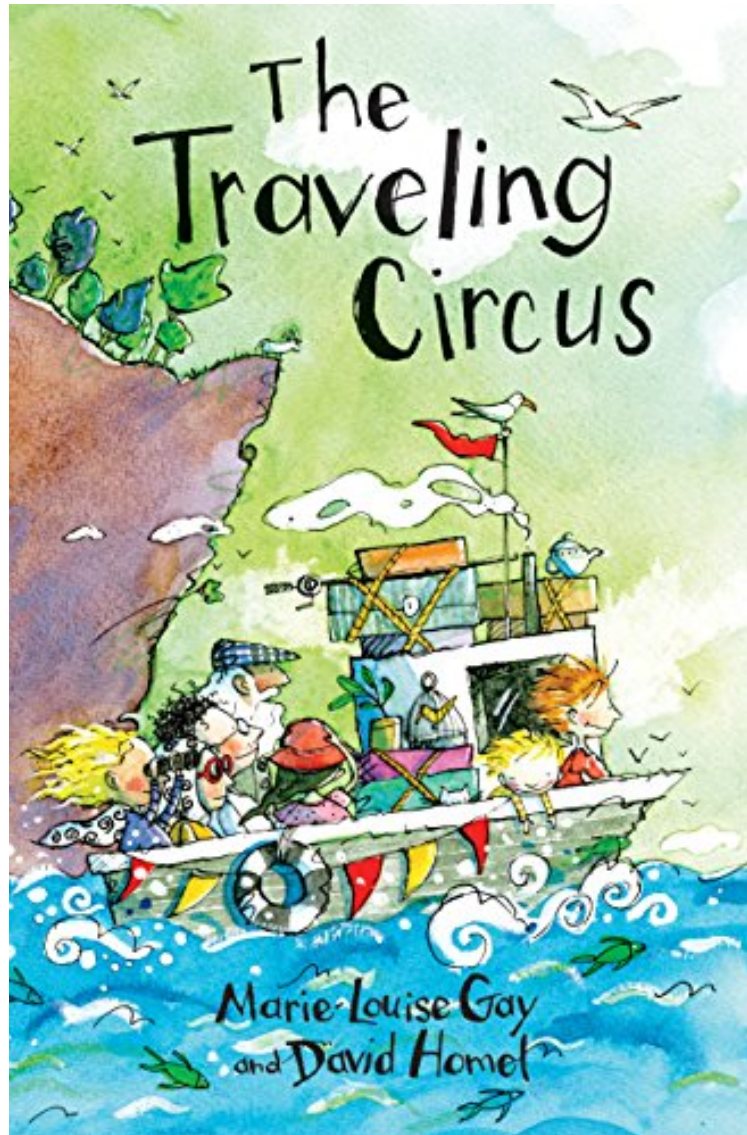


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The Traveling Circus

Marie-Louise Gay, David Homel

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#1890565 in Books 2015-04-14Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.60 x .80 x 5.70l, .0 #File Name: 1554984203144 pages | File size: 21.Mb

Marie-Louise Gay, David Homel : The Traveling Circus before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Traveling Circus:

Charlie and his family are about to embark on another trip, to another out-of-the-way place off the beaten path. This time they are heading to an island in Croatia — an incredibly beautiful country that lives in the shadow of war and

conflict. Even for a seasoned traveler like Charlie, Croatia is a very different experience: the language is unfamiliar and half the words have no vowels, goats are a traffic-calming device, and red cliffs loom like fortresses over an impossibly blue sea. Still, Charlie and his little brother, Max, manage to find adventure wherever they go. There's cliff diving, pigs on spits, hair-raising ferry crossings and snake juice for breakfast. There's a sober side to their adventures this time, too, as Charlie finds out that this area of the world has a long and troubled history. But he also discovers that you don't need to speak the same language to communicate with people. Not when you're having a party in a field, surrounded by goats and dancing in the glow of car headlights with the radio blaring out Croatian music. A warm, funny and thought-provoking book that celebrates a child's love of adventure and boundless curiosity about the world.

From School Library Journal Gr 2-4—Family adventures begun in *Travels with My Family* (2006) and *On the Road Again* (2008, both Groundwood) continue for Charlie, younger brother Max, and their parents. This time they are off to Croatia after Charlie discovers an old postcard under the stove. With a dreamy, artistic mother and a slightly spacey father, Charlie and always-hungry Max are free (sometimes unbelievably so at the ages of roughly 12 and six) to engage in zany, episodic encounters with the local environment and personalities. Fascinated by a language with almost no vowels (they head to the island of Krk), Charlie narrates fishing attempts gone wrong, labyrinths with scary hermit "minotaurs" in the center, goats used as traffic control, and war-torn villages. Charlie's voice and humor lighten even the darker moments, and his interaction with, and eventual appreciation of, even the quirkiest characters will guide young readers by example. VERDICT While the picaresque format precludes either a complex plot or any significant character development, this fun romp, with a lovable narrator and enhanced by Gay's charming pencil drawings, is recommended for children graduating from beginning readers to chapter books.—Katherine Koenig, The Ellis School, PA "Hints of gravity punctuate but do not puncture the holiday fun . . . A salutary, unusual look at part of the world rarely seen in North American children's literature, wrapped up in family fun." — Kirkus s"Charlie's voice and humor lighten even the darker moments, and his interaction with, and eventual appreciation of, even the quirkiest characters will guide young readers by example." — School Library Journal"The wryly amusing story shows that less popular destinations can offer unexpected rewards as well as new ideas to ponder." — Booklist"The prose is spry, literate, and lively, making this, and the whole series, a must for budding world-travelers." — Horn Book