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# Mercury



## Synopsis

August 31, 5:15 PM, French Hill, Nova Scotia: A girl named Tara is running. She runs through her nice neighborhood and up a road to the burned ruins of what was once a beautiful house--her family's house. August 31, 1859, French Hill, Nova Scotia: A girl named Josey is picking blackberries with her friend Connie. As the girls gossip, a handsome stranger knocks on the door of Josey's house. His name is Asa, and with his coming, Josey's life--and later in time, Tara's as well--is about to change forever. Because there is treasure in the woods that belong to Josey's family. Gold--an untold fortune. Asa has a secret way of finding it, and his partnership with Josey's father could make them all rich. But there is darkness in the woods, and in Asa. And in the present day, Tara, Josey's descendent, is about to discover the truth about what really happened in the family's past. Eisner award winner Hope Larson weaves together history, romance, and a touch of her trademark magical realism in this remarkable graphic novel of how the past haunts a teenage girl's present.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: GN370L (What's this?)

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers (April 6, 2010)

Language: English

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Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 27 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #659,040 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #24 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Canada #46 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Canada #328 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Moving

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 8 Up "Set in Nova Scotia, this book relates two coming-of-age stories in tandem, showing how the past interweaves with the present. In the present, Tara and her mother have lost their old farmhouse in a fire, and Tara's mother is struggling to support them from far away

while Tara lives with relatives. She loved the old house and wants to rebuild it, but her mother is pressured to find a job elsewhere. In 1859, Josey, Tara's ancestor, falls in love with a gold dowser who has convinced her father to open a mine. Her mother, who has supernatural sight, is sure that the dowser means no good. The stories collide as Tara goes searching for the gold said to have been hidden on her property, and Josey's tale reveals how it came to be hidden. Elements of the supernatural echo in both settings as Josey experiences the same visions her mother has and Tara discovers that she has a knack for dowsing. Though the end of the story leaves things hanging for Tara and her mother, the actions that the girl takes to gain control of her destiny suggest that she will find a way to achieve her goals. The storytelling, both in words and pictures, brilliantly offers details from Canadian history and modern life. The dialogue varies from funny to poignant. An excellent graphic novel, particularly for fans of Faith Erin Hicks's *The War at Ellsmere* (Slave Labor, 2008).  
Alana Joli Abbott, James Blackstone Memorial Library, Branford, CT Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**\*Starred Review\*** Larson (Chiggers, 2008) won an Eisner Award for Special Recognition in 2007 and is establishing an oeuvre of thoughtful, girl-centric graphic novels that often feature touches of unobtrusive fantasy, lending a dreamy quality that helps characterize her distinctive storytelling style. *Mercury* tells two tales: one of Josey, who lives in a small Canadian town in 1859; and the other of her descendant, Tara, who has returned to the same town in 2009, a year after her house burned to the ground. Tenth-grader Tara's burgeoning relationships and her difficulty reacclimating to her old school will be more identifiable than Josey's forbidden courtship with itinerant prospector Asa, but the use of two time lines delineates the different eras' outlooks on family and romance, which brings some immutable human truths into high relief. The gentle dose of magic realism doesn't feel incongruous and underscores the powerful ways in which past touches present. The insights unfold leisurely, but patient readers will find themselves deeply invested. Comparisons to Craig Thompson's *Blankets* (2003) wouldn't be inappropriate, but Larson continues to perfect her own unique style and offers something the graphic format is sadly short on: a coming-of-age story for girls. Grades 9-12. --Jesse Karp --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

a gift i was proud to give. perfect condition, came quickly good price

The drawing is so expressive...I think that's one of the aspects I liked most about this novel.

Larson's expert illustrations really allowed me to connect with the characters and I happily rooted for Josey and Tara. I became so attached to the characters that I was quite sad when the book ended...I wanted to know more about what happened to these two young girls. There's an element of ghosts or spirits in the book and mystical occurrences which I always find to be lots of fun. I also loved the interplay between the past and the present. The author flipped back and forth between the two stories very frequently, which normally annoys me, but worked perfectly for this book. Overall, I'd recommend this to those who like graphic novels, elements of the supernatural, and historical fiction - a quick fun read!

I had high hopes for Hope Larson as I looked for graphic novels for my grand nieces and nephews this past Christmas. To me, this was probably the best of the Larson novels I found, but I just couldn't follow the story. I'll keep it at home and see if any of the young relatives who visit like it better than I did.

About a year ago, I had the pleasure of purchasing and reading another one of Larson's graphic novels, "Gray Horses." I fell madly in love it, and this second work of art was not a disappointment. This book is intriguing, engaging, and exceptionally beautiful. I plan on re-reading it over and over again.

Nice to see that comics aimed at younger readers can be this good. Top notch art, compelling story and plenty of stuff for both teens and adults to like. The characters are charming, and really look forward to checking out more Hope Larsen books

Mercury is one of those stories I picked up and didn't struggle to read, but found myself constantly wishing for more. The story is OK, the characters quite sweet, and I felt satisfied with the tale, but still many nagging negatives stick in my mind. First of all the artwork, the style is fine but I felt like there were only 1-2 templates the people were drawn from, and without powerful characterization I often found myself double checking who everyone was. Given that the story seemed to rely heavily on meaningful looks and emotional expressions this didn't gel well. Second the story was worthy, but I felt lacked real tension. The basic premise centers around an old-timey gold-rush era family and a modern family and their various trials. On an intellectual level the tales were linked well and should have made sense, but between the complaint above and little to alert the reader which time-span you were in I often found myself having to check the characters clothing to remind myself which

story I was in. The old-time family probably held more drama as we see a family react to the appearance of a charming but suspicious stranger, and I could see what the story of the modern family was portraying but I felt it was a little flat. I'll probably have to use some SPOILERS to explain so...SPOILERS AHEAD sorryThe story is basically about a young teenage heroine, who has to live with friends(relatives) due to tough circumstances, the tension is meant to sit with her families lack of income and the likelihood of having to move to another town so her mother can work, but she is settling in 'French Hill' and even has a boyfriend (ooooo). The story is wound up when our MC magically discovered a sack of gold (which was lost/hidden in the old-timey story). Anyway my problem with all this is not so much the details (as I mentioned intellectually its a good story) its more that the narrative didn't make me feel it, most of her story-line seemed just seemed to follow a hard done by teenager, sure moving away from your boyfriend sucks but it never really felt that bad (especially compared to the historic tale)There was an awesome blurt of supernatural towards the end, which was really cool but probably underused and not really explained (it was probably deep cultural metaphoric stuff lost on an idiot like me but whatever) but I think ultimately Mercury could have thrived better as a fleshed out novel or with more story arc.

Tara's house burned down. The farm had been around forever and she really wished she could still live there. Her mother wants to move them away from Nova Scotia, but it's home to Tara.Josey lived in Tara's house in 1859. That is where she fell in love with an interesting stranger.Legend has it that there is treasure buried on the property. Tara finds little clues to lead her there and her and her friends check it out. Tara just really wants to keep her home and she'll do what she can to help keep it.This was a really interesting and strange novel. I really liked the back and forth between the two time periods. Little things were interspersed in the modern day story that came from 1859. I was especially glad that it was obvious when you were switching perspectives so that things didn't end up getting too confusing.The story was really strange. Especially the 1859 one. Asa was a really odd character and I'm not sure what was going on with him. Everything about him was strange. It could be how people were in that time, but even the mother didn't seem to like him.If you enjoy graphic novels, you should make sure to check this one out.First Line:"Hi, house."Favorite Line:"You're holding me too tight."

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