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Harry on Holiday; A Hiccup on the High Seas; Rattle and Hum in Double Trouble; Bing Bang Boogie, It's a Boy Scout

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

A mixed bunch from the well-established 'Jets' series of 'simple stories ideal for children who are just beginning to enjoy reading'. The stories - some of them complicated enough to require a fair amount of explanatory text - are told partly in cartoon-style pictures with speech bubbles which move the story on economically. This leads to very full, even cluttered, pages, especially in the paperback versions, which I found confusing to follow at times. These four volumes demand a fairly high level of fluency and sophistication in those who have not yet developed reading stamina for more solid texts. Parents and teachers would need to match to readers' interest and ability.

Harry on Holiday is the simplest of the four and concerns Harry whose family cannot afford an exotic holiday this year. Harry finds a way to have a 'mega-badly-good' time close to home, even being asked to report on it for a TV holiday programme - alert readers will pick up clues to the ending from the pictures.

A Hiccup on the High Seas is a pseudo-Viking adventure (complete with now-discredited horned helmets), its simple, at times banal, text enlivened by some apt images. The ending is limp and more attention could have been paid to the characterisation and jokes, but the story has a certain appeal.

Rattle and Hum in Double Trouble is about two rather cute robot detectives working with their sergeant to solve the mystery of the bogus Mr Gumboyle. A female pirate and a witch add their expertise to the puzzle in this jam-packed

adventure. 8-year-olds will probably find Rattle and Hum's bottoms, which tend to fall off inconveniently at times of stress, hilarious.

The most sophisticated of these stories, and one that I enjoyed hugely is **Bing Bang Boogie, It's a Boy Scout**. This unlikely tale of Boy Scouts from outer space visiting Earth to do their 'Backwoodsman' badge contains lots of authorial comments on the history and nature of language, and a useful message for those whose only form of entertainment is the computer.

Running Order:

35

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