



Fizzlebert Stump The Boy Who Ran Away From the Circus and Joined the Library

Books Reviewed:

[Fizzlebert Stump The Boy Who Ran Away From the Circus and Joined the Library](#) [1]

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Reviewer:

[Geoff Fox](#) [3]

Not a Choice:

off

BfK Rating:

3

A.F. Harrold is a performance poet and **Fizzlebert Stump** is, I think, his first novel. Fizzlebert is our hero's name (most often he was just called Fizz?), and Mr Harrold likes a good rib-tickling name. His baddies are the elderly Mr and Mrs Stinkthrottle, Fizz meets a librarian named Miss Toad, and he works in the circus-ring with a lion tamer called Captain Fox-Dingle. (The lion, on the other hand, is called Charles (Fizz's job is to stick his head into the lion's mouth which is not as tricky as it sounds since Charles has rubber teeth)). Mr Harrold is also fond of brackets, and sometimes brackets inside brackets, since he often turns parenthetically aside from his plot to chat with his reader about this story and storytelling in general. For example, there might be a digression about cliff-hanging chapter endings; an explanation of a longish word; or a conversational 'Let's hope the rest of the story gets more exciting?.'

Fizz's mum is a clown and his dad a strongman, both rather preoccupied with their careers. His best friend is Fish, the sea-lion; and since sea-lions have their limitations as best friends, Fizz is lonely because he's the only kid in the circus. Once the story kicks in, it's about a library book falling accidentally into Fizz's hands, what happens when Fizz returns it to the library, how he's kidnapped by the Stinkthrottles and then how he's rescued. So no, it doesn't really get a lot more exciting, to be honest, and young readers do tend to like plenty of pace and incident. But for a performance poet, it may be more a matter of how you tell 'em; and Mr Harrold does tell 'em with plenty of wit and a relish for words which his audience could find infectious. The book needs readers who are not looking for pages crowded with action and excitement, but are happy with an amiable tale where the villains are clearly going to cop it in the end; readers who will enjoy an unusual, comical and engaging one-sided conversation with the author ? a conversation which would read very well aloud.

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