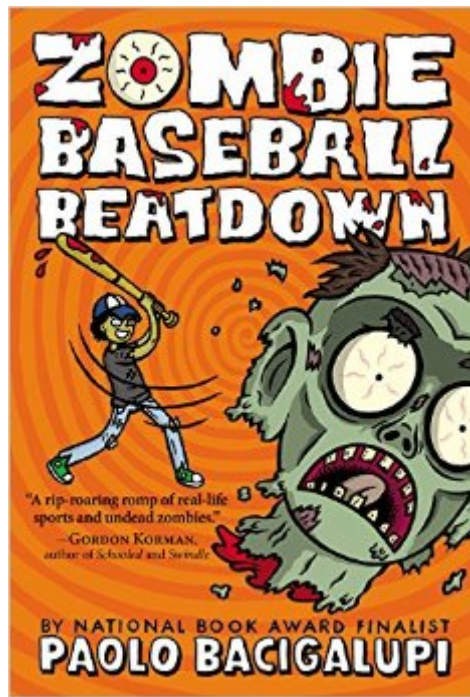


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Zombie Baseball Beatdown



Synopsis

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

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (September 23, 2014)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (24 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #67,858 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #91 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism](#) #104 in [Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Baseball](#) #180 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction](#)

Age Range: 10 - 13 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

I was shopping for new books with my son recently, and he was pretty lukewarm about most of what we were seeing. I had put a few books for kids in his age range on our list, but he wasn't terribly excited about the whole thing. I had decided that we needed some new books to read together (and for him to read on his own) and he was resigned to it, but that was about it. Naturally, his level of enthusiasm changed markedly when he saw this book. Zombies? A freshly-whacked zombie head flying toward the reader on the book's cover? Now he was excited and I was resigned. I mean, every right-thinking person loves zombies, but yet another zombie movie/show/book/game/etc? When is enough finally enough? Still, he had his heart set on this book as soon as he saw it, so I added it to the list and resolved to look it up later to see if it was worth getting. I did look it up, and read some reviews here and elsewhere, and decided to get it. I'm glad I did. We read the book together, taking turns, though I read the bulk of it to him. Throughout the book and in retrospect, I

was very impressed by the writing and character development. When we read other books for this age group (including some of the ones on his list I was more in favor of buying, I have to admit), we often encounter characters who are fairly flat, perhaps partially to serve as a cipher for the reader, and a lot of cringeworthy narration and dialogue. Especially narration. I can't think of any specific examples at the moment, but you know what I'm talking about: the kind of goofy kid-isms that unhip middle-aged writers think that kids would say, but that kids wouldn't actually say or think. I was impressed that Bacigalupi so deftly avoided that kind of cliché pandering while still writing a book that many kids would identify with. The characters are well-developed within the narrative mode the book employs, and the author's writing is appropriate and appealing for kids in this age range without talking down to them. For other parents or book buyers concerned that this book is just a pulpy zombie beat-em-up, let me say that while there's enough of that to keep the kids happy (eventually, anyway; early on, my son asked "When are we going to get to the zombies?"), that's not really what this book is *about*. This book is about three ordinary friends in an ordinary little town who encounter a very unusual situation and have to deal with it the best they can. That's refreshing given the rash of young adult books published in recent years that rely on the same old escapist wish-fulfillment formula (you thought you were an ordinary boy, but you're really a demigod/wizard/the Chosen One/etc.!) for a lot of their interest. This book deals with friendship, class, race, and character in a fairly obvious manner without being preachy or diving into tangents. It explores the occasional duplicity of adults and the world we expect kids to adjust to, which I think is valuable for kids this age, who are starting to become a bit more able to view the world critically. This is a well-written and entertaining book that is much more sophisticated than the title might suggest. I'm very glad that we bought it, and my son is looking forward to rereading it.

I'm a big fan of Paolo Bacigalupi, because he writes dystopias that actually take our current world as a starting point and consider how current issues could develop. (In other words, they're not dystopian romances where the dystopian structure makes no sense.) I've enjoyed *The Windup Girl*, *Ship Breaker*, and *The Drowned Cities*, so I picked up this latest book too even though it's for children. I'm not particularly into zombies or baseball, but the author was enough to sell me on it. So, I had good reason to expect that I'd enjoy this book. And yet Bacigalupi *still* managed to impress me and exceed my expectations. There are big issues here: food safety, the treatment of illegal immigrants, the disproportionate power of corporations compared to individuals. There's also a compelling plot with plenty of action. And these different elements just fit together so well, making the book much better than the sum of its parts. This has more depth than a typical action-adventure

story, without sacrificing interest or becoming preachy. I'll definitely continue to read anything Bacigalupi writes, whether for adults, teens, or children, and if I had a child of my own I would recommend this book to them. At least one other reviewer has raised the question of whether the topics here are appropriate for children. The protagonist of the book is half Indian (as is Bacigalupi's own son, I think), and he's teased and taunted about it by some of his teammates in his mostly-white town. One of his best friends is an illegal immigrant who was brought to the United States as a baby and has never known any other home, but is at risk of being deported. In other words, there are controversial issues here. If you're open to discussing big ideas with your child and helping them develop an awareness of the different lives that people live, this book could be a good starting point for a conversation. If you're looking for a mindless zombiefest, this is not the book for you.

A novel variation on the zombie story. The book has fun with how zombies are created, and the teenage protagonists feel realistic. The underlying messages are serious ones, about the health of our meat supply and also how policies on illegal immigrants allow unscrupulous employers to take advantage of them, but the polemical messages don't get in the way of the action. And how could you not like a zombie cow head?

I bought this book for my 13 year old son. He can be a picky, somewhat perfunctory reader. I was pleasantly surprised to see him read this book in two days! He couldn't put it down and wants the next one. He really liked the mystery and the motivation between the main character.

I will buy the rest of the story when available. This is a bit different from the authors earlier works, but very entertaining none the less.

This story fails on multiple levels: characters suddenly find themselves with weapons, and prove willing to mow down "zombies" who'd been their families just moments before. A very disappointing effort from a very belated author.

When I read Scalzi's "The Big Idea" piece on it, it sounded interesting, but I didn't intend to pick it up. Except I saw it on my library's eBook catalog, so I thought, what the heck. It sounded like fun. Paolo says he wrote the book as a fun thing without much pressure. There aren't any literary techniques. He just tried to make a fun book for boys about zombie fighting, without many themes

and motifs. I think the themes are actually more prevalent than he makes light of. There's a prominent thread of foreigners/bigotry in here. More so than the zombies, which are actually lacking. Those expecting something like "World War Z" or "David Wellington" will be disappointed. That being said, the novel does achieve what it seeks out to. It's a beach read, not too heavy except for the racism themes, and some fun gross-outs.

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