

Big Nate: Nailed It!

Lincoln Pierce

Andrews McMeel Publishing (Feb 28, 2023)

Softcover \$12.99 (176pp)

978-1-5248-7923-5

A sixth grader navigates life's hard knocks with wit, some wisdom, and experience in *Big Nate: Nailed It!*, the latest collection of the long-running syndicated comic strip.

Nate, seeking to better his fortune, decides he needs a good luck charm and sets about finding it. When he concludes that a particular pencil will do the trick, he embarks on a series of bold undertakings, only to see his luck soon return to normal. Elsewhere, Nate also grapples with school, hair, dating, and animals, including a chess match against a cat. At times the humor tests the limits of middle school topics, as when Nate and his friend stand in what they think is a line for snacks, only to find out it's the autograph queue for an author of erotica. But with a delicate touch, the joke remains on the "safe" side of middle school sensibilities, as Nate's friend wonders: "But isn't erotica pudding?"

The illustrations are marked by an elegant simplicity, providing necessary details but remaining clear and uncluttered. Passing a tried-and-true test for comic art, most pages provoke a laugh even without reading the words. The text adds additional cause for amusement, from outright jokes to small touches like a lispy first-grader's response when Nate tells the boy that his mother has hired Nate to babysit: "Well, she'sh washting her money."

The "joke per page" format, and the continuous nature of the strip's original publication schedule, have benefits other than frequent opportunities for chuckles: no prior knowledge of the characters is required, and although some story lines unfold over multiple pages, it's always in small, easy-to-digest doses, so the book can be put down and picked up again at leisure.

The graphic novel *Big Nate: Nailed It!* places twenty-first-century laughs into a classic format.

PETER DABBENE (March / April 2023)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.