



The island of Dr. Libris (Mar 2015)

Author: [Grabenstein, Chris](#)

Ages 9-12 **Fiction**

Description: A twelve-year-old boy, worried that his parents may divorce, discovers that an **island** in the middle of the lake where he is spending the summer is the testing grounds of the mysterious **Dr. Libris**, who may have invented a way to make the characters in books come alive.

Book Appeal Terms: [Definition of Appeal Terms](#)

Genre: Fantasy fiction

Pace: Fast-paced

Min/Max Grade level: 4 - 7

Lexile: 640 **Accelerated Reader:** [IL: MG, BL: 4.3, AR Pts: 5](#)

Booklist:

Grades 4-7 Grabenstein follows up his best-selling *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* (2013) with another playful title paying homage to classic works of literature. Billy Gillfoyle is not thrilled at the prospect of spending his summer stuck at Dr. Libris' weird lake cabin with his mom, who's too busy finishing her dissertation to entertain him. Throw in a neighborhood bully and the potential of his parents splitting up, and Billy's summer is off to an awful start. But when the characters in the books he reads start coming to life—from Hercules to Robin Hood to Pollyanna—Billy's summer quickly goes from dull to adventurous, even dangerous. Grabenstein's economical prose is perfectly suited for this novel, which teems with appeal for a variety of readers, from those who will catch all the literary references to those who enjoy a good fight scene. Readers will appreciate Billy's cleverness in solving his ever-growing problems, as these literary characters make plenty of trouble outside the confines of their intended stories. Effortlessly readable and a whole lot of fun. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: The

publisher is banking on the popularity of *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*—there's a national tour and major media exposure in the works for Grabenstein's latest. --

Barnes, Jennifer (Reviewed 12-01-2014) (Booklist, vol 111, number 7, p56)

Publishers Weekly:

Grabenstein (*Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*) delivers a science-based variation on the theme of fictional characters being brought to life. When Billy's mathematician mother, who has been studying the concept of parallel universes, explains to him that "Some people refuse to accept the limits given to them by others," the 12-year-old doesn't give the statement another thought—until he discovers he can make impossible things happen through the power of his imagination, combined with reading. With his parents headed toward a likely divorce, Billy is spending a "boring" summer with his mother in a rental cottage, but a foray into the library of the absent owner, Dr. Libris, leads Billy to an island where fictional characters appear. Grabenstein mixes up a melange of characters from the books Billy (and eventually two neighbor children) reads, with Hercules, Robin Hood, the Three Musketeers, Tom Sawyer, and even Pollyanna coming together in dangerous escapades. While the adventures are not especially suspenseful, the story moves at a quick pace and has a good-natured tone that makes for a light but satisfying read. Ages 8–12. Agent: Eric Myers, Spieler Agency. (Mar.) --Staff (Reviewed January 5, 2015) (Publishers Weekly, vol 262, issue 01, p)

Kirkus:

Billy Gillfoyle discovers that a powerful imagination can bring characters from books—and comic books, video games and role-playing-game cards—to life. Unhappily spending the summer with his mother in a lakeshore cabin she's rented from a university colleague, the 12-year-old finds no Internet or TV but plenty of books in a locked cabinet. (Finding the key is a relatively easy puzzle.) When he reads *The Trials of Hercules* in Dr. Xiang Libris' library, he hears the voices of Hercules and Antaeus outside. They're fighting on an island just offshore. Reading *Robin Hood*, he hears the sound of swordplay. When he explores the island the next morning, he meets the characters he heard, not only brought to life, but also interacting with each other. Grabenstein's similarly powerful imagination unfurls a grand series of adventures

in which Billy and neighbor Walter Andrews are pursued by the Sheriff of Nottingham, search for buried treasure with Tom Sawyer and save Billy's parents' failing marriage. In this entertaining literary romp, the author includes references to over 20 classic tales, from Aesop's Fables to Holes. For curious readers, he's listed the titles at the end, but familiarity with these stories is not required to appreciate this fast-paced fantasy. Readers will wish their summers were so eventful. (Adventure. 9-13)(Kirkus Reviews, December 15, 2014)