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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ JUVENILE FICTION

Loogie the Booger Genie: Prince of Prank

N. E. Castle
Bret Herholz, illustrator
CreateSpace (Nov 16, 2012)
Softcover $9.99 (100pp)
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Thousands of tales are told about people who are lucky enough to find a genie bottle, but very few take the side of the genie. Naturally, a genie would rather be free, even if it means losing his or her magical abilities. Such is the case of Prince Loogar in N. E. Castle's *Loogie the Booger Genie*.

Eight-year-old Prince Loogar's pranks are not only annoying, they border on dangerous. But nobody wants to stand up to the next ruler of the kingdom, not even his mother, who defends him when one of his pranks causes her to sneeze black ooze. It is up to Hendrick, the wizard, to protect his people and help Loogie become a better prince. Condemned to be pea-sized until he learns to perform good deeds, Loogie finds himself stuck in the nose of another prankster, Charlie. Unless they learn to work together, neither boy will be free of the other.

This clever story revolves around the tension between Loogie and poor Charlie, who wants Loogie out of his nose. Castle is well versed in the sort of humor that appeals to third, fourth, and fifth graders. Everything about this book is fun, from the bright cover that depicts the resentment between Charlie and Loogie to the snot jokes and witty wordplay that complement the author's chatty style. Even the font is large and friendly, designed to appeal to budding readers. The art is reminiscent of Jules Feiffer's work in Norman Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth*, adding humor to a well-written adventure.

Beyond the amusing plot, however, are themes of kindness and cooperation. Without being preachy, Castle weaves in some practical advice about what happens when pranks go too far. The relationship between Charlie and his father, who happens to be the principal at his school, is both believable and comforting, especially since his father loves a good prank himself. The exciting exploits in this book help Loogie and Charlie understand the balance between fun and harm.

Readers who enjoy chapter books and stories about medieval kingdoms and playing pranks will love *Loogie the Booger Genie*.

EMILY ASAD (January 9, 2013)

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