

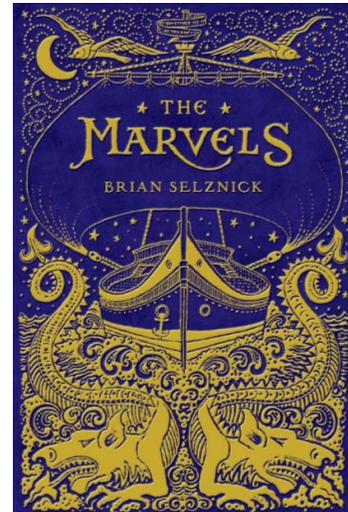
2017 Kate Greenaway Medal shortlist

Visual Literacy notes

Title: **The Marvels**

Illustrator and author: **Brian Selznick**

Publisher: **Scholastic**



First look

- *The Marvels* is not easy to share within a group as it needs close attention and is so heavy: try to ensure that each shadower has had a chance to look through it before you begin to discuss the book with the group.
- It is not possible to consider the meanings that inspire the artwork without knowledge of the whole story. However, it is the artwork and design that is important in the Greenaway award so, although it is preferable that everyone has read the whole book, it is not essential in order to discuss the images. You may want to give a brief outline of the written text to any in the group who haven't read the whole book.
- Ask the shadowers to chat in pairs, or as a group, about the presentation of the book. What did they like or dislike and why? Talk about all the visual aspects of the book i.e. end papers, font choices, title page and layout. How do these 'extras' contribute to the overall impact of the book?

Look again

- Look at the design of the front cover. Open out the dust jacket to see the complete piece of artwork. What are the chief differences between the two aspects of the cover – the symmetrical, gold-on-blue on the front and the sketchy, grey drawing on the spine?
- Why do you think that the pages are edged with gold? What meaning is usually associated with gold? What effect does it have on the look of the book?
- Look at the beginning of the graphic text. The opening pages of the story seemed to be designed to confuse. How soon does the reader find out that a play is being performed to the crew of a ship sailing on a stormy sea?



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- All the illustrations are achieved using pencils and a variety of techniques. Much of the effect of each image comes from the use of pencil to show light, shade and the wide spectrum between light and dark. Can you produce a similar picture to one from the book?
- Which of the following words could be used to describe the illustrated pages of *The Marvels*? Ask each member of the group to choose what they think are the three most effective words to describe the drawings

gloomy	dark	mysterious	shadowy	strange	odd
ethereal	historic	misty	complicated	spooky	ambiguous
murky	dreamlike	paranormal	exquisite	fascinating	

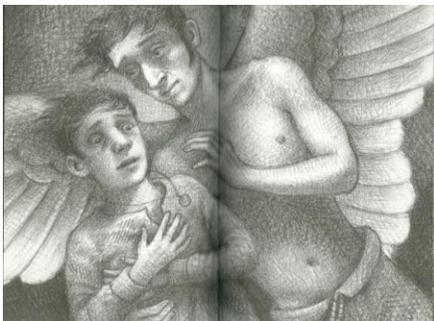
Exploring the texts

See *Brian Selznick*

Go online to **YouTube**. Type in the search box *Brian Selznick's inspired The Marvel's Trailer* and when you have found it, watch the trailer.

Drawing

Use a pencil to copy the picture of the 'angel' at the start of the tale. This image is a recurring visual theme throughout the book.



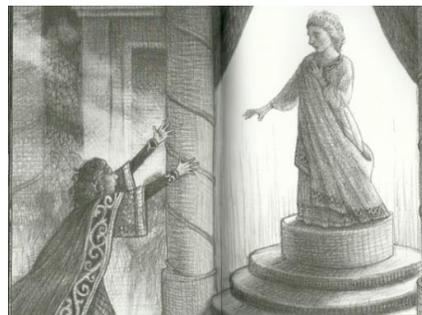
Literature research

There are many references to Shakespeare, especially the play *The Winter's Tale*. How is this play relevant to the story in *The Marvels*?

There are several references to a poem by W.B. Yeats that starts:

*Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light*

Find this poem. Ask a librarian to help you find it or for it look online. Why do you think Joseph liked this poem so much?



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