



# The Infinity Year of Avalon James

*Dana Middleton*

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## **The Infinity Year of Avalon James** Dana Middleton

Avalon James and Atticus Brightwell have a secret--one that they aren't allowed to discuss with anyone. This secret is shared between two best friends. When you and your best friend turn ten years old magical things are said to happen. You both will receive some kind of magical power. It can be a power you can call on time and time again. Or it can be a power that comes once when you need it most. It's your Infinity Year and the possibilities are endless.

The past year hasn't been great with her family being torn apart and bullying at school, so Avalon is depending on her magical ability to appear soon and help. With the clock ticking and her eleventh birthday approaching, which would be the end of her powers, Avalon's hopes are running high. Will she and Atticus get the powers they so desperately want and need?

Dana Middleton's debut novel is a wonderfully enchanting story of the possibility of magic and the even more magical bond between two best friends.

## **The Infinity Year of Avalon James Details**

Date : Published October 11th 2016 by Feiwel and Friends

ISBN :

Author : Dana Middleton

Format : 212 pages

Genre : Childrens, Middle Grade, Realistic Fiction, Fantasy, Magic

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## From Reader Review The Infinity Year of Avalon James for online ebook

### Heidi M Rogers says

Adorable, quirky, sweet, fierce – that's how I'd describe Avalon James. And her best friend Atticus? Let me just say his character was a touch personal. I loved this story and devoured it in a day.

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### Susie says

This is a great book! I loved getting to know Avalon. This book has engaging characters, interesting and easy to follow plots, and good morals. I would definitely read this again.

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### Katie Proctor says

A really sweet middle grade book- Avalon and her best friend Atticus believe they are getting magical powers when they turn ten. It's all about their fifth grade year and how they make mistakes and learn a lot and it's just really sweet. Would be a great addition to any middle grade library collection.

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### Jen says

The Infinity Year of Avalon James is a lovely story with interesting, engaging characters and a wonderful boy-girl friendship at its core. Avalon is a relatable protagonist, and I felt like the book did a great job of making her struggles and triumphs feel immediate, believable, and well-earned. There are several twists in this book that add depth to the story, and the magical element is handled subtly and well. This story left me feeling warm and fuzzy inside, and it is one I will certainly share with young readers in my life. Highly recommend!

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### Sam says

#### 3.5

*Huge thank you to Raincoast for this ARC!*

*The Infinity Year of Avalon James* has an intriguing premise: it's about two best friends who when they turn the age of ten are granted an "infinity year" -- magical "things" are supposed to happen, especially since it's a secret they share. I loved this idea of two best friends sharing a secret like this, though this novel didn't entirely win me over like I thought it would.

First off, I LOVE the friendship between Avalon and Atticus and I think the way Middleton develops it is fantastic. You get a very rich sense of their friendship, what they share with each other, and they are great to

grow alongside in the novel. I loved how they wanted to protect one another, and yet when Atticus' secret is let out, Middleton does an amazing job of connecting the reader with both Avalon and Arricus' feelings.

However, the premise for this novel feels a bit misleading. I had it in my head that something really magical was going to happen, because it's something constantly discussed by the two best friends. This novel is through and through contemporary all the way, but the blurb makes it sound as though there's more to that contemporary setting than there actual is. This is not a bad thing, but it was definitely a case for me of expecting one thing and definitely getting something else.

I also felt that the supporting case in this story were way too one-dimensional at times, and to be honest, I don't entirely understand Elena's real motivations for being such a poop disturber. The reason is given, and while it's perfectly good in middle grade, it did leave me wanting a bit more. I do love some of the littler tidbits in the novel, such as the spelling bee, and M the cat (I loved M the cat, M is rad).

While I have a few criticisms of this novel, I do think it is pretty swell over all. I had a lot of fun reading about Avalon and Atticus' adventures, and I think Atticus' secret was wonderfully shared in a way that I think a lot of kids can relate to. I think the portrayal of bullying is spot on here and I love the way Avalon handles herself. There's a lot to enjoy about *The Infinity Year of Avalon James*, and I think those looking for a good book about friendship will find something to love here in Dana Middleton's debut.

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### **Carolanne says**

Lovely story about a genuine friendship between two 5th graders - Avalon & Atticus. Would be a good read aloud.

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### **Casey Lyall says**

This book was sweet and emotional - I loved the friendship between Avalon and Atticus (who also have truly marvelous names.) It's about making the right choices - thinking about what kind of person you want to be and making your own magic. Just right for any middle grade reader.

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### **Hannah says**

I thought that this book was very interesting, because of the settings and different feelings the main character had. I was very curious at the start of this book, because the title really hooked me in to the book. When I started reading I really couldn't stop until the end. I loved all the parts of the story and it was a suitable book for me to read over the summer break. When I started reading this book, I was amazed by how the writer, Dana Middleton, started the story with an amazing introduction about the main character. I would definitely recommend this book to people who like stories about kids in junior school with hard and new problems to face over the years. I think people around the age of 10 to 15 will enjoy this book and will continue to read books like this one. I really enjoyed this book and it was a fantastic book for me.

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## Stacy Fetters says

*"We were eleven. We were all out of magic powers but we would be best friends forever and that was good enough for me."*

Never thought in a million years that a middle-grade book would have me feeling so many warm, fuzzy happy thoughts. What is happening to me? Is my black heart growing redder and three times its normal size like the Grinch?

Pfft! Probably not.

Avalon and Atticus have been friends for a very long time. They have done everything together. Being ten is a huge deal. That's when they will receive their infinity powers. Either for the entire year or once when it will come in hand the most. They are patiently waiting and praying it happens soon...

At the beginning of school they believe that things will be the same. That is when they find out they will be seperated into different classes.

And oh no! Avalon is stuck with the three meanest bullies.

Avalon can't help herself and get those bullies back bigger and better. Which only makes her life worse. She seems to be the butt of all their jokes.

Atticus tries to get her to cool it and no girl ever knows what that means.

Being seperated, they start making different friends and Avalon tells her new friend a huge secret about Atticus that blows around the entire school.

Secrets can make or break friendships. And this seems to do the latter.

Will Infinity powers help repair a friendship? Can Atticus ever forgive his best friend?

I tore through this book in a few hours. It caught my attention from the get go and I couldn't put it down.

The story of two bestfriends will always uplift your mood, no matter how old you get.

Now go forth and fetch me my milk!!

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## Anna Field says

A cute story about a boy and a girl who are best friends and how they over come life's bumps and twists in a context that children can relate to. Would definitely recommend this book.

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## Jasmine from How Useful It Is says

I started reading The Infinity Year of Avalon James on 7/19/18 and finished it on 7/24/18. This book is an awesome read! I love Avalon and Atticus' friendship. I like Atticus' calm and easy going personality. Despite the tough times in Avalon's life both at home and at school, I like how she's driven to achieve her goals: spelling bee and her dad. I like the reason for Atticus to stop eating meat. I like Mae and how she stands up for Avie during a class presentation. I like reading through Avie's ups and downs and her support system like Hari Singh and Mrs. Jackson. Hari has great advices. Atticus' grandpa is cool.

This book is told in the first person point of view, following Avalon (Avie) James, 10 years old, as she waits for her magical power to come. She has recently learned that when a person turns 10, his/her Infinity Year starts. Her best friend Atticus Brightwell is also 10 and they both are starting 5th grade at Grover Cleveland K to 8. Avalon can't wait to have her power because the previous year, when she was 9, was a particularly bad year for her. The mean girls lead by Elena Maxwell, to put it lightly, weren't very nice to her.

Furthermore, life at home is a bit harder with what happened with her dad and her cat M. Through it all, Atticus is the only person to keep her from taking drastic actions. But as best friends, Avie can tell there is

something that is bothering Atticus but somehow he's not telling her what it is.

A well written book, The Infinity Year of Avalon James is definitely a read for everyone. I love the cover and the chapter designs. I like the spelling bees and definitions to big words within the story. I like how Avalon applies what she learns in school to her life outside of school. I like how the whole school dresses up for Halloween, especially how Avie and Atticus coordinate their costumes to match each other. I like the plot, suspense, diversity, and humor. I cry and smile reading this book. I love the zoo trip and learning of what groups of animals are called. This book is an excellent read and I highly recommend everyone to read it.

Pro: fast paced, page turner, easy to read, friendship, family, dealing with mean girls, spelling bee, diversity, humor

Con: none

I rate it 5 stars!

\*\*\*Disclaimer: I won a copy of this book from a Twitter giveaway hosted by the author. Many thanks to Dana Middleton for the opportunity to read and review. Please be assured that my opinions are honest.

xoxo, Jasmine at [www.howusefulitis.wordpress.com](http://www.howusefulitis.wordpress.com) for more details

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## Chris says

Summary (Amazon.com)

Avalon James and Atticus Brightwell, both aged 10, are waiting for their "infinity" powers now that they are at the height of their "Infinity Year". According to Atticus's grandfather, your Infinity Year begins when you turn 10; if you obey the rules of the Infinity Year (you can only talk about it with your best friend) you will develop magical powers before turning 11. While waiting for their powers, both are dealing with problem issues (Spoilers) Avalon is dealing with Elena, the school bully, who ridicules her for her father's incarceration. Atticus requires medication to address bed-wetting issues. When Avalon inadvertently reveals Atticus's secret, she endangers their friendship and her own Infinity Year. Atticus is a vegetarian and requires medication to address bed-wetting issues, two situations not rare among preteens but seldom addressed in middle grade fiction. Although dedicated fantasy fans might find the mystical elements too light for their liking, this will appeal to readers looking for an overall upbeat story with realistic drama.

Comments

I absolutely loved this book. I could have read it nonstop from beginning to end and was annoyed when I had to put it down. As a realistic fiction book with a great story and memorable characters, it was right up my alley. Realistic fiction is my favorite genre. I wasn't sure I would like the "fantasy", but as it turns out that was a very subtle part of the book. Readers who are looking for a more developed fantasy theme will be disappointed. Did Avalon and Atticus really experience infinity powers, or was it just determination and grit in helping each other out kicking in when it was most necessary?

Dana Middleton is a wonderful writer. The book is perfectly plotted and the pacing is spot on. I couldn't wait to see what would happen to Atticus and Avalon next and if they would really eventually get their infinity powers. Although there is not much action, there is plenty of emotional drama, humor and even educational trivia. I learned a lot about the history of spelling bees, how contestants prepare for them and how they are conducted. The practice words introduced here are great vocabulary builders for readers. I also learned a lot

about zoo animals. A bunch of rhinos is called a crash; a group of giraffes is a tower, zeal of zebras, cackle of hyenas, unkindness of ravens, parade of elephants....

Characters are sincere and well defined. Both kids and adults are portrayed as complex people who interact and cope with their troubles in individual ways. Avalon has a bright and relateable sensibility that will endear her to readers. She knows her negative traits as well as her more admirable qualities. She is a good speller, (she gets that from her dad) but she is not good in social situations, especially when it involves Elena and her taunts about Avalon's dad. Does she get that from her dad too? She needs Atticus' calm demeanor to counterbalance her own instincts to lash out.

Atticus seems very mature for his age – he is a vegetarian, very intelligent, and he is obsessed with the Titanic. He is good and trustworthy. His mom doesn't understand any of that stuff. She doesn't like Avalon and is not afraid to show it. She later apologizes to Avalon and confesses, "I thought he needed more friends. I thought he needed different friends. I thought you weren't good enough for him." Are there moms like that? Absolutely! Ashamed to say I was one of them! Friends pick each other – it is their choice.

Other great characters in this book include "M" Avalon's cat, Mrs. Jackson, Avalon's teacher who may look odd (a long whisker grows out of a mole on her chin) but recognizes Avalon's spelling talent and mentors her. Then there is Hari Singh, the defending 7th grade champion of the Grover Cleveland School spelling bee who will be representing the school in the national spelling bee finals. He tells Avalon "Being a great speller isn't just about the words. It's about being a super nerd. And super nerds don't let things get in the way of a spelling bee." There is so much wisdom in this book!

Friendship is one of the major themes in this book. The friendship between Avalon and Atticus is real, and unbreakable, although it is tested when Avalon unintentionally reveals Atticus' secret about bedwetting. During the time when they are not speaking, Avalon realizes she has other friends to play with, but it's not the same. "With a best friend, it's the bits in-between the talking that are just as important. The bits where you're not talking. Where you're not playing. Where you're not doing anything. You're just being friends." It's the bond between Avalon and Atticus that makes this book so worth reading.

Another theme is bullying. It is perhaps one of the biggest school issues on the planet today. Schools conduct special lessons about bullies and being bullied and most have zero tolerance policies. Wonderful – but many times bullies don't recognize or refuses to recognize themselves. Elena is the bully in this story, but Middleton never gives us a reason for her behavior and she comes across as a mostly two dimensional character. I would have liked to learn a little bit more about her.

Dealing with consequences is another issue in the book. Not every story has a happy ending. Not everyone is forgiven for mistakes. Avalon's dad is in prison paying the consequences for his stealing from the car dealership where he worked. Avalon is paying the consequences for lashing out against Elena by being barred from the regional spelling bee. Adults and children are faced with many decisions every day. For every decision reached, there are consequences both good and bad and Middleton is adept at showing how this works.

In all, I am highly recommending this book to children or adult who love realistic fiction with just a touch of magic. It features a very positive depiction of boy-girl friendships with appealing and memorable characters. The themes of friendship, bullying and consequences are very current in today's world.

I would recommend this book for grades 4-6. The cover and title make it more appealing to girls, and I think it would be a wonderful class read.

## Tien says

It's such a great middle grade book about friendships.

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## Wendy MacKnight says

How much did I love this book? SO MUCH! The story of Avalon James (who is carrying a big weight on her shoulders) and her best friend Atticus, this is a story of resilience, friendship, and being comfortable in your own skin. I loved Avalon from the first page and was rooting for her the whole way. Kids and the adults in their lives are going to love this story. Dana Middleton is one of my new favourite authors - when you finish this book, read *Open if You Dare!*

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## Michelle Wrona says

This review can also be found on *A Thousand Lives Lived*, check it out for more!

**I love reading books about kids growing up, mostly because I always get a flashback to when I was deciding what kind of person I wanted to be.** Dana Middleton's *The Infinity Year of Avalon James* always looked so promising from the moment I saw its cover and read the summary, and I knew that I would enjoy it. Let's say that I certainly did adore it. This was a special story about a girl who realized that everyone's life has some kind of magic. It was cute, memorable, and something that I recommend to all middle-grade readers. This isn't your typical coming-of-age story, but a gorgeous tale that I cannot get out of my head.

**BEFORE ANYTHING - let's talk about Atticus and Avalon's relationship.** I am the biggest supporter of boy and girl best friend relationships because in society, they seem to be frowned upon as people immediately expect a romance to bloom. I just don't get it. Atticus and Avalon were adorable and even though so many obstacles came in the way of their relationship, practically tearing them apart, they still were still good. As in good, they still respected each other. And I loved that their friendship wasn't competitive, as they both were so excited for the powers involved with the *Infinity Year*.

Middleton's writing *is adorable*. I love the way she formatted the story and how it was completely fast-paced. I finished in a matter of hours, especially because it's only 224 pages, and it doesn't require heavy thoughts, just happiness and a good mood. This book just equaled **HAPPINESS**. Can they please make a Disney Channel Original Movie out of it to teach kids some cute lessons?

*The Infinity Year of Avalon James* is a great story that I definitely recommend. Go grab it and enjoy, because many books aren't like this one.

*\*A review copy was provided by the publisher in exchange for a honest review. Thank you so much!\**

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