



Oh No!: Or How My Science Project Destroyed the World

Mac Barnett , Dan Santat (Illustrator)

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It's a terrible thing when a giant robot starts destroying your city.

It's even worse when it's your fault.

Oh No!: Or How My Science Project Destroyed the World Details

Date : Published June 1st 2010 by Disney-Hyperion

ISBN : 9781423123125

Author : Mac Barnett , Dan Santat (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 36 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Science Fiction, Humor, Robots



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From Reader Review Oh No!: Or How My Science Project Destroyed the World for online ebook

Stephanie says

“Oh no...Oh man...I knew it.” This is how the science fiction picture book Oh No! (Or How My Science Project Destroyed The World) began when the main character won her science fair with the robot she made. The only problem is that after she wins, the robot gets loose and begins to destroy the city. Feeling responsible for the destruction, the girl tries many different things to stop the robot. In the end, she was successful at stopping it, but with unintended consequences... “Oh no...Oh man...I knew it.”

This book is told primarily through illustrations with sparse text narrated through the girl’s point of view. Dan Santat’s created the engaging illustrations in this book using Photoshop and they give the book a movie-like feel. The illustrations and text in this science fiction book allow readers to easily follow the plot line of this book. Since the book takes place in a modern day real world city, the reader would be able to connect to this and imagine the destruction that a robot could cause if it got loose in a city.

Although this book is mostly illustrations, the text requires students to have an understanding of cause and effect to understand the issues with the design of the robot that are causing the destruction and preventing the girl from stopping the robot. Although students in K-3 would enjoy this book, it would be more deeply comprehended by students in this grade band who have understanding of cause and effect.

Lisa Vegan says

Well this one, much to my surprise, was not my cup of tea.

I did like that it’s a girl who’s built this amazing (although certainly problematic) science project for the science fair. I did like the humor; it is a very amusing premise and much of the story is likely to appeal to kids’ funny bones.

I didn’t much like the art style. The illustrations just didn’t do it for me, but I can understand why others like them.

There aren’t that many words but there is some advanced vocabulary, especially at the plans for the robot, so while this could make an okay read aloud book, I’d say this book would be better enjoyed by independent readers to read to themselves.

Maybe if I had been in a different mood I’d have enjoyed it more.

Anke says

This is a great book for all sorts of reasons. It’s a good read for a wide range of age levels, the intelligent star of the story is a clever GIRL, science fairs are portrayed as quite the cool thing, visually it’s a picture book,

but really, this is a deluxe graphic novel and finally, it's hilarious!

The author does not share the girl's first name, but we do learn very quickly that her blue ribbon science fair project (a giant robot) is destroying the world! She tries everything in her power to stop it; yelling, hitting, writing it a note—but she realizes she didn't give it ears, the sense of pain or the ability to read. It gets funnier. She programmed the robot to control dogs' minds. To solve her rampant robot problem she runs home to her lab to create a giant toad. He indeed gets rid of the robot, but what can stop a giant toad?

Visually, this book is like a Japanese Godzilla movie. During the destruction pages all street signs are written in Japanese and the black edges of each page make it look like we're watching a movie. Older kids and adults familiar with those movies will enjoy that part of the book.

This story can be read aloud to kindergarten students and even enjoyed by middle school students. Connections can be made to science, writing, reading and math. The bookends have great detailed illustrations on her two projects, with the back one representing the mathematical concepts behind her Growth Ray Device for the toad.

Sharon says

What could go wrong with a robotic science project that has a claw and a laser eye, but no ears to hear its creator's commands? Young readers will giggle their way through this simple book as the hero uses her scientific know-how to find a solution only to realize she has created an even bigger problem!

Elizabeth Westlund says

This science fiction picture book is about a young girl who creates a robot for her science project. Unfortunate events lead to the robot going loose on the city and creating havoc. The little girl keeps repeating phrases like, "I probably shouldn't have..." She tries numerous ways to stop the robot, but to no avail. Eventually, she devises the idea of creating a giant toad that will stop the robot, but instead ends up repeating the cycle.

This story was complex, yet the words in the story were very simple and brief. The reader really has to rely on the illustrations to make inferences and fill in the gaps of the story. Luckily, the illustrations were vivid, colorful and interesting to follow. It did fit the criteria of planting clues and inviting the reader to predict what will happen next. I did feel that there was a quality of good science fiction that was missing in this book. Our textbook states that, "The best works of science fiction, then, are those that draw believable characters". The characters seemed undeveloped and somewhat one-dimensional. This could be due to the fact that I am coming from the mindset of an adult, but I felt that some further development would have led to a more interesting story to match the wonderful illustrations. Despite this, I liked the science fiction nature of this book that we don't see as often for very young readers. I would likely use this in a kindergarten or first grade classroom to introduce the genre and spark discussion.

Kaethe says

August 7, 2012

Brilliant concept with great art by Santat. I loved it from endpaper to endpaper, and was particularly fond of the other projects at the science fair (clever throw-aways). Only problem was, Tash and I agree, it wasn't long enough. We'd love to see a middle-grade novel with the mad scientist, our favorite since *Lunch Walks Among Us*.

July 11, 2014

Well, a sequel is good, too.

Library copy.

L12_sarah says

Oh No! (Or How My Science Project Destroyed the World) is the story of a young girl whose science project (a giant robot) wins first prize at the science fair and is admired by everyone...until it escapes the school gym and starts terrorizing the city. She realizes how big her problem is (in more ways than one) when she remembers that she didn't give the robot ears to hear, or the ability to read, or the ability to feel pain, all of which are incredibly important if one is trying to stop a giant robot with laser eyes from destroying everything! To stop her robot, the little girl creates a giant robotic frog who does manage to save the day...until it goes on a terrorizing spree and the cycle starts all over again.

This book, published by Disney Hyperion Books, is very reminiscent of Disney/Pixar's *The Incredibles*, both in the story and illustration style used. The color illustrations are a cross between a graphic novel and a 1950s cartoon with their cartoon quality and antiqued colors. The book is larger than a typical picture book and thus provides a larger canvas for illustrations. The illustrator, Dan Santat, created the animated Disney series, *The Replacements*, so it is clear that the book has strong ties to the Disney company and that such links to *The Incredibles* may be intentional.

Oh No! (Or How My Science Project Destroyed the World) has few words and relies mostly on its pictures to tell the story, which is what gives it its graphic novel feel. The book is well suited for a read aloud with younger students (grades pre-K through 1st), particularly because the story is so simple. Older students would probably be a little bored with the story, especially if they are familiar with the *Incredibles* story.

Tasha says

It all started when a smart girl builds a giant robot as a science project. When it goes on a rampage, she

realizes all of the features that she should have included and ones that it definitely should not have, like the laser eye. She also realizes that it is up to her to stop it. She tries to communicate with it, but when that and hitting it fail, she comes up with another solution. She builds a gigantic toad programmed to destroy the robot. And it works! Now just to solve the problem of what can stop a giant toad...

Riotously funny, this book is a brilliant tribute to the monster flicks of the 1950s. Barnett's dry, understated text heightens the drama and action of the story. Santat's illustrations pay homage to vintage comics in the colors and stylings, but remain firmly modern too. The illustrations are worth lingering over, especially the many and varied signs shown throughout the city, some in Chinese letters, strengthening that tie to monster movies.

This is a picture book worth sharing with a wide range of ages, even young teens who may have seen some of the type of movies this book references. Happily cheesy, wonderfully funny, this book is extraordinary.

John says

Oh my goodness, I love this book and so will my students.

529_Amalia says

OH NO! (Or How My Science Project Destroyed The World) by Mac Barnett and illustrated by Dan Santat. In this movie like, graphic novel like, picture book, a nameless pigtailed girl wins her science fair and is in for some trouble. With the speech bubbles in the beginning, "Oh no", "Oh man...", "I knew it" and the dark shadow looming over the city as the pigtailed girl walks down a destroyed street, you can't help but to turn the page to find out what happens. As the story unfolds the nameless girl begins to tell her story "Everything was going so well....until the rampage started, that is." As she tries to control her robot she thinks that she probably shouldn't have given it a superclaw or a laser eye. As she is yelling, "Hey, robot! Knock it off already!" she realizes maybe I should have given it ears, then when she holds up a sign "Cut it out buster", she realizes maybe I should have taught it to read. With nothing working she has an idea! She creates a giant toad monster to destroy the robot. While her idea works, we see the speech bubbles, "Oh no", Oh man..." you just have to turn the page to find out the ending. A giant toad monster can't create any havoc....can it? A Kirkus starred review, recommends ages 4-10. From the robot blueprints on the inside cover, to the "Please Stand By" and Japanese subtitles, to the widescreen boarders, you can't help but enjoy this science-fiction picture book. Barnett does a great job on this almost wordless picture book to keep you page turning with just the right amount of story on each page. Santat does an awesome job on the Photoshop created artwork with the movie like illustrations and the always seeming dark shadow looming over the city. This, I feel, would be a fun read-aloud text for the younger grades. It has been a long time since I have been in the classroom, but I will throw this idea out there...I also feel that this is a good mentor text to use with the older grades on how an author creates suspension for the readers. What does the author do with the words or how do the illustrations used also create suspense?

Jackie "the Librarian" says

[image error]

Catherine says

The picture book, “Oh No! or How My Science Project Destroyed the World”, by Mac Barnett with illustrations by Dan Santat fosters children’s’ imagination and innovation to be creative. The picture book begins with an illustration of a city in disarray. Incorporated in the illustration are ironic signs posted on buildings with slogans like “invest in your future here.” The main character built a robot for her science fair who is now destroying the city. The main character tries to tame the robot, but realizes she didn’t create the robot with ears or taught the robot how to read and even programed the robot to not feel pain. The main character decides in order to stop this destruction, she would have to built another robot. She goes home and creates an enormous toad robot. An interested reader will have to read on to see if the robots work together to destroy the world or if the toad stops the destruction. I would suggest this book to readers grades pre-school to second grade. This would be also be a great instructional tool in the classroom. The illustrations support the story as well as adding more entertainment for the reader. Along with the illustrations in the book, the inside cover of the book has blueprints of the robots. I thought this was another great addition to the book and I would highly suggest this book to interested readers.

Amy says

I added Oh No! to our reading list after:

- 1) seeing that so many of my Goodreads friends have read this.
- 2) seeing that it pertained to a *girl* doing a science project.
- 3) seeing that it sort of had a graphic novel flavor.

My niece loves science, and I want to encourage that, so if we have books about a science fair project going haywire, so much the better. Sometimes our scientific endeavors get away from us, after all, and a little fun mayhem never hurts in a story. My niece also likes graphic novels, so I was pretty sure she was going to like this one, and she did. It was just completely her cup of tea.

What I did not know was my nephew was also going to love this book! It had a crazy robot destroying a city! That is little boy heaven, right there!

We do our reading in the car while we wait at the bus stop for their mother. Those kids were practically crawling over the back of the front seats in order to get their noses closer to this book. They wedged each other between the two bucket seats, and I had to unstuck them! I thought the book was fine, cute for what it was, but I didn’t adore it (certainly not enough to get myself wedged into a tight space in order to get closer to the book). The kids did have a lot of fun with this, though, and that is good enough for me.

David says

Some kids are too smart for their own good ... and maybe for everybody else's good. When an overambitious little girl builds a humongous robot for the science fair, she fully expects to win first place. What she doesn't expect is the chaos that follows. Mac Barnett and illustrator Dan Santat combine forces to create a hilarious kid's-eye account of the kind of destruction that can come only from a child's good intentions. This book is sure to appeal to kids and parents familiar with the ordeal of science fairs. (Goodreads summary)

This hysterically funny book has wonderful details throughout.

The monsters battling aspect will be appreciated by those who remember Japanese monster movies.

Continuing potential mayhem is suggested at the end. May be more effective one on one, but I'd like to try it with a group. For grades 1-4 and all who enjoy over the top funny picturebooks.

Betsy says

I've been wracking my brain trying to come up with a name for this new breed of children's book author/illustrator we're seeing these days. It's a genre without a name. We're seeing a lot of picture books these days that engage kids, but also turn on their heads classic picture book forms. It started with books like The Stinky Cheese Man and The True Story of the Three Little Pigs and now includes titles like Pssst or The Purple Kangaroo or Guess Again. *Oh No! (Or How My Science Project Destroyed the World)* is just the latest addition to a fast growing genre hereby dubbed Juvie Satire, and it is the creation of two of the genre's kings. Author Mac Barnett burst on the children's literary scene running as fast as his legs could take him, and illustrator Dan Santat glides right along side him, painting every dog, cat, and chicken that happens to cross his path. Alone, they are impressive. Combined, they may well be either unstoppable or too wacked out for the average child's mind to handle. Let's hope for the former.

We enter this story midway through the action. As our heroine says, "Oh no . . . oh, man . . . I knew it." Next thing we know she's facing the retreating back of a mechanical wonder on the rampage. Says she, "I never should have built a robot for the science fair." Flashback to her winning the top prize at the science fair, just as her creation bursts through the gym wall to cause a little mass destruction. Feeling just a twinge guilty about the whole thing (and unable to stop her robot herself), our heroine returns home and turns a small toad into a robot fighting monstrosity. This goes well, the robot is destroyed, and the mayor of the city is very pleased with the solution . . . that is, until the toad takes off after seeing a tasty airplane fly by.

I once interviewed Mr. Barnett about his writing and he had some interesting things to say on the subject of kids and their remarkable inability to feel bad about massive foibles. In terms of this book Mr. Barnett said, "I wanted to write about a very particular kind of regret that only children can feel: a regret that is sincere but also usually less acute than the situation warrants. I'm thinking particularly of an episode at 826LA, a nonprofit writing center I used to run. I walked into the bathroom to find a kid who'd flushed many paper towels down a toilet and wrecked a 100-year-old plumbing system. He was standing in an inch of (thankfully clean) water, and he smiled sheepishly, apologized, and went back to the writing lab to finish his homework. It was a small step from that bathroom to ruined major metropolitan area, from the scatological the eschatological."

Not that this book would have necessarily worked without illustrator Dan Santat. If you've seen Dan Santat's work before it might be because he illustrated Tammi Sauer's *Chicken Dance*, Anne Isaac's *The Ghosts of Luckless Gulch*, or *The Secret Life of Walter Kitty* by Barbara Jean Hicks. His art is best when he's allowed a certain amount of freedom to get creative. When he can draw upon his influences, that's when his style is at its most insane. So really, pairing him with Mac Barnett was nothing short of inevitable. These two guys seem to feed off of one another's styles and the result is nothing short of controlled chaos.

Santat created this art through Photoshop. You might not pick up on this immediately but there are hints. To make this book read more like a Japanese monster film the images here often have a faded, grainy quality to them. A thin white line will sometimes run down the image, like a flaw on a piece of film. You can practically hear the whirl of the projector on some of these scenes, as if you were sitting in a darkened theater watching a toad attack a robot. I feel as if there's a small tip of the hat to the Manga style of drawing as well. When that toad kicks the robot, the style is very distinctive. Not overtly so, but some people will note the reference.

On top of that are the millions of details Santat has included for your reading pleasure. The names of the other science projects (example: "Cat Diet: Why Is My Cat So Obese?"), the fact that the gym the robot escapes from contains the words, "Home of the Fighting Jackalopes", or the small "Wet Paint" sign on the newly repaired wall (destroyed yet again by our heroine's second creation). Even the dogs wearing their cardboard boxes and aluminum foil headpieces look like escapees from the Flight of the Conchords song "The Humans Are Dead". The craziest detail, though? Santat takes the time to occasionally draw in a hair. The kind that might get stuck on a frame of a film. It's small and oblique and in the upper right hand corner of one of the pictures. Now THAT is dedication, folks. It eventually gets to the point where you're convinced that the book is chock full of in-jokes that you are not a part of. I found myself several times wondering things like, "Why is the license plate on that car 2BZK131?" or "Why does that bus read 1975 DOWNTOWN?" We may never know the answers.

I'm a librarian. I see the world through a librarian lens, particularly books for kids. With that in mind, I am simultaneously thrilled and saddened by the endpapers on this book. In the event that you purchase it or see it in a bookstore, take off the cover. Holding the cover up so that it has its front to you, you'll see that you are looking at a single scene, complete with fleeing author and illustrator. Of course, our heroine's glasses are reflecting both a giant toad and a giant robot while that same robot rampages behind her, so it doesn't really work as a single picture. Still and all, you'll forget that fact if you turn the cover around and see that the book now looks like a movie poster from a Japanese monster film. Word on the street has it that Mr. Santat wanted to subtitle the entire book in Japanese, but the publisher balked at this being too weird an idea. Still, there's a fair amount of Japanese wordplay in this book. So much so, that Dan credits Antoine Revoy for the Japanese translations. As a librarian I know that a lot of systems glue down their covers after covering them in plastic. So Mr. Santat's hard work on the inside cover will probably never see the light of day for a lot of folks coming to this book for the first time. Pity.

Will kids like it? First off, reading it aloud in storytime probably isn't going to fly. I say this because the book works more like a graphic novel in sections than a picture book (see: the Manga reference). But while it may not be the kind of thing you'd want to engage a group with, when it comes to one-on-one reading it's a lot of fun. A kid snuggled with a parent is going to be able to interpret what is happening from one panel to the next and draw connections. I might try reading it to a class of 2nd graders I know, just to see if they like it, but even if I do that they're going to miss a lot of the details hidden in here.

Once in a while I'll get a kid in my library that wants a picture book starring a fireman or a spaceship or, best of all, robots. I had one of those the other day. And sure, I pulled out some of the Otto books and maybe

Robot Dreams if I felt he could handle it, but I know what he really wanted. He wanted this book. He didn't know that he wanted it yet, but if I'd shown him this cover and read him the title his little sticky fingers would have reached for it on some kind of innate instinct. Adults will gravitate towards it because it is hip. Kids will want it because . . . well . . . to be frank because it involves a giant toad fighting a giant robot. And that's pretty much all you can say about that.

For ages 4-8.
