



[Home](#) > Squids will be Squids

Squids will be Squids

Books Reviewed:

[Squids will be Squids](#) [1]

Issue:

[115](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

The team that brought you **The True Story of the Three Little Pigs!** and **The Stinky Cheese Man** now offer a reworking of Aesop - 'Fresh Morals, Beastly Fables'. The definition of 'beasts' is wide. Aesop would have thought more than twice about including 'Piece of Toast and Froot Loops' and 'Duckbilled Platypus vs. BeefSnakStik'. As in the previous titles, the whole book plays with its theme: in this case, of animals representing the less appealing behaviour of humans. The dust jacket is part of the entertainment, with thumbnail biographies of Eagle Scieszka and Lion Smith. This book is suitable for 'Ages 49-630 (in dog years)'-but probably best for 70-98. For the most part, the fables draw on the stuff of urban childhood and adolescence, relationships with parents and friends. Every fable ends with a 'moral': although these are more often quips and punch lines. But do not be misled, although Scieszka is cool and streetwise, this is, in the spirit of Aesop, a tongue in Cheek guide to manners. Three fables about elephants make up a running joke whose underlying message is the need to call home if you are going to be late (or stay out all night). Scieszka's sharp observations are perfectly matched by the weird shapes and colours of Smith's imagination. As in previous titles, text, design (by Molly Leach) and illustration all work together to create a consistently off centre world, where the joke is in how far the idea of the fable can be pulled out of shape and still emerge reasonably intact: see, for instance, why Straw should not play with Mathes; or what happened when Rock, Paper and Scissors were partners on an end-of-year Science project. The book is perhaps not as readily accessible as its predecessors. But those who already know Scieszka and Smith will not be disappointed.

Running Order:

37

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[1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/squids-will-be-squids>

[2] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/115>

[3] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/clive-barnes>