



BROWSE



 ***Guys Read: Funny Business (review)***

Karen Coats

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Reviewed by:

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Scieszka, Jon, ed. *Guys Read: Funny Business*. Walden Pond/HarperCollins, 2010. [256p.] Trade ed. ISBN 978-0-06-196374-2 \$16.99 Paper ed. ISBN 978-0-06-

Having introduced his web-centered Guys Read initiative in 2005 with *Guys Write for Guys Read* (BCCB 6/05), Scieszka now offers Volume One of the "Guys Read" library, a set of short stories themed around, not surprisingly for Scieszka, humor. There are multiple classes of boy funny here. For instance, there are the kind of folksy stories your grandfather tells about his glorious exploits in pranking the gullible (Christopher Paul Curtis), and creative sibling dodges for getting out of really bad scrapes (Eoin Colfer). Also appearing are school assignments that take on a life of their own (Kate DiCamillo and Jon Scieszka), the kind of situations that arise from being stupid and having stupider friends (Jack Gantos, David **[End Page 147]** Lubar, Mac Barnett), and a number of instances where aliens, zombies, murderous turkeys, and supervillains are outwitted by your average ten-year-old with his wits about him (Adam Rex, David Yoo, and Paul Feig). None of the stories turn on overly clever rhetorical finesse, cheap shots, or silly slapstick for their chuckles (although some are rather gross and oozy), instead developing their situations into conclusions that range from wryly ironic to slightly dark, indicating a respect for the reader's ability to appreciate subtlety. The stories are also classroom-friendly, providing sound, entertaining models for the humorous short-story form; mostly, though, they'll offer compact literary pleasures for kids who follow the included authors and who like a good snicker. Jeff Kinney's story will be included in the bound volume.

the adult world and on his separation from his mother (who initially read him the tale), poignantly demonstrating the boy's yearning for grown-up competence and for a combined Oedipal and narrative triumph, whereby he could both care for the motherly woman better than her husband did and make the story come out the way he wishes. Say's watercolors have a smooth, even control that's perfect for his realistic portraiture, with far-reaching landscapes emphasizing Jiro's isolation, but that mode also manages to shade seamlessly into an airy, slightly stylized folkloric style in the crane wife herself and in her household with Jiro; the first view up the curving path of stones to the little cottage is a silent evocation of embarkation into the world of legend. Not only does this offer an unusual entrée into a folklore discussion, it provides an excellent opportunity to share Bodkin's haunting *Crane Wife* (BCCB 10/98). A brief retelling of "The Grateful Crane" opens the book. DS

SCARBOW, ALEX *Time Riders*. Walker, 2010 [416p]

ISBN 978-0-8027-2172-3 \$16.99

Reviewed from galley

R Gr. 7-10

Sal, Liam, and Maddy, three teens moments away from death, are saved to become time riders, individuals who protect a future world from the various shifts caused by time travel. The three kids are just settling in as a team and learning their respective roles when a particularly critical time shift occurs, separating the trio and sending two first to a New York in a realm where Germany has conquered all and then to a post-apocalyptic wasteland peopled by creepy near-humans who evolved out of the disaster. Suddenly the time for trial runs, jokes and bonding, and guidance is over, as the kids recognize that if they don't right things quickly, they will be stuck, along with everyone else, in a world that never should have been. Though the tags that identify the kids' different ethnicities and eras get overused, the characters are expertly developed, each displaying vulnerabilities and quirks that make them memorable as individuals, even as their unique features mesh well into an unstoppable, loyal team. Both their horror at their near deaths and the terrifying potential consequences of time travel and their excitement at the adventure of their new lives feel authentic, and readers will likely identify with their acceptance of the risk that comes along with their quest. This is a brilliantly paced, fascinating look at the ways in which one seemingly small change can ripple out to—literally—the end of the world. AS

SCIESZKA, JON, ed. *Guys Read: Funny Business*. Walden Pond/HarperCollins, 2010 [256p]

Trade ed. ISBN 978-0-06-196374-2 \$16.99

Paper ed. ISBN 978-0-06-196373-5 \$5.99

Reviewed from galley

R Gr. 3-6

Having introduced his web-centered Guys Read initiative in 2005 with *Guys Write for Guys Read* (BCCB 6/05), Scieszka now offers Volume One of the "Guys Read" library, a set of short stories themed around, not surprisingly for Scieszka, humor. There are multiple classes of boy funny here. For instance, there are the kind of folksy stories your grandfather tells about his glorious exploits in pranking the gullible (Christopher Paul Curtis), and creative sibling dodges for getting out of really bad scrapes (Eoin Colfer). Also appearing are school assignments that take on a life of their own (Kate DiCamillo and Jon Scieszka), the kind of situations that arise from being stupid and having stupider friends (Jack Gantos, David



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2715 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland, USA 21218
+1 (410) 516-6989
muse@press.jhu.edu



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