

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Sheely/Addy	School:	OBMS
Book Title:	Half Upon A Time	Genre:	Fantasy/Fairytale
Author:	James Riley	Pages:	416
Publisher:	Aladdin	Copyright:	9/13/2011

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

Jack lives in a fantasy world. Really. He's the son of the infamous Jack who stole the magic beans from the giant, and he's working hard to restore his family's reputation. He finds the perfect opportunity when a "princess" lands in front of him, apparently from the land of Punk, as her Punk Princess t-shirt implies. May is from our world, and she's utterly confused to find herself in the midst of the fairy tale characters she has read about. But Jack and May have more in common than they realize--and together, they embark on a hilarious and wild adventure in this highly accessible, modern middle grade fantasy novel.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

I can identify major and minor parts of a plot.

I can explain how events in fiction affect each other.

I can read from a variety of genres.

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

Children's Literature

The first character we meet in this tale is Jack. But he is not the fairy tale Jack of Beanstalk fame. No, that Jack was this Jack's father; and this Jack hasn't seen him since that famous encounter with the giant. Living with his grandfather in the shadow of his father's reputation as a thief, Jack is a different sort of hero. His education is devoted to learning how to save a princess, since that is the only way to escape his life as a peasant. Unfortunately, Jack doesn't seem to be very good at it. He alone, of all the village boys, has failed his princess-saving test. Again. Still, that hardly seems to matter when a princess named May unexpectedly drops into his life. Her grandmother is missing, and she needs Jack's help to save the old woman. Before you know it, Jack is facing witches and wolves, taking on giants and dragons with the best of them. Along the way, he and May pick up a dainty companion (a fairy), a noble companion (Prince Phillip) and a scary companion (the Wolf King). A host of familiar fairy tale characters appear, including—but certainly not limited to—

Snow White, Merriweather, Malevolent, Red Riding Hood, the Wicked Queen, the Huntsman, the Seven Dwarves, and Rapunzel. James Riley's novel is more a re-imagined and greatly embroidered fairy tale than it is a fractured one. "Quick-paced" is an understatement, as our heroes move swiftly from one danger to the next, with hardly a breath in between. The only disappointment is that all of the bad guys get away—but there's pleasure in that, too, as it means we'll get to see May, Jack, and Phillip track them down to set things right in a much-anticipated sequel. Highly recommended.
Reviewer: Heidi Hauser Green

Review #2

From The Critics

Gr 5–9—In his twisted fairy-tale world, hapless young Jack fails his princess-rescuing test, but fate gives him another chance when a circle of blue fire deposits May, wearing a T-shirt that reads "Punk Princess," into his cottage. Jack recognizes her as a true princess and they set off on a quest to find her grandmother, Snow White. Joined by super-smooth Prince Phillip, and staying just ahead of the giant green Huntsman, they journey to the Black Forest, ride the wicked wolf's back, release a genie when they break Red Hood's magic mirror, and spend time in the dungeon of a fairy queen before finding Snow White and seven dwarfs in the Palace of the Snow Queen. Jack is perennially clumsy, and May has a quick, sharp tongue until she trades her sarcasm to save Jack's life. Snappy dialogue, fast-paced action, unexpected twists, and the inevitable conflicts of a threesome made up of two teenage boys and a pretty girl make this an enjoyable read. A whirlwind ending upsets everything, setting the stage for a sequel.—Kathleen Isaacs, Children's Literature Specialist, Pasadena, MD

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **Jack and the Beanstalk**

Author: **Brothers Grimm**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

None

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): Lexile 820

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 2/1/12

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults