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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ JUVENILE FICTION

Muskie Attack

G.M. Moore
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Corbett Griffith is the invisible boy. His divorced parents both have demanding careers that leave little time for parenting. His mother decides to send him to his Uncle Dell's fishing lodge in northern Wisconsin for the summer. A summer spent working in the woods has no appeal to Corbett, who is a city boy, but his Uncle Dell does his best to make Corbett feel welcome. Dell introduces him to Pike, another boy who works for the lodge in the summer. Pike is the exact opposite of Corbett, a true outdoorsman. Their differences do not stop the boys from getting to know one another, and soon they are immersed in adventure—primarily in the form of fishing. Corbett enjoys some success on his first fishing trip, and the praise and admiration he earns leads him to pursue the sport with great enthusiasm. When a contest is declared to catch a 70-pound muskie, Corbett is determined to the catch the beast, hoping that this will earn his parents approval and attention.

G. M. Moore's *Muskie Attack* is a story about one boy's summer vacation. The author does a good job of creating a community—the reader is introduced not only to Corbett, Pike, and Dell, but also to Pike's family, the guests at the lodge, and several of the town locals. The author shares a great deal of information about fishing as well as some fairly vivid descriptions of fishing related injuries. For example, Moore writes about injuries that Pike sees in the first aid tent: "On any given day, he could see an eye laceration from a flying lure, a severed tendon from a fillet knife, or a hook embedded in someone's head. The grossest injury he saw was the end of a single, two-inch hook sticking directly out from the center of one fisherman's eyeball."

That many parents do not have enough time for their kids is a sad reality, and children need guidance to understand and overcome situations where they feel neglected. Stories about individual strength, finding personal interests and learning to value one's self are all good lessons to teach neglected children. Corbett goes to extraordinary and dangerous lengths to get attention. Though his parents are only mildly impressed with his accomplishments, the community celebrates with a parade and a festival. The author writes: "Now he had more attention than he'd ever imagined. And his mom had sounded proud of him when he'd called and told her about battling the muskie and saving Pike."

Parents may want to read this book with their child to ensure that young readers do not come away thinking that performing a heroic feat is a good way to get attention. However, in the end the book is entertaining. The environment is very real and the story feels authentic. Corbett and Pike have more adventures to share, and many readers will look forward to joining them.

CATHERINE THURESON (January 6, 2011)

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