However an interesting thing about this book in particular is that it includes blemishes of non-fiction, mostly about Mushrooms. I enjoyed how the author slipped in these small segments as it was sort of a break from the intensity of the book itself. The book is about a boy named Trevor Musgrove and his experiences after moving to a new school and trying to fit in. Trevor Musgrove isn't a very wealthy child and sometimes he has to make sure certain people don't know his backstory in order to make friends. There were 4 literary elements the author used very well and intrigued me about the book. These were his use of characterization, conflict between characters, mood, and imagery. The way the author of this book used mood was very hard to identify, but very well done nonetheless. At the beginning of the book, the mood seems to be a progressively cheerful one, this is indicated as Trevors like slowly gets better and better and he get more accustomed to the new school and area he's moved to. This is evident in the fact that Trevor finally found a class he enjoys, he also agreed to try out for his favorite sport, soccer, and has devised a plan to do so, he has also made friends with the some of the most popular kids in school. However, you can already feel that the situation is tense. The author is obviously trying to lead up to something, in other words, she is foreshadowing what this is probably going to lead up to. The author indicated this by what she's told us about the situation Trevor is facing. For example, although he is planning to try out for the soccer team, his mother isn't too keen and may not let him. Another example is the fact that the only subject Trevor enjoys, Summit Science (Similar to Honors Classes), is not a subject he is supposed to be in. Trevor may see this as a happy accident, but something is bound to go wrong somewhere. As the book progresses, the mood does infact change into a tenser, disappointing one. You start to feel sympathetic for Trevor. You can see this as one of Trevor's few friends abandons him and starts to despise him. Another example is when his mother starts to work at a place called the fry factory, this enforces the fact that Trevor cannot try out for his soccer team as he has to babysit his siblings instead. This point in the book is clearly distinguishable as the climax.

Trevor faces many conflicts throughout this book, they could be classified as small conflicts, large important ones, conflicts with himself, and conflicts with others. A few examples of this literary element the author is trying to enforce occur when Trevor has to decide if he wants to disobey his mother and go to his soccer tryouts, which are very important to him, or stay back at home and watch over his siblings until his mother arrives home. This is an example of a conflict that Trevor faces with himself. The ongoing feud between Xander, Trevor's ex-best friend, and Trevor himself is a very obvious conflict Trevor faces with someone else. They used to be friends but now despise each other. Though this book mostly consists of miniature conflicts faced by a single main character, Trevor, he does in fact face a few that could get him in a lot of trouble. Approximately 3/4th's of the way through the book, around the climax, Trevor is accused of stealing Xanders cell phone as it is found inside his backpack. Though no one believes him, he is not guilty and is trying to figure out how to get himself out of this mess. During this section of the book, the tone is very scary and intense. I think the author is trying to paint a picture of a conflict that is very realistic and very serious. The author of this book used both direct and indirect characterization. If you investigate the book closely you

easily see morphed forms of direct characterization. This kind of characterization occurs because the author never fully explains to the audience a detail about the main character by saying something like "Trevor is a graffiti fanatic with an interest in soccer." The author usually tells us things in a direct yet indirect way. An example of this is when the author writes, "Because when I'm standing up I'm what you call a stand up comedian, and when I'm sitting down, I'm just plain funny," she isn't indirectly telling us that Trevor is a funny bloke because this isn't dialogue spoken by Trevor, it's more of an introduction. Though the author doesn't use a lot of direct characterization, indirect characterization is everywhere. For example, Trevor's effect on Diamond, a friend of Trevor's, is quite large. He helps her escape from her abusive step dad and takes initiative in order to stop it. Trevor is also a funny person and often makes his classmates laugh. While the author describes and interprets the reactions to Trevor's joke by his classmates, it helps show that Trevor is a talkative, funny, and bold figure. His interactions with the antagonist, Xander, also help to show his emotions and better draw you into the terrifying rollercoaster that is Trevor Musgrove's life.

The final literary element the author uses spectacularly is imagery. Infact, to enhance the immersion of the book, the author also has an illustrator, Antonio Caparo, add in small section of drawings such as the non-fiction sections. He uses his drawing in two main situations in the book. These are when Trevor does some graffiti and when Trevor takes notes in the Summit Science Program. The illustrator does small sketches in the corner of the book to show what Trevor Musgrove might draw in certain situations. These sketches help immerse you into the book as they add another dimension into the book, a visual one. These sections sometimes ended up being my favorite part of the book, as they were filled with fancy techniques of drawing and graffiti, they were overall a great addition to an already great book. The final use of illustration in this book was during the note taking parts of this book. During the scenes where Trevor is in science class he is often requested to take notes. Since his character is very artsy, you can imagine his notes would be too. There are little drawing of notes which not only provide a sense of imagery but also a whiff of non-fiction to read. These notes often refer to Mushrooms and are surprisingly well written and very informative. I would even go as far as to admit that I went back to look at these sketches after reading the book because they were so interesting and I had never seen anything like them in any book i've read. Because of all the previous things the author and illustrator did perfectly, it's easy to forgive one or two mistakes. This book was fantastic in its sense of mood and immersion and I would most certainly recommend it to anyone interested in a good read.

JilltheOWL says

When I first started reading this book I almost had to stop. Not because the writing was bad, but because the book starts out with a really sad event, and I didn't know if I wanted to read a book about such sad lives. But I made myself keep reading. I'm glad I did or I would've missed all the hope this story carries. Trevor is a main character that you can root for because he doesn't give up. He always has the hope and belief things will work out. There were times when I was like "Trevor, come on bud it's just not gonna happen", but he never took an answer he didn't like. He worked as hard as he could to make it what he wanted it to be. Although his ability to have hope was strained at times, it was always there. Several roadblocks are thrown up in front of him, he plowed on. I had to admire that! He kept me reading because I wanted to see him succeed. You will too.

After seeing the science teacher I work with wearing a t-shirt with mushrooms and their scientific names, I passed the book on to him. Trevor is placed in an advanced science class where the instructor has them

searching for and learning about mushrooms. For this class he has to keep a field journal. That teacher and journal help Trevor go beyond what might normally be expected of him. After I told the science teacher I work with about this, he was really excited to read it. I think he'll like it.

Final Thought: A great book for middle schoolers about never believing people when they tell you your dreams aren't possible.

Best for ages: 11-14 There are a few parts of the book that might be too serious for the younger kids.

Maura says

I got to read a ARC of *Invisible Lines* By Mary Amato. WOW am I glad that Beth contacted me at first I was very iffy because it didn't seem like my type of book, also it's rated for younger kids not teens, but once I started reading I forgot all my worries. I mean I RECOMMEND THIS BOOK FOR YOUNGER KIDS AND TEENS A ND EVEN ADULTS. I mean the book is such a realistic view of the world. It has realistic dialogue too. Mary Amato tackles a lot of issues that are big in our world. For example: Bullying, not getting everything we want, domestic violence, and ect. This book was simply amazing. It's fast paced and is funny. Trevor is a very relatable character, he has problems that most of us face: trying to fit in and not having a dad around 24/7. Trevor learns that it doesn't matter if your rich or poor or where you come from. Also you shouldn't judge people on status either. I'd probably could write 10 pages of what I liked but you guys probably would get bored so all I'm going to say is I seriously recommend this book. I had a bad week this week, mainly bullying issues, so when I read Trevor's story I could relate to Trevor somewhat and I really liked his mother's advice to raise above it. The next time I face my bulliers I'm going to raise above it. The only complaints I have is I wish they could of had less science stuff *even though I do realize that was a main part in the story* because I'm not smart in that area so it was hard to keep up and understand it. The other thing I wish the bullying could of started earlier between Xander and Trevor then later. That all I have to complain about. Now who is going to read *Invisible Line* when it comes out?

Andrew says

This is the third 2011-12 Missouri Truman Award nominee that I have picked up. This is another book that is very deserving of a nomination.

Invisible Lines is one of the most convincing first person narratives that I have ever read. Trevor Musgrove, the story's narrator, is such an accessible, believable, and enjoyable main character.

Trevor lives with his mom, little brother Michael, and little sister Tish. They live in the projects in an apartment called "Deadly" Gardens. Trevor's mom is trying hard to make ends meet, but is not having great success. From what I can gather, Trevor's father is in jail and Michael and Tish's father has ran off from the family.

This book deals with social class, and I must admit, I was worried about this book at first because of this. I thought it might perpetrate the social stereotype that all rich people are arrogant, "evil" jerks. To a small extent I don't think it fully avoids this, and this is the only reason I couldn't give it a 5 star review. Amato doesn't quite convince me that she is not trying to make the case that rich people do act a certain way. To her

credit she doesn't go overboard building Trevor's mom up as some heroine who has been wronged by those that have more than her. Trevor's mom does seem to realize that she has created her own mess. Many of Trevor's values are focused on treating all with respect and being the better person, another plus.

Trevor makes an observation on page 259 that bugged me. "I jump down and stare at the Dumpster. I can't help thinking about Charlie [subplot, "Charlie" an infant, is found in the dumpster in a cardboard box at Deadly Gardens early in the story]. How come some babies get cardboard boxes and other babies get houses like Langley's [wealthier supporting character]? That doesn't seem fair. It seems like everybody should start the same....But you can't pick how you start, can you? So, is it luck? Good luck if you end up in Langley's house and bad luck if you end up in a Dumpster? How can something as important as your life be based on luck? And when you know you're not lucky, how are you supposed to feel?"

I couldn't help but wonder if I was seeing Amato's personal values bleed through? It could just be that a young man of Trevor's age and social class may see the world this way and the author is doing a good job of character development. Whatever the case, there's no such thing as "luck" in life. You make bad decisions, you have bad consequences. People that make good decisions usually end up having a better life.

Amato does deal with the issue of domestic violence very well. She kind of surprises you in how she throws it in toward the end of the book. I never really saw it coming.

I highly recommend *Invisible Lines* to just about anyone. It's a great realistic fiction story that keeps you moving along at a good pace.

Lexile 650

Kirra says

Invisible Lines is a great book that teaches you about character and includes a lot of symbolism, It is a very great book and I suggest reading it.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Sally Kruger aka "Readingjunkie" for TeensReadToo.com

Even with the odds stacked against him, Trevor Musgrove proves that determination and a sense of humor can work wonders.

Moving to a new school has its challenges. Trevor, his mother, and his two younger siblings are moving into a new apartment. It is a pretty crappy place with smelly hallways, broken elevators, and a definite criminal element. Unfortunately, it's all they can afford. All three kids wear secondhand clothes and sleep on mattresses from a place called Save the Children. Trevor's mom works two jobs and that leaves him babysitting the two younger kids when he'd rather be playing soccer and hanging out with his new friends.

School could offer a breath of fresh air for Trevor. The kids from his underprivileged neighborhood attend

school along with a bunch of rich kids from a different part of town. Trevor discovers himself in a science class for gifted kids in something known as the Summit program. At first he is worried about not making the grade, but once he meets the unusual teacher and starts learning amazing things about mushrooms, he finds out learning is fun and easier than he ever imagined.

A big soccer fan, Trevor also finds he has a chance to try out for an elite traveling soccer league. When he mentions it to his overworked mother, she immediately says no way. "Too expensive" and "who will babysit while she has to work" are her reasons for saying no, but Trevor doesn't give up easily. He secretly attends the tryouts and gets a place on the team. It sounds like good news, but that's when everything else begins to go wrong.

INVISIBLE LINES by Mary Amato is a fast-paced story of one boy and his fight to help his family, make his mother proud, and meet the challenges of an accelerated program. Amato combines soccer, art, and science in a tale that will grab readers on page one.

Aimed at a middle grade audience, INVISIBLE LINES is excellent for independent reading or for use with a group. The characters are typical middle school students in situations that will provide discussion material as well as entertainment.

Susan Taylor says

A beneficial lesson for kids about poverty and how desperately our little ones will attempt to cover it up - cleats that are two sizes too small, a fibs about why a boy doesn't have a cell phone, or even a father.
