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Fakespeare: Something Stinks In Hamlet

Rebeca Wallin

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Book Review

Fakespeare: Something Stinks In Hamlet

Author

M. E. Castle

Illustrator

Daniel Jennewein

Reviewer

Rebeca Wallin

Rating

Excellent

Level

Primary, Intermediate

Pages

261

Year

2017

Publisher

Imprint

ISBN

9781250101594

Fifth-grader Kyle is resigned to a boring afternoon spent with his know-it-all neighbor Halley when an unexpected crate full of books is delivered and changes everything. Kyle reads the first few lines from Hamlet, and the book suddenly grows and eats Kyle and Halley, transporting them back in time to the kingdom of Elsinore. The major problem here is the horrible stench that pervades the town. Hamlet's evil Uncle Claudius has usurped the throne and Prince Hamlet is working to convince the kingdom that he should be king. After several plans go awry, the time travelers, with help from Hamlet and Ophelia, are finally able to expose Claudius for the stench-causing villain he is. Hamlet is restored to the throne, Kyle reads the last line of the play, and the travelers return home, better friends than before.

The title may lead the reader to believe that the story will follow many of the original plot points from Hamlet with the addition of a few new characters. Instead, the story is based mainly on these new characters and their quest to get back home with only a few similarities to the original play. However, a rousing story unfolds with plot twists and turns and interesting characters that change and grow. The book is full of silly gags and jokes that the preteen set will appreciate, including an annoying narrator whom only the time travelers can hear and with whom they argue by shouting at the sky. The book contains hidden lines and situations from the original play which will only be caught by a Shakespeare connoisseur. These instances will be lost on most of the targeted reading group.