Clarion Review

Juvenile Fiction

Loogie the Booger Genie: A Very Nasty Cold

N. E. Castle
N. E. Castle, illustrator
Bret Herholz, illustrator
CreateSpace
978-1-4802-1970-0
Four Stars (out of Five)

Charlie Simms has something up his … nose. It's a prince of a booger with magical powers.

After playing a prank on Hendrick, a cranky old wizard, Prince Loogar is turned into a genie and banished to a tiny bottle; he is to be released from this curse only when he has done good deeds. Charlie discovers the bottle years later and accidentally shoves it up his nose. Whenever he scratches his nose, Prince Loogar—also known as Loogie—appears, ready to grant Charlie's wishes. When Charlie catches a cold, he is able to wish it away, but when Loogie gets the same cold, he has trouble shaking it. The boy-booger duo attempt to summon Hendrick for magical medical intervention. Mayhem ensues when Charlie's wishes get lost in translation and Tildor, an evil genie, appears on the scene.

Charlie is a likable eight-year-old protagonist with two best friends named Tom and Katie. The oddity of his nose leads to some gooey, nasal-related descriptions that many young children will find quite hilarious: "Loogar dribbled out like a wet booger and hung upside down from Charlie's nose." Charlie's patience reveals itself in his explanations to Loogie about colds while suffering the prince's arrogance in addressing him as "a peasant."

Confident Katie and meek Tom present equally positive role models as well-mannered children inquiring about Loogie's health and relating to one another in easy terms. Even when Katie is grossed out by seeing Loogie coming out of Charlie's nose, she says politely, "Please don't EVER do that again." The changing dynamic between Charlie and Loogie also conveys the theme of friendship as Loogie, originally a disgruntled genie, becomes Charlie's buddy.

N. E. Castle's story about wizardry humorously provides children with some basically accepted facts about colds and cold etiquette, though some may be scientifically questionable, as

when Charlie explains that “when you have a cold, you have a fever.” Castle is able to highlight the practices of using remedies such as cough medicine, old-fashioned chicken soup, covering the mouth during a sneeze, and using tissues to wipe away boogers. Castle also reveals how colds make it hard for Loogie to hear well, which is why Loogie conjures up a “blizzard” instead of a “wizard” and then converts an ice cream truck into a “lavatory” instead of “laboratory.”

Though the plot is quite simple, the details are at times sketchy, as with Tildor’s presence. No one is quite sure how he shows up in Charlie’s era and under his bed, though they suspect Loogie’s nanny put the genie’s bottle into Charlie’s pocket during a previous adventure. Despite this vague explanation, the story provides enough details about olfactory organ discharges and magical mishaps to keep children engaged.

The quarter-page pencil sketches offered on nearly every page complement the story with absorbing images, such as the princely booger hanging from Charlie’s nose. The easy-to-read font may appeal to experienced new readers ages seven years and up, while younger children listening to the story will be engrossed with the nasal nonsense.

Contagious colds, slimy sneezes, magical boogers, and wacky wizardry make for a fun and catchy read.

Maya Fleischmann