



Zombie Baseball Beatdown

By Paolo Bacigalupi

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In this inventive, fast-paced novel, the "New York Times"-bestselling and Printz Award-winning author of "Ship Breaker" takes on hard-hitting themesNfrom food safety to racism and immigrationNand creates a zany, grand-slam adventure that will get kids thinking about where their food comes from.

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Zombie Baseball Beatdown By Paolo Bacigalupi Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 5-9—Don't be misled by this novel's horror B-movie title and cover art: thought-provoking, topical issues and wry wit elevate it above the expected gross-out zombie tale. Middle school friends Rabi, Miguel, and Joe literally smell trouble wafting from their small town's meatpacking plant, where they find cows living in filthy conditions and behaving oddly. Then the boys' baseball coach turns up moaning "Brainsssss!" and tries to bite Rabi. When the children discover that meat from the sick cows is being packaged and sent to local supermarkets, they are on their own to prevent a zombie cow apocalypse because no one believes their story. Miguel's revelation that he's in the country illegally introduces biting commentary on racism and immigration. Bacigalupi also zings big business, the meatpacking industry, and the USDA, culminating in an epilogue that's both cautionary and empowering. Rabi, Miguel, and Joe are realistic, complete characters. It's a testament to the author's skill that they express values of courage, friendship, and integrity as naturally as they toss off hilarious observations: "Talk about ankle biters," Rabi comments when he sees two little zombie girls chewing on a man's leg. References to current video games and cyberpunk comics add appeal to this fast-paced home run.—Marybeth Kozikowski, Sachem Public Library, Holbrook, NYα(c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

From [Booklist](#)

Printz-winning Bacigalupi writing a middle-grade zombie novel? Yes, it really happened, and yes, it's pretty darn good. Milrow Meats, the meat-packing plant in Delbe, Iowa, is up to something. Pals Rabi, Miguel, and Joe can tell from the ungodly stink, the anxious behavior of the Mexicans who work there, and—oh yeah—their zombified Little League coach, who tries to nosh their brains. Further sleuthing reveals that SuperGrow growth supplement is being fed to the cows, creating undead bovines that, in turn, create "zombie burgers." And what happens when folks start snarfing those burgers? Though the plot synopsis recalls such gleeful splatter fests as John Kloepper's *Zombie Chasers* series, in Bacigalupi's hands it feels closer to Walter Dean Myers' *Cruisers* series, with much of the story delving into issues often overlooked in youth fiction: the capricious treatment of immigrant workers, the absence of options for the poor, and the questionable record of the USDA. Simultaneously smart, funny, and icky, this book asks a tough question: Is it worth looking the other way in order to save yourself? HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: The sheer improbability of a big-name author delivering a project like this should generate a strong Venn diagram of commercial and critical interest. Grades 4-7. --Daniel Kraus

Review

A 2013 *VOYA* Top Shelf Fiction for Middle School Readers Book

A 2013 Association of Booksellers for Children Best Book for Children

A 2013 *Booklist* Best Audiobook of the Year

A 2014 Children's Book Committee at Bank Street College Outstanding Book

A 2014 ALSC Notable Children's Recording

A 2014 YALSA Top Ten Amazing Audiobook

"Printz-winning Bacigalupi writing a middle-grade zombie novel? Yes, it really happened, and yes, it's pretty darn good....Simultaneously smart, funny, and icky, this book asks a tough question: Is it worth looking the other way in order to save yourself?"

?*Booklist*

"A high-energy, high-humor look at the zombie apocalypse....a signal alert to young teens to think about what they eat....sure to be appreciated by middle school zombie cognoscenti."? ***Kirkus Reviews***

"Defies the expectations of the comedy-horror genre, turning this zombie novel into an effective bit of social commentary while staying true to the story's grisly and goofy roots....Casual readers will have a blast, and those who look deeper will learn something, too."? ***Publishers Weekly***

"It's a testament to the author's skill that [the characters] express values of courage, friendship, and integrity as naturally as they toss off hilarious observations....[A] fast-paced home run."? ***School Library Journal***

"[Introduces] reluctant readers to activism through literature.... a dark comedy with a bit of heart."? ***The Bulletin***

"Batting comes in handy beating down zombies....Will appeal to reluctant readers."? ***Library Media Connection***

Users Review

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Barbra Walker:

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