Laboratory Management: Principles and Processes

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This is a cute and fast read about a young witch (she’s only 100), Hunky Dory, and how she discovers who she really is. She’s going to school to learn how to be the best and most evil witch there is, but she discovers that she really likes granting people’s wishes – an absolutely no-no for the truly wicked. So she starts doing it on the sly, and finds that she likes the rush she gets from helping people. This odd fairy godmother streak in her gets her tossed out of school and home to find her own way, and Hunky is pretty savvy about this, too. Eventually she comes to the realization that she’s got a bit of witch in her fairy godmother tendencies, and that her friends and family love her anyway, even though she’s become a bit of a black sheep.

Wit and wisdom abound in these pages (sometimes a bit too transparently). There’s a list at the back of the book in case you missed any of these lessons and for the most part they are GOOD lessons and aren’t too preachy: “There’s no voice on the outside that can tell you more than the voice on the inside.” There are some long verse sections which can also be irritating – but like Lord of the Rings, you can skip them easily enough. Younger teens and tweens will probably enjoy this the most.

DiLorenzo does it again!!! A real page turner that I could not put down for very long once I started it. His prose is very fluid and his acidic rhetoric gives life to the book. Some parts seemed repetitive, as if each chapter is meant to be a stand alone essay, and for that reason, one - theoretically - would not have to read the book in a linear fashion, and could skip around to read whatever chapters interested them the most. A must read!!!!!!

I adore books that take classic fairy tales and turn them on their heads and Diary of a Fairy Godmother is certainly twisted enough. This book was a cute, quick read and perfect for a lazy afternoon and to ease me back into reading. The word games took a little bit of getting used to. Everything bad is good in Hunky’s world and being a little wicked is the whole point of the story. The characters and character names are amusing. There are names like Frantic Search and Velvet Underground and all the little witch girls are hilarious. The world building is half the fun.

A few different fairy tales sneak in throughout this story, including Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella. It’s sort of like what those fairy tales would be like if the characters made mistakes and had a healthy dose of attitude and snark. Hunky is trying to make her own way in the world and her fumbling is amusing. She is the
original wishing well and even builds her own house out of cookie dough! (No children are eaten as a result. Sorry.) The main character appears to be a young child, about 13 or so to my estimate, and while we are told she is much older than that, I found it so odd with Hunky’s mother kicked her out of the house. It was weird. But then, Hunky is no ordinary kid and this is fairy tale world, so I should probably stop overthinking this.

Diary of a Fairy Godmother by Esmé Raji Codell is a cute coming of age story that reminds readers to make their own way in the world and that if they want something, they have to work for it. Wishes are never a good short cut. A person needs to build character. (Of course, if my Aunt tried to give me conflict as a birth gift I’d probably turn her into a toad at the first possible moment. But then, my Aunt isn’t the evil queen so maybe not.) Diary of a Fairy Godmother was a swift, sweet read with a witty writing style and was perfect for a lazy afternoon.

Macklin

Rating: it was amazing

I love this book. It is so cute and has great lessons for people anyone of any age even if it is just a reminder.

T.W. Brown

Rating: it was ok

It would be unfair not to mention that this author and I do not have a positive relationship. That is why I waited a considerable length of time before buying (at least I get points for that), reading, and reviewing this book. Oddly enough, I have heard accusations that I reviewed this book under an alias. Good or bad, I ALWAYS review under my name. A review is simply one individual's opinion. So, with that disclosure done, on to the book.

I have the most recent edition with the re-edits, but it is still lacking to the point of distraction. The biggest flaws are in the dialogue and there are simply too many to ignore. Mr. Dale is a journalist, and perhaps the story would have had a better flow if he stuck to story narration. The rules of punctuation differ for dialogue versus simple paragraphs. The repetitive nature throughout was also a bit over done for me. However, it is his style choice and if it works for his audience, then he should not change it simply because others don’t enjoy it. He would do well to study Cormac McCarthy, it might give him some ideas that will smooth out his delivery if this minimalist approach is to be his continued choice.

There is a story in there despite the distractions and Dale is unapologetic in his beliefs which are woven throughout. They scream from the pages, and that is perhaps the strongest aspect of this book. It is a societal metaphor, and whether you agree or disagree with his politics, he does present them in a no-holds-barred manner. Again, he has a background in journalism and perhaps would be serving himself and his readers better by ditching the zombie scene and penning actual treatises on political ideology.

While not for me, I believe there is an audience that will appreciate this book. However, Dale would do well to obtain editing assistance.

Matthew Baker

Rating: liked it
I don’t normally review self-published works here at Shattered Ravings, but when I read the plot synopsis for CODE FLESH, I decided to make an exception. I am always intrigued by new zombie concepts, especially those from first-time authors; this book is no different. With CODE FLESH, author Alan Dale gives us a unique and vicious look into a horrific future.

I have to confess up front: I enjoyed this book for the most part however there are a few issues with it. This is very understandable though, as self-published authors do not have access to copy editors and such. I have self-published three novels myself and know all too well the headaches and hassles that can accompany it.

Basically, what a self-published novel boils down to is the story itself. If you have an entertaining premise and your execution is halfway decent, then you shouldn’t have too many problems with readers enjoying your work. Unfortunately, when the premise becomes stale or non-plausible, that’s when readers switch over to critique-mode. With this book, Dale walks a fine line in between the two areas.

The story of CODE FLESH is original for sure, but I have to question it’s plausibility. I mean, granted it is a zombie story, but it’s the background that is throwing me. Sure, we as a society overlook a lot, especially where the government is concerned. But I’m not too sure that an organization like the NWO could literally take over without much resistance. I get the symbolism involved in regard to the 99% and all, but this is one aspect of the book that made me wince a little.

Still, putting that aside, the individual sub-plots within the story are entertaining and the characters are flawed, believable individuals for the most part. The action and horror are tight, with some nice battle scenes and several terrifically gory zombie attacks. There’s even a couple of interesting, um, ‘commentaries’ given from the zombie point-of-view as well.

The prose in CODE FLESH is pretty good, although I do have to admit that some of it rambles. Specifically, the same point or even phrase is reiterated almost to the point of absurdity in some spots. Here’s an example:

He was near death and too weak to scream.
His eyes said it all.
His eyes.
His eyes.
The pain he must be feeling. That I soon will be feeling.

I think I understand what Dale is going for here with this type of literary style, but it is a difficult thing to do well; unfortunately, it backfires drastically in this book and puts the reader off more than anything.

CODE FLESH is a great book overall that could benefit from the resources a standard publisher has at its disposal. Given a bit of work, I could definitely see this published by a major house, if not one of the genre-specific publishers. The book is currently available on Amazon if you want to check it out.

Mariah

Rating: really liked it

This was extremely cute! A very fast and enjoyable read. I love the author, so it was great reading another book by her.
I was really hoping to finish this book by Halloween, but I was one day late of that :p
Dawn Draper

Rating: liked it

I listened to this book on CD. It was very cute. Honky Dory is a witch that doesn't have the money to attend Hogwarts. She and her classmates have quirky names and are in school to learn how to be witches that aren't exactly nice. Honky Dory runs into a fairy godmother at the christening of "sleeping beauty" and through much resistance on her own part decides that her destiny is to be a fairy godmother herself. This book is filled with twists and turns through Hogwarts terminology and fairy tales of times past. All in all it was fun but I would be interested to hear how teachers would use this in class.

Taylor

Rating: it was ok

Started out funny but stopped. It's like the side of the bad villians and monster in fairtales. Her whole family is bad and she is expected to be also, but kind of isn't sure to be bad or good yet. The main character's aunt is the villian in Sleeping Beauty and they go crash baby Aurora's (Sleeping Beauty) baby shower. One of the other funny parts is when the Aunt and her niece (the main charater)are at the party the Aunt gets sick of it she decides to put a curse on the child to make the party intersting. The Aunt really cracked me up. It goes through tons of other fairtales too but it's her point of view like a diary.

Andrea

Rating: it was amazing

I've been tracking the making of this book since it was just an idea floating around in Alan's head, chatting for hours over the phone during my night shift, exploring names for the characters and such. Despite my faith in Alan's epic ability to paint a vivid picture in my mind's eye and his grasp on political/social controversy, never would I have imagined how deeply he would penetrate my self awareness and where I (we) fit in the grand scheme of life and current times. You don't have to be an avid undead fanatic to be captivated by this novella. Its dark and revealing understory is just as disturbing as the rotten flesh-eating scrats that effectively permeate the pages, leaving its entrails to fester in your psyche. I know how this story ultimately "ends" and I can't wait to see how people react. Mwahahahaha All in all: DNA is an easy enough read for consumers simply seeking entertainment value, while standing to become the next Tolkiensk series which parallels historical catastrophes, topical issues, and the future path we humans may ultimately have to navigate. Please, I insist, read up and engorge... >:D