



THE BOOKS of MARVELLA



MARVELOUS

TRAVIS THRASHER



WHAT READERS ARE SAYING . . .

“*Marvelous* is a fun mixture of suspense, teenage angst, love, and tragedy. It’s a story that somehow hovers between hope and hopelessness. Travis Thrasher’s stories feature characters that demand to be invested in and rooted for. He has a knack for crafting a story that leaves you wanting more, and thankfully *Marvelous* is definitely that type of story and a great beginning to a series.”

TOM FARR

“*Marvelous* didn’t just make me identify with a teenage boy; I *became* Brandon and felt his pain, loneliness, and joy. Thrasher’s finely crafted thriller-mystery put my life on hold for a day, ruined my fingernails, and left me wondering how I could possibly wait until book number two.”

CHRIS BAILEY PEARCE

“*Marvelous*, the first of the Books of Marvella, will draw you into a teenage world of pathetic parents, alcohol, drugs, bullies, outcasts, romance, mystery, and the supernatural. And it wouldn’t be a Travis Thrasher story without a creepy uncle, a killer on the loose, corrupt police, and a classic rock playlist. Thank goodness it’s fiction!”

BETTY JO HENDRICKSON



“Wow! *Marvelous* was compulsively readable; it hits a lot of the same notes that the Solitary Tales reached. If you like compelling characters with an intriguing premise, a bit of music, danger, and high school angst thrown in for good measure, all wrapped up in a story that explores themes of God’s redemption—get ready. This first book hints at a series that is sure to be as wildly entertaining as it is unforgettable.”

JOEL DAVIS

“Thrasher excels in making you feel what his characters are going through, whether or not you can personally relate. Only the best fiction can do that, and Thrasher does it so easily you barely notice until you start feeling along with the character. Thrasher is a writer unlike any other. He’s written love stories, adventure, mystery, horror, Christian movie novelizations, and even a few extrapolations of country music songs. And he’s good at them all. But creepy-YA-life-is-beyond-weird-coming-of-age stories? That’s definitely what he’s best at.”

JOSH OLDS, LIFEISSTORY.COM

“Prepare to fall in love with a character who doesn’t realize his own strength but keeps standing and fighting for the underdog anyway.”

MELINDA BAUR

“Teen life is hard. Harder if you live with an abusive father in a dead-end town with a killer on the loose and a girlfriend with a dark secret. Travis Thrasher returns with *Marvelous* and sets the stage for the horrors to come.”

JEFFREY KOTTHOFF, LO-FIDELITY RECORDS



“I am increasingly convinced that Travis Thrasher enjoys tormenting readers. He introduces his protagonists, inserts conflict along the way, and then—wouldn’t you know it?—the book’s ending leaves the reader hanging until the next one is released. As with Thrasher’s previous series for young adults, the Solitary Tales, readers are going to finish the book and be ready to start the next one. I know I want to read the second in the Books of Marvella—*now!*”

KEVIN DENIS

“Fans of the Solitary Tales series have a wonderful new gift from Travis Thrasher. *Marvelous* introduces them to Brandon and Marvel, lots of mystery, an overarching sense of impending evil, and a love story that burns brightly despite numerous obstacles.”

JOHN CLARK

“I just finished *Marvelous* and *wow!* I love it! Definitely written in classic Thrasher style, *Marvelous* is one book fans of the Solitary Tales will not want to miss. I love the town, the record store, the characters, everything. Brandon is such a selfless character, and Marvel is such a lovely enigma. I could not stop reading because I was totally enthralled with the story! I can’t wait to see how things turn out in the series. I need more!”

JOJO SUTIS

“*Marvelous* is an amazing and uplifting feat of storytelling with real, believable characters you can’t help caring about. This book—the entire series—is a must-read, not only for young adults, but for anyone who enjoys great writing.”

DON BEARD



“Remarkable’ is one of the definitions of *marvelous*, and I think that the characters in this book have remarkable resilience. That’s a trait that keeps readers interested in the story. There’s so much heartbreak swirling around Brandon and Marvel, yet they are being pulled forward toward the plan God intended for them. Each time I read a portion, I was left thinking about the two of them. That is a sign of a good book.”

JENNIFER CARTER



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The worst feeling in the world is being stuck. Stuck in a place you know you can't leave, stuck in a position with no power. Stuck being a person you'd never trade places with.

Summer's barely begun, and I already feel like some kind of prisoner.

I walk past my brothers' bikes sprawled on the lawn, past the open garage that stands separate from our two-story house. I'm actually coming home with a piece of good news: I got a job at the record store downtown. But I don't find anyone inside to share it with. I grab a can of Coke from the fridge and glance at the stack of mail on the kitchen table—mostly unopened bills addressed to my father.

I wonder if and when I'm going to have to start helping pay some of those bills.

I hear the back door open and my brothers' excited voices. I step into the hallway and the first thing I see is blood on Alex's face and T-shirt. Carter is right behind him.

“Brandon, look at this,” Alex says, holding one hand up to his nose. It’s probably broken.

Not Alex, not now.

I know what happened, and I know that I finally have to act.

I rush back to the kitchen and grab a big butcher knife. No, that’s crazy. I put it back and grab a big, round cast-iron skillet instead, holding it like a warrior about to go off to battle.

Alex has followed me into the kitchen and is still talking. “Carter’s big head busted me on the nose,” he says.

“What?” I stop and look at him again. My heart is racing. “What were you guys doing?”

“Wrestling on the trampoline.”

I sigh and let out a tidal wave of anger.

“I didn’t mean to,” Carter says. “What are you doing with that frying pan?”

I shake my head and put the skillet away. Not that I would’ve done anything with it anyway. It was just an impulse.

Carter laughs and runs off to the family room.

I poke my head into the room and see my father in his usual place on his armchair throne, eyes focused on ESPN.

“I got another job,” I tell him.

He nods and looks at me the way he always does. Like I’m some kind of stranger. At least I’m not a stranger holding a cast-iron skillet, prepared to whack the side of his square face.

“Who would hire you?” Carter asks, and laughs at his own joke. “Someone whose grass you cut?”

Carter's a little full of himself. Comes from being the baby, I guess, and Mom and Dad's obvious favorite.

"At least someone around here has a job," I say.

"Carter's not the one who busted up his car, is he?" Dad says.

He's just trying to irritate me. I don't say anything, because I can't deny it. I do have a busted-up car. Which is exactly why I now have two jobs this summer.

I turn to head upstairs to my room.

"You need to get your crap out of the garage, 'cause I'm cleaning it out."

"Okay," I call back.

I'm asking for trouble by not saying "Yes, sir," but I'm already halfway up the stairs so I get away with it. It's a ridiculous request anyway. My father "cleans the garage" at least once a month. It's just an excuse for him to hide out and drink the day away while claiming to Mom that he's working on something: his car, a washing machine he hopes to sell, the motor from a dishwasher. Things that have been broken since forever.

When I'm upstairs and Alex passes by me again, I shake my head. "Change your shirt," I tell him.

For a second he wonders what I'm talking about. "Oh, yeah."

Four males in this house. Sometimes it's not a pretty sight.

Mom's running late at the law office where she works as a paralegal, and I'm doing anything I can to stay clear of Dad. I pump air into the tires on my bike, since it will be my main mode of transportation this summer. I have an older bike in the garage too, one that I've said is garbage but Dad keeps

saying he'll fix up and sell. If I had a dollar for every time he's said one thing and done something else, I could buy a new car. A really nice one.

Dad's an electrician, or was, till he lost his job—he hasn't electrified anything in years. Work got scarce when the housing market tanked years ago, and during my sophomore year it dried up altogether. Dad's mood went from slightly overcast to pitch-black.

"Got the bike out, huh?" Dad walks by me and I freeze. For a second he looks down at my bike, then he keeps going to the back of the garage where his work table sits. There's a big Chicago Bears flag behind it, along with pictures of the 1985 Bears. The wonderful, infamous '85 Bears. There's a funny shot of William "The Fridge" Perry doing a touchdown dance.

It's a bit sad when you know your father loves a 325-pound defensive lineman from several decades ago more than his own son.

"So—you gonna go find a third job?" Dad says, his back turned to me. "Since they're so easy to get?"

I don't respond, because I'm not sure where this is coming from. He's the one who told me I needed the second job because I'm paying off my car—the car that got crashed by a friend.

Dad turns around and looks at me. "You think you know what it takes to be the man of the house?" he asks.

I think of those bills again. "No, sir."

He nods slowly, then smiles. It's the meanest sort of smile I've ever seen. The kind the bad guy flashes right before he beats the hero to a pulp.

Maybe I need that skillet after all.

“You guys just stay so busy with your jobs. . . .” His voice fades out as if he’s talking to himself.

I just stand there, not sure what to do, really unsure where this is going. I’m not even sure who he’s referring to. Mom and me?

Dad snaps out of whatever it is. “Go on inside, okay?”

There’s not one bit of hesitation in me. I don’t need to understand anything. I don’t need to ask what’s happening with him. All I want to do is get out of here.

Back inside the house, I feel a little better. Mom will be back from work any minute with her clueless, busy self, and that’ll make me feel even better. But something’s going on inside Dad that can’t be explained by a couple of beers in the middle of the afternoon. This—this whatever it is—scares me.

It scares me because summer has only begun. And Dad has nowhere to be except here. Maybe I *should* get a third job.

