

\*\*\*\*\*  
WITH A 35TH ANNIVERSARY AFTERWORD FROM THE AUTHOR  
\*\*\*\*\*

# *E.L. Konigsburg*

From the Mixed-up Files of  
Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler





# *I*

CLAUDIA KNEW THAT SHE COULD NEVER PULL OFF the old-fashioned kind of running away. That is, running away in the heat of anger with a knapsack on her back. She didn't like discomfort; even picnics were untidy and inconvenient: all those insects and the sun melting the icing on the cupcakes. Therefore, she decided that her leaving home would not be just running from somewhere but would be running to somewhere. To a large place, a comfortable place, an indoor place, and preferably a beautiful place. And that's why she decided upon the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

She planned very carefully; she saved her allowance and she chose her companion. She chose Jamie, the second youngest of her three younger brothers. He



could be counted on to be quiet, and now and then he was good for a laugh. Besides, he was rich; unlike most boys his age, he had never even begun collecting baseball cards. He saved almost every penny he got.

But Claudia waited to tell Jamie that she had decided upon him. She couldn't count on him to be *that* quiet for *that* long. And she calculated needing *that* long to save her weekly allowances. It seemed senseless to run away without money. Living in the suburbs had taught her that everything costs.

She had to save enough for train fare and a few expenses before she could tell Jamie or make final plans. In the meantime she almost forgot why she was running away. But not entirely. Claudia knew that it had to do with injustice. She was the oldest child and the only girl and was subject to a lot of injustice. Perhaps it was because she had to both empty the dishwasher and set the table on the same night while her brothers got out of everything. And, perhaps, there was another reason more clear to me than to Claudia. A reason that had to do with the sameness of each and every week. She was bored with simply being straight-A's Claudia Kincaid. She was tired of arguing about whose turn it was to choose the Sunday night seven-thirty television show, of injustice, and of the monotony of everything.

The fact that her allowance was so small that it took her more than three weeks of skipping hot fudge sundaes to save enough for train fare was another



example of injustice. (Since you always drive to the city, Saxonberg, you probably don't know the cost of train fare. I'll tell you. Full fare one way costs one dollar and sixty cents. Claudia and Jamie could each travel for half of that since she was one month under twelve, and Jamie was well under twelve—being only nine.) Since she intended to return home after everyone had learned a lesson in Claudia appreciation, she had to save money for her return trip, too, which was like full fare one way. Claudia knew that hundreds of people who lived in her town worked in offices in New York City and could afford to pay full fare both ways every day. Like her father. After all, Greenwich was considered an actual suburb of New York, a commuting suburb.

Even though Claudia knew that New York City was not far away, certainly not far enough to go considering the size and number of the injustices done to her, she knew that it was a good place to get lost. Her mother's Mah-Jong club ladies called it *the city*. Most of them never ventured there; it was exhausting, and it made them nervous. When she was in the fourth grade, her class had gone on a trip to visit historical places in Manhattan. Johnathan Richter's mother hadn't let him go for fear he'd get separated from the group in all the jostling that goes on in New York. Mrs. Richter, who was something of a character, had said that she was certain that he would "come home lost." And she considered the air very bad for him to



