



2009

Thirteen Ways to Sink a Sub

Ruth-Anne Brown

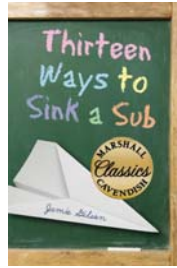
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Gilson, Jamie. *Thirteen Ways to Sink a Sub*. Illustrated by NA. Marshall Cavendish, 2009. ISBN 9780761455875. \$15.99. 103 p.

Reviewer: Ruth-Anne Brown

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fiction; Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Schools—Juvenile fiction; Substitute teachers—Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

After their teacher stumbles from the classroom to vomit, Hobie Hansen and his fourth grade classmates celebrate their freedom. The flu is going around the school, and there are many ignorant substitutes. The boys bet the girls that they can make their substitute cry--the losers have to retrieve the kick balls that land in the spit pit for the remainder of the year. The spit pit is a concrete staircase that is littered with rotting garbage and mucus. The boys make up duties for themselves to leave class while the girls all give Ms. Ivanovitch, the substitute, the wrong names when she calls roll. The girls throw snowballs at the sub and lead her around the whole school to find the music room. The boys skin her elbow after a male student tackles her in square dancing. Ms. Ivanovitch starts taking the fourth grade students more seriously, but by then, the situation is out of control. One boy clogs the sink and leaves the water running to flood the room. The sub leaves the classroom. While the students cleaning up the water with paper towels, one boy throws his wad of sticky towels to the ceiling. Ms. Ivanovitch comes back with mops to dry the floor only to have a soaking mass fall on her head. She starts laughing so much, she cries.

Thirteen Ways to Sink a Sub gives the authentic perspective of an eleven-year-old boy. The first person story of Hobie Hansen helps the reader to engage with the characters and plot. Gilson originally published *Thirteen Ways to Sink a Sub* in 1982. It was reprinted after being awarded as a Marshall Cavendish Classic in 2009. An entertaining, quick read for all ages.

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