ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

HUMOR

No News Is Bad News
Amara Thompson
Addis Daniel
AuthorHouse
978-1-4772-1745-0
Two Stars (out of Five)

Humor in writing is largely a subjective concept. While some may find the writings of Mark Twain vastly amusing, others may prefer more outrageous and visceral humor. *No News Is Bad News*, a collaboration between authors Amara Thompson and Addis Daniel, targets the latter audience with dubious results.

Structured as a screenplay, *No News Is Bad News* tells the story of BJ, a young man who lives at home with his mother and works at a local news station in the dreary town of Dimsum, North Dakota. When a job anchoring the news opens up, BJ decides to do whatever it takes to gain the promotion. With a little help from his friends, he comes up with a plan to create news by committing minor crimes, ensuring that he is the reporter with a jump on the stories. It's not long before his chief rival for the anchor position discovers the plan and decides to start doing the same thing. Soon, their humdrum town is overwhelmed with uncharacteristic levels of pranks and misdemeanors.

Thompson and Daniel's premise is an interesting one, offering the opportunity for humorous moments and intriguing plot twists. Unfortunately, the opportunity is lost in the execution and the overwhelmingly crude tone of the book, which tends to obscure the more clever aspects of the story.

The screenplay structure of the book provides a simple, unfettered reading experience, but proves limiting in terms of character development. Readers may have difficulty discerning any positive qualities in the majority of the characters, as their interactions consist primarily of profanity-laden dialogue and potentially offensive remarks. Readers should also be aware that politically correct language is sacrificed to the quest for humor; jokes target everything from gender, religion, and cultural backgrounds to sexual identity and body weight. One incidental character is referred to as a "chubby adult…wearing an undersized NBA throwback jersey," a "fat man child," and "cheese puff kid." Even protagonist BJ presents a consistently self-serving

contempt for everyone around him, from his disrespectful attitude toward his own mother and girlfriend to his coarse interactions with friends and coworkers. He and his friends are oblivious to the consequences of their words and actions, and the seriousness of their crimes (breaking and entering, destruction of property, and robbery among them) is downplayed in order to focus on the sophomoric humor.

The action in the story is conveyed with sparse description due to the screenplay format. This occasionally results in a lack of thorough scene setting; however, the authors do convey the basic action taking place sufficiently. The book is also plagued by misplaced commas, missing apostrophes, lack of capitalization, and other textual errors, and lines occasionally run into one another, resulting in scene descriptions tagged onto dialogue in some instances.

Humor is often a matter of personal taste, and while *No News Is Bad News* has an intriguing premise, the crudeness of its dialogue and characters' behavior will limit its appeal.

Jeannine Chartier Hanscom