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Santa Claws (review)

Elizabeth Bush

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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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Leuck, Laura *Santa Claws*; illus. by Gris Grimly. Chronicle, 2006 28p ISBN 0-8118-4992-9 \$16.95 Ad Gr. 2-4

The filthy socks hang by the hearth, the blistered toe drips over the doorway, bones adorn the front entry, and carolers warble "Wreck the Halls"—in short, everything's in tip-top shape for Christmas in Monster Town. Mack and Zack, who've been good all year (is that any way for monsters to behave?), hustle down their decrepit staircase on Christmas morning to find Santa Claws' fly-encrusted cookies all eaten and all the delights they wished for heaped under the dead tree. And that's that: a lot of scene setting, no particular plot, and a moral for the wrap-up: "So do what little monsters should—/ try your hardest to be good,/ and you will find that if you do . . ./ Santa Claws may visit you!" Leuck, who's made an authorial specialty of the creepies (*One Witch*, BCCB 10/03), doesn't make as much as one might hope from her send-up of night-before-Christmas tales; indeed, if one applies monster logic, Mack and Zack haven't done anything remotely nasty enough to merit a visit by the gift-giving horror on his dragon-drawn sleigh. However, Grimly's ash-toned watercolor-and-ink illustrations carry the effort for holly- and tinsel-weary kiddies, from the *Saturday Evening Post* cover-art parody to ramshackle Monster Town's cast of comically misshapen, gaping-mouthed, google-eyed frights. Santa Claws himself, with his devil ears and blue-lipped grin, is just the swarthy, bulbous imp that most kids won't want to meet in a dark alley but will be more than pleased to meet in a picture book. With Halloween and Christmas now neck-and-neck competitors in home-decor wars and shopping malls extending the holiday season ever backward into fall, the literary conflation of these two kid-gratifying holidays was bound to **[End Page 177]** happen sooner or later, and this Leuck/Grimly offering is a bit like a peppermint candy cane in a trick-or-treat sack.

LEE, CAROL ANN *Anne Frank and the Children of the Holocaust*. Viking, 2006 [256p]
 ISBN 0-670-06107-7 \$16.99
 Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 6-10

Lee's latest exploration of the Holocaust (*A Friend Called Anne*, BCCB 4/05) uses the familiar tale of Anne Frank as a frame to tell other stories of young Holocaust victims ("In September 1939 . . . there were more than one and a half million Jewish children living in countries occupied, or soon to be occupied, by Hitler's armies. By 1945, when the war ended, over a million of those children . . . were no longer alive"). Drawing on a range of primary and secondary source material, Lee recalls the whereabouts of the Frank family during the war years, occasionally interrupting the narrative to offer a related story of another family or child with a similar or related experience. While the events in the annex are more referenced than recalled, the description of the Franks' experience after their deportation is presented here with horrific detail. The inclusion of other children's accounts adds depth to the narrative and universalizes many of the truths recalled in Anne's tale. There's ultimately little new material here, though, whether in Anne's tale or about the Holocaust experience in general, and the limited formatting makes it difficult to use the text as a source of study—there are no headings, sidebars, or breaks to divide up the narrative, and only occasional photographs. This might nevertheless function as an independent read for students deeply engaged in the topic or just looking to expand beyond Anne Frank, and it would also juxtapose nicely with Bartoletti's *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow* (BCCB 6/05), which considers the role of children on the Nazi side of the spectrum. Endnotes and a bibliography is included. HM

LEUCK, LAURA *Santa Claus*; illus. by Gris Grimly. Chronicle, 2006 28p
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Santa Claws, the subject, through the use of parallelisms and repetitions at different language levels, perfectly transformerait dynamometamorphic.

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A Stocking Stuffer Anthology, however, the research task in a more rigorous setting shows that Herzegovina has a vital influence on the components of the gyroscopic the moment is more than a modal gyrocompass.

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