

PSC Reviews
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Oliver, Lin ESCAPE OF THE MINI-MUMMY AD+ Grades 2-5

In this sequel to *Attack of the Growling Eyeballs* (and part of the growing series *Who Shrunk Daniel Funk?*), Daniel Funk gets into more wild and crazy adventures with his miniature brother Pablo as he tries to create a winning diorama about ancient Egypt and figure out why he occasionally shrinks to the size of his left toe, all the while keeping these secrets from his annoying and nosy 3 sisters. A series for boys by one of the co-authors of the Hank Zipzer series, the book is funny and wacky. The only complaint is that while all the characters are ridiculous in some way, the girls in the book (with the exception of the goofy, loveable grandma and the only one to know Daniel's secrets) seem overly insipid and irritating.

Jay, Stacey UNDEAD MUCH? AD/AD+ Grades7 to 10

This sequel to *You Are So Undead to Me* about Megan Berry, a teenage zombie settler with powers beyond the norm, has a bit of everything for the paranormal crazed teenager: a girl with unknown powers who doesn't recognize how attractive and powerful she is, a hot and perfect boyfriend, a crush on a zombie (the friendly kind), mean girls, a creepy guy, evil cheerleaders, and the typical zombies who want to eat your brains. When Megan's unusually strong powers are little match for what seem to be your typical RC (reanimated corpse) and she is suspected of using black magic to have called the creatures herself, she has to decide who to trust and uncover the secrets of her mother's past to prevent a zombie apocalypse. While the story is predictable and the writing ho-hum, fans of *Twilight* and other paranormal romances will enjoy the action, adventure, romance, and humor in this book.

Teague, Mark THE DOOM MACHINE AD+ Grades 5 to 10

It's 1956 in the small town of Vern Hollow and a well-respected scientist and her smart, logical daughter are getting their car fixed by mechanical whiz kid Jack and inventor uncle Bud during an alien invasion. In their attempt to get away from town, they get stopped by a cop and his mean son Grady...and happen to bump into the alien skreeps, giant spider-like creatures, who capture them. It turns out that an invention of Bud's with them that was with in the car is a "Special Item" that could bring about destruction of the world and thus could give skreeps complete control over all of space. Such begins a crazy adventure into space, alien territory, and a galaxy overrun by a ruthless queen skreep. While the tale begins as a sort of science fiction farce without clear direction, the heroic journey of two brave kids as they navigate space and time facing aliens and beasts of all nature and with a prophecy that they will save the galaxy lingering over their heads is action-packed and engaging. Received a starred review from School Library Journal.

Holmes, Sarah OPERATION YES R Grades 4 to 9

Living on an air force base with a star general for a dad is not easy for Bo, especially when he finds it hard to stay out of trouble at school. But when a new teacher, Miss Loupe, arrives and shakes things up with a whole curriculum based on improv and theater games, Bo realizes that he might be excited about school for once. His cousin Gari, on the other hand, who came to live with Bo's family when her mom got shipped out to Iraq, is not at all excited. As Gari schemes a way to get sent back to Seattle and Bo tries to earn his dad's respect by proving that his school behavioral issues are in the past, Bo and Gari's animosity for each other only seems to grow. However, when Miss Loupe's brother disappears abroad in a military incident and destroys her spirit and enthusiasm for teaching, Bo and Gari find a way to work together and engage students in bringing her spirit back. Told from both Bo and Gari's point of view, this story does an excellent job at portraying what it means to live on an air force base, have family in the military, step out of your comfort zone, learn to work together, and choose what is really important.

Herrick, Steven NAKED BUNYIP DANCING AD+/R Grades 3 to 8

This novel in verse written by an award-winning Australian poet is a funny, sweet book about a year in the life of a sixth-grade classroom with a new hippie teacher who has long hair and "a T-shirt with the slogan Meat is Murder on the front and McDonald's = McJunk on the back." Told from different students' point of view as they prepare for a class performance. Naked bunyip dancing refers to a nonsense suggestion by the class clown as what the class should do together. The book gently and humorously deals with different worries of tween students—from a boy worrying about dancing ballet (even for his girlfriend's sake!) to the joys and fears of first love to not wanting to write poetry because there's nothing to say. Along the lines of other verse novels such as *Love That Dog*, the book does a good job at making poetry accessible for young readers. Named a Notable Book in the Younger Readers Category by the Children's Book Council of Australia.

Rapp, Adam PUNKZILLA R Grades 9 and up

Named a 2010 Printz Honor book, this epistolary novel of a runaway teenager writing to his gay brother who is dying of cancer is intense, occasionally sexually graphic, and a realistic portrayal of living on the run. 14-year-old Jamie, known as Punkzilla by his Portland friends, ran away from military school and his army general father's exceedingly high expectations. When he finds out his brother Peter ("P") is dying of cancer, he embarks on a gritty Greyhound bus journey that involves leaving his criminal and drug-ridden life in Portland and avoiding (not always successfully) creeps, perverts, and thugs as he makes his way to Memphis. Strong language, mention of drugs, and sexual gratuity do not diminish the power of this harsh coming-of-age story.

Everheart, Chris RECON ACADEMY: TEEN AGENT AD- Grades 3 to 6

This graphic novel about four teenagers who each develop special abilities in forensics, martial arts, computers, and gadgetry and join-up to form a high-tech security force is predictable and uninspired. The graphic novel format will entice students to pick up the book and the spy-kid aspect is kind of intriguing, but there is little else inspiring about the book, even the bright colorful graphics. Part of the series, Recon Academy, in this book, the four teenagers are trying to catch a thief. When a new kid enters the school and seems to have a winning idea for the science fair, only one of the teenagers is at all suspicious. With no other thief suspects, the clues

that this new kid is in fact the dangerous thief have to (literally) thump everyone else over the head before they can band together and save the day.

Skeers, Linda and Wilsdorf, Anne TUTUS AREN'T MY STYLE AD+ Grades K-2
When Emma, a tomboy who loves to catch frogs and dig for pirate treasure, receives a pink tutu ballerina outfit in the mail, she is disappointed and unsure about how to be (or if she even wants to be) a ballerina. Friends, neighbors, and family all try to show her what is needed to be a ballerina, from twirling around to floating on tippy-toes, but Emma decides to make up her own rules. Watercolor illustrations with expressive faces make the book come alive. A fairly ordinary, but rather sweet book about being yourself.

Williams, Karen Lynn and Cooper, Floyd A BEACH TAIL AD+/R Grades K-2
In this book beautifully illustrated using pastels, interesting perspectives, and expressive faces, a boy Gregory and his dad are at the beach. Gregory draws a lion in the sand, whose tail grows and grows as Gregory encounters different sea creatures and sand castles. But when Gregory finds himself far away from his dad, he must trace the tail back until he finds his father again. A great tale for summer and nature discovery.