

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Jamie Edwards Grade: 6 School: SMS

Book Title: Beasties, The Genre: Science Fiction/fantasy

Author: Sleator, William Pages: 198

Publisher: Broeck Steadman Copyright: 1999

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.)

At first Doug doesn't believe the rumors about bloodthirsty creatures who are said to have left a trail of amputated victims across the northern woods. Then, he and his younger sister find signs of a mysterious presence in the land behind their home. They are about to meet the Beasties, a "family" of beings with war on their minds--war against the human race!

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)

Conceptual Understanding

2. Interpret similes and metaphors to understand new words and phrases in text.

7AVB

6. Critically compare across texts noting author's style as well as literal and implied contents of texts. 7RPB

7. Predict or hypothesize as appropriate from information in the text, supporting with specific references to a literary work. 7RPB

Self-monitor

8. Apply self-monitoring strategies to clarify confusion about text and to monitor comprehension. 7RPD

13. Describe and analyze the elements of character development. 7RALA

14. Identify the main and minor events of the plot and explain how each gives rise to the next. 7RALC

15. Identify the use of figurative language. 7RALG

16. Demonstrate comprehension by inferring themes, patterns and symbols. 7RALE

I use this book as part of an author study of William Sleator. We compare writing styles across texts and write comparison essays for assessment. We also use this book as one of our choices to study the genre of science fiction/fantasy.

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

- Publishers Weekly

With all the moral complexity of H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, Sleator's (*The Spirit House*) latest novel revolves around a community of small, pasty creatures that live underground and harvest the humans who inhabit the surface. The Beasties have been deprived of their forest home and of various crucial body parts by commercial loggers. They replace their losses with human limbs, which they amputate from the human host, using crude surgical techniques. When teenage Doug, the narrator, and his little sister Colette move to a deserted house in the country, the Beasties coerce the pair into helping them maim a logger. As the rather stereotypical pair of children (Doug is an athlete, Colette is a bookworm) begins to sympathize with the Beasties' plight, they are forced into ethically challenging positions throughout the book (e.g., Doug even donates one of his eyes to the creatures' new leader, who is blind). The moral dilemmas here are exceptionally well developed (although the question of Colette's possible brainwashing is never fully resolved), and the Beasties' unusual speech lends a quaint poignancy to their otherwise disgusting character: "You thinking you can just pry out where we live and snooping around and then go bye-bye... I'm so sorry, my strong, healthy young anatomies, but it doesn't working that way." This gleefully icky horror show may well leave readers with some soul-searching questions about nature's changing environment that resonate long after the cover is closed. Ages 10-up. (Oct.)

Strange creatures whose existence is threatened by loggers require human donors to survive. PW said that this novel "may well leave readers with some soul-searching questions." Ages 8-12. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Cahners Business Information. BarnesandNoble.com

Review #2

- Children's Literature

When Doug's father gets a grant to study a rare tree fungus, the family moves to an isolated forest area, rumored to be inhabited by a race of dangerous creatures called Beasties. Doug doesn't take the rumors seriously until he meets a forest ranger without an ear and a housekeeper without a nose. Then his younger sister, Colette, discovers a maze of underground tunnels behind their new home. They meet the Beasties and become embroiled in a battle between humans and non-humans. In this slick horror novel, Sleator creates a race of horrific creatures endangered by deforestation. Who are the true beasts--the humans who abuse the environment or the Beasties who mutilate humans to replace their own missing body parts? Doug can't imagine a reason to side with non-humans until the Beasties generously spare his life. Is it possible that the Beasties are more humane than the humans are? The shocking climax presents a whole new dimension to the idea of self-sacrifice. This is a suspenseful horror story that will make readers think as well as cringe. 1999 (orig. BarnesandNoble.com

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

Title: Boxes, The Author: Sleator, William

Title: Boy Who Reversed Himself, The Author: Sleator, William

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:
Title: Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

One reference using the word, "hell". "...he folded his arms across his chest, thinking. "Well, Hell, I can forget the rules just this once, for a couple of lost kids,..."

Deceptive explanation in reference to the appearance of the "Beasties".

References to amputated "victims" w/ no detail to the amputation, other than the implied inference that limbs were removed via crude surgeries.

One reference to the word "gods." "It seemed to be a study of ancient beliefs about strange gods and woodland spirits..." (p. 59). Term is used in a non-biased fashion...used only in an observational manner.

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): Ages 8-12

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 5/23/07

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