



Heck: Where the Bad Kids Go

By Dale E. Basye

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WHEN MILTON AND Marlo Fauster die in a marshmallow bear explosion, they get sent straight to Heck, an otherworldly reform school. Milton can understand why his kleptomaniac sister is here, but Milton is—or *was*—a model citizen. Has a mistake been made? Not according to Bea “Elsa” Bubb, the Principal of Darkness. She doesn’t make mistakes. She personally sees to it that Heck—whether it be home-ec class with Lizzie Borden, ethics with Richard Nixon, or gym with Blackbeard the Pirate—is especially, well, *heckish* for the Fausters. Will Milton and Marlo find a way to escape? Or are they stuck here for all eternity, or until they turn 18, whichever comes first?

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 6–8—Quintessential good-kid Milton Fauster knows all about his sister Marlo's life of petty crime. So, when they are both killed in a freak marshmallow explosion, he isn't surprised that she doesn't qualify for Heaven, but he's shocked to find that he isn't going there either. They end up in Heck, an unearthly reform school that isn't quite Hell, but certainly not a place anyone would want to stay in "for all eternity—or until they turn 18, whichever comes first." Principal Bea "Elsa" Bubb figures that there is something irregular about Milton's soul contract and keeps a close eye on him. Milton, meanwhile, plans to escape. During a dreary class, he meets Virgil, who has a map of the Nine Circles of Heck. Unfortunately, the only way out is through the sewer pipes, literally "down the toilet." The torments of the darned are described in vivid and often grotesque detail. Errant toddlers nap in gingerbread coffins while Boogypeople read them Edgar Allan Poe. Milton and company make two graphically described voyages through the underworld plumbing. There are numerous classical and historical allusions, many of which will sail over the heads of the intended audience. ("I have an ax to grind with you," snarls home-economics teacher Lizzie Borden, after giving the celery 40 whacks.) In the end, the clever, if somewhat disturbing premise is overwhelmed by slow pacing and relentless descriptions of garbage, sewage, and other heckishly unpleasant things.—*Elaine E. Knight, Lincoln Elementary Schools, IL*

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From Booklist

Welcome to Grizzly Mall: Home of the State's Second-Largest Bear-Themed Marshmallow Statue! Such is the Kansas-fed, white-bread suburb 13-year-old Marlo Faustus longs to escape. And escape she does, with her unwitting, innocent younger brother, Milton, when said sculpture explodes, and they arrive, newly deceased, in Heck—where the bad kids go. Puns and allusions abound, enough to sate the corniest appetite, even if many will slide right by the reader: the kids' limbo is ruled by one Bea Elsa Bubb, Principal of Darkness, and faculty include Mr. Nixon (ethics), Lizzie Borden (home ec), and Mr. Dior (fashion, though his sole offense appears to be that he is effete). Beneath the jocular surface, though, Marlo and Milton work through a complex sibling relationship on their quest for escape. Can they put aside their differences to elude the Boogypeople and hall monitors free the jarred blobs of lost souls, hatch a getaway, and stay together? Heck if I know. Grades 3–6. --Thom Barthelmess

Review

Starred Review, *Publishers Weekly*, June 30, 2008:

"The author's umpteen clever allusions...make this book truly sparkle."

Review, *The Wall Street Journal*, July 26-27, 2008:

"Parents and readers . . . are in for a treat with Dale E. Basye's very funny debut novel."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

William Lee:

The knowledge that you get from Heck: Where the Bad Kids Go may be the more deep you excavating the information that hide within the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It doesn't mean that

this book is hard to comprehend but Heck: Where the Bad Kids Go giving you thrill feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in particular way that can be understood by means of anyone who read it because the author of this guide is well-known enough. This kind of book also makes your own vocabulary increase well. Making it easy to understand then can go to you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having this kind of Heck: Where the Bad Kids Go instantly.

Joan Marcial:

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Gerald Kelly:

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