



The Right Hook of Devin Velma

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From the author of *Greetings from Witness Protection!* comes another unforgettable middle-grade novel about friendship and family.

Devin wants to hit it big on the internet by pulling a stunt at an NBA game--one the entire nation will be watching. Addison can't turn Devin down, but he can barely manage talking to his teachers without freezing up. How's he supposed to handle the possibility of being a viral sensation?

Addi's not sure why Devin is bent on pulling off this almost-impossible feat. Maybe it has something to do with Devin's dad's hospital bills. Maybe it all goes back to the Double-Barreled Monkey Bar Backflip of Doom. Or maybe it's something else entirely. No matter what, though, it's risky for both of them, and when the big day finally comes, Devin's plan threatens more than just their friendship.

With memorable protagonists and a wonderful supporting cast, *The Right Hook of Devin Velma* is a one-of-kind knockout in middle-grade fiction.

The Right Hook of Devin Velma Details

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Author : Jake Burt

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From Reader Review The Right Hook of Devin Velma for online ebook

Kathie says

I'm not setting any reading goals for 2019, but if I was, one of them would be to read the books I buy in a more timely fashion! I really enjoyed Jake Burt's debut novel GREETINGS FROM THE WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM, so I bought THE RIGHT HOOK OF DEVIN VELMA shortly after it was released at the beginning of October. I finally sat down to read it this weekend, and then kicked myself for waiting so long to pick it up.

What I loved about this book: This book hits the middle grade sweet spot, about 5th grade (which isn't a coincidence since Jake teaches 5th grade), and it's been a while since I read a book that was funny, yet touching, realistic fiction with male protagonists aimed at this audience. Addison freezes up whenever he has to talk to someone with whom he isn't comfortable, but his best friend, Devin, is trying to become an Internet sensation and taking Addi along with him on his crazy adventures. When one of Devin's ideas has some serious repercussions, Addi needs to decide how far he's willing to go to help his friend.

I've said this before, but I really think there is a need for shorter realistic fiction middle grade chapter books like this one, with content that appeals but is under 250 pages. I also really liked the way social media was addressed, and the role it plays in young people's lives. I think it could make an excellent classroom discussion, and show that likes and followers are not a true reflection of self worth. I really hope more people will pick up this book, and actually read it!

Lorie Barber says

Thanks to Feiwei & Friends for an advanced copy of this book. It is author and teacher Jake Burt's sophomore effort, and is quite a departure from his debut adventure, Greetings From Witness Protection. In The Right Hook of Devin Velma, Addison and Devin are best friends, and have been since first grade. But their friendship is put to the challenge as both begin to experience challenges in their own lives. Will their friendship withstand these tests, or will they go their own way.

This book was such an awesome example of friendship. Addi and Devin are quite opposite, but they help each other, cover for each other, and have each other's backs. Told from Addi's POV, we got to see Devon through his eyes, and also got to see how Addi deals with his anxiety - with humor and self-awareness. Burt really knows middle grade kids, and he develops these characters through insightful inner thinking, crisp, on-point dialogue, and realistic responses to things that happen to them. Any middle grader who has had issues with friendships or struggles with anxiety will see themselves in this book. Which pretty much means that this beautifully written book is for everyone! Add it to your Library when it comes out this fall!

Debbie Tanner says

Jake Burt has such a gift for writing characters and a story line that are so interesting and yet so similar to

people you know, you feel a little (or a lot) sad when the story is over because these characters have become your friends! This is his second book (and I loved the first one) and it has such a terrific story about Addison and his best friend Devin. They've been friends since they were in kindergarten and each of them have hit a bit of a rough patch. Devin has a brilliant idea for solving the problems that involves a highly complicated social media blitz. And it works but in a completely different way than anyone could have foreseen. I think the kids are going to love this one!

Margie says

Great reading for 10-14 year old or anyone who enjoys a quick and fun story. I enjoyed this authors other book just as much and recommend him.

Ms. Yingling says

E ARC from Edelweiss Plus

When Devin's father lands in the hospital after a heart attack, he is concerned that the family won't be able to pay the medical bills. He hopes that by filming an impossible trick on the monkey bars, the Double-Barreled Monkey Bar Backflip of Doom, it will go viral and bring attention to him so that he can raise the money. His best friend Addison is supposed to help him film and spread the word, but Addison has a lot of anxiety and is prone to "freezing", so doesn't get the video even though Devin does manage the trick. Addison's family struggles as well, but are close with Devin's family. Devin comes up with the great idea to get on the "kiss cam" at a professional basketball game behind a celebrity couple, and since his sister is on their cheer squad, manages to get into the game and the two even get on the camera-- but Devin slips and Addison is caught on tape saving his friend from falling over the railing. Addison is the one the rockets to fame, which irritates Devin. It takes a lot of understanding, and some help from Addison's parents, for him to understand the dynamics of his relationship with Devin, Devin's fears for his father, and a way to help his friends family deal with the father's medical issues.

Strengths: I've never understood why the default in middle grade literature is for parents to be dead or uninvolved. Sure, it gives characters a lot of freedom to have adventures, but I wish that more realistic stories had more constructive parental involvement. This even had Devin's great-great-grandmother, and the math supporting having all of those generations! Both families had some job insecurity, and Addison lived in an apartment with some difficulties for which HE felt somewhat responsible. There are more and more books showing realistic challenges faced by children who might be concerned about growing out of shoes from the dollar store, about having food on the table, and about the job situations of their parents. This book is able to balance those worries with the more common middle school worries about friends, and imbues it all with a good sense of humor and a general air of hopefulness in the face of adversity. This makes it a good book for children who do face difficult situations, because it shows them some coping strategies, and children who don't have to face these situations will hopefully learn that "everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle" and will encourage them to be empathetic.

Weaknesses: Can you really make money going viral on YouTube? I think that is one of those things that 12-year-olds believe more than I do.

What I really think: Definitely purchasing, and so pleased to see this one. It's a stand alone, has a great cover, and is Sonnenblick-esque in that it covers serious issues in a humorous way.

Laura Gardner says

Thanks to @macmillankidsbooks for the free book to share with #kidlitexchange! #partner
This one isn't out until October, but it belongs at the top of your pre-order list for the fall!

~*~*~*~*~*

swipe for the back!

~*~*~*~*~*

I love, love, LOVED WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM by #jakeburt so I couldn't wait to read his newest book. THE RIGHT HOOK OF DEVIN VELMA did not disappoint.

Here's why:

~ it's both hilarious and heartfelt. I giggled out loud and let out a bit of a sob at the end.

~ Addi Gerhardt's crippling anxiety-- we need more depictions of this in #kidlit!

~ Devin's grandmas are THE BEST. I want a Triple G in my life!

~ great candidate for a read aloud! short, engaging and funny

~ extremely readable...as in, sit on the couch, get a couple of snacks and finish it in one sitting readable.

I'm putting this one on a future summer reading list right now. You're all going to love it!

~*~*~*~*~*

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Jen says

CONFESSION TIME: The author of this book wrote the BEST book in the world, otherwise known as "Greetings from Witness Protection". I COMPLETELY fangirled over it and the author at BEA in 2017. Made a dang FOOL of myself to tell others how incredibly AWESOME it was.

I contacted the author through a lovely book site we were both on and he agreed to come do a signing for us of it. I was THRILLED and fangirled some more. And he agreed to 1) send us an ARC of his next book (this one) and 2) to do a signing of it when it comes out.

He sent us an ARC, as he promised to do. I let my bookstore boss read it first, because she LOVED Greetings. She LOVED it. Then I let the mother of my S.O. read it, since she tried to hide my copy of Greetings and pretend she had given it back to me she loved it that much. She also loved this book.

But I was afraid to read it. What if it didn't live up to my expectations? What if it just couldn't compete with Greetings (aka the best book of all time)? What if it was SO GOOD that I was ruined for any other book I ever read again, unless it was a book by this author. I was paralyzed. I just COULDN'T read this book.

And then the author was all like, "So have you read it yet?" And I was ashamed I let my neurotic behavior prevent me from reading this book. So I hiked up my big girl pants, took a deep breath, and went for it!

And HOLY CATS, this book was so AWESOME!!! Funny and REAL and sad and true and just absolutely PERFECT.

Now, it's not the best book in the whole wide world (aka Greetings), but it is DANG TOOTIN CLOSE. It's like when you have more than one cat. You love them all, but you love them all differently, not more or less. I sincerely LOVED this book and am GROVELING FOR FORGIVENESS from the author that I didn't read it immediately upon receipt.

(Full disclosure-I also received an eARC copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley, because the book was so precious, it didn't leave the house and I needed an immediate copy for my fix. They were very gracious and granted me the ebook form of it. So now I can read it anywhere. Which makes driving a challenge! Just kidding, I only read at red lights...)

So yeah, this review is pretty much me going fangirl on how awesome it is without giving anything away of the plot. Or the setting. Or the characters. Soon I'm going to do a tad of what I liked about those things without being spoilery, cuz you need to read this book.

As with the first book, the young characters were snarky, but not rude. They were realistic. The adults were present and while they had their own issues, they were adults about it and they were the ones who dealt with them. The adults were present and loving, not perfect, but they were THERE.

No love interests, the MC and his BFF are 12, but there is a crush interest, which is realistic. Some serious issues, mostly financial and the health of one of the parents is a big deal, but no Disney orphan/one parent trope. One somewhat scary scene, but not violent. This would be a great book for a precocious younger reader to middle grade on up. Like old fogie adult on up, like me.

It is very well written, so it wouldn't bore adults to tears. I was in awe of his writing chops while laughing at most of it to be honest. SO GOOD!!!

5, wowthatwassogoodandIneedmoreof yourbooks,orheckevenyourgrocerylistprettyplease, stars. Move "Greetings from Witness Protection" and this book to the top of your TBR. They are fast reads and they will make you laugh and cry. I had tears in my eyes from this book.

My thanks to NetGalley and Macmillan Children's Publishing Group for an eARC copy of this book to read and review.

Leonard Kim says

Greetings from Witness Protection! was a promising debut, and Burt's talent is evident here too. Compared to Greetings, I thought this book felt more "experienced" but also perhaps a little more conventional. Nevertheless, I will look out for Burt's next book.

Susan says

The Right Hook of Devin Velma

By Jake Burt #jakeburt

Published by Feiwel and Friends #feiwelandfriends @macmillankidsbooks

Many thanks to the author, the publisher and @kidlitexchange for the review copy of this book, which will be released October 2. All opinions are my own

Oh, my, Jake Burt, who wrote one of my favorite MG novels from 2017, Witness Protection, has done it again! This is definitely five stars! He has written a beautiful story about friendship, extended families and the impact that social media has on our lives. Here are some things I especially loved about this story:

Devin's extended family including his grandma, great grandma and great great grandma all living under one roof, and not only supporting Devin, but loving Addison as one of their own.

The love and support between the two families who have been friends for many years and ALWAYS have Saturday night dinner together

Even though both families are struggling financially, their insistence that the twelve year old best friends need to do their best in school, and most importantly just be kids, rather than scheming to help their families by becoming social media stars.

The true friendship between Devin and Addison, even after Devin gives Addison a black eye.

The "tough love" that both families show toward their sons when they learn about their scheme.

The humor, compassion and firmness exhibited by both sets of parents when they outline the consequences of the scheme.

The growth shown by both boys

I highly recommend this be added to every librarian's "back to school" order. You're going to need lots of copies!

@misspitlick7 this is coming your way!

Laurie says

What lengths would you go to to help your family if your dad got sick? Well Devin Velma wants to become a social media sensation so that he can make a lot of money to help his family with his dad's hospital bills. He knows if he can nail the Double-Barreled Monkey Bar Backflip of Doom on video it will be easy money. The problem is, Devin only has one Twitter follower and that is his best friend, Addison (and technically Addison doesn't have an account - Devin created it just so he would have one follower). By some miracle, Devin does nail this impossible move but Addison failed to get it on video. So when Devin comes up with another crazy stunt idea Addison feels obligated to help him whether he wants to or not. Devin wants to become an internet sensation by flashing his painted check behind a couple of celebrities at an NBA game. Everything is going according to plan until the kiss cam is done earlier than normal. When Devin takes off from the upper deck to try to get to the camera, things go completely wrong. Will Devin be able to pull off this impossible stunt in order to save his family? Or will it become a complete flop? Will Devin and Addison make choices that could ruin a life-long friendship? Read this amazing story of family, friendship, love, and a whole lot of humor! This is one you don't want to miss!!

I absolutely love this story!! Devin and Addison and their family is as close as close can be, but Devin and Addison are completely opposite. Devin is outgoing a crazy and Addison freezes up when any attention is put on him. I think this is great to show kids that they can have all types of friends. This book is also hilarious. The characters in this story have such a great wit about them. Don't let this one pass you up!! Follow me:

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Karina says

I loved this author's previous book, GREETINGS FROM WITNESS PROTECTION, and I thought this was just an amazing! Thank you to the publisher for providing me with an advance copy for review. I suspect this book will be a huge hit with middle grade readers and beyond.

LeeAnne says

"I finally figured out why my best friend Devin punched me in the face."

That's how this sweet middle-grade book about friendship making it through hard times. Devin is trying to get famous so that he can help his family with his father's medical bills. He needs his friend Addison's help, but Addison has his own problems to work through. Working together they may just figure out that they had everything they needed all along - each other.

Mrs. Hornick says

Fame can be everything for some people. Without fame these people think that they just aren't good enough. Just like Devin the main character in The Right Hook of Devin Velma by Jake Burt feels. When Devin's dad gets sick, his family can not afford the medical bills for him to get the care he needs. So Devin had a great idea that if he can make a video on Youtube and become trending then he will be able to make enough money to pay off his dad's medical bills. He expects to trending by doing crazy stunts to impress people. He decides to do this with one of his friends named Addison Gerhardt.

Addison (Addi) knew that what Devin wanted was insane from the moment that he heard his idea. Devin wanted to go a crazy stunt on live TV at a NBA game that was unmissable. Of course, Addi could not turn Devin down, but he still thought that it was insane what his friend was going to do, just for some fame. Addi

could not understand why Devin was wanting fame and money. He thought it might be because of his dad's medical bills but he was unsure. Addi could barely talk to his teachers without stumbling. How is he supposed to be a viral sensation when he can barely talk to his teacher because of what he is doing? This book would be great for kids who think fame is everything. Also, it could show caring to someone because Devin cared so much about his dad that he was willing to risk his life just so his dad could get the help that he needs. This book can teach kids that fame is not always what you think it will be. This book is This is because fame can go very wrong or it could work out. Also, this book is very funny, but yet it there are some impractical events that are mentioned and it has to be understood that these events should never occur in the real world. Finally, this book shows just how powerful friendship can be so read The Right Hook of Devin Velma by Jake Burt to find out what happens to Devin and his friend Addi.

Cassie Thomas says

Devin and Addi's story took me back to a time when friends were the most important thing, good friends that is. I felt so much nostalgia when they were having these schemes to try and attempt to fix their parents problems (with terrible ideas), and especially when they were having their moms plan their sleepovers. As a young kid, I remember fighting with my best friend and never really understanding the importance of that friend and how much they truly meant to me - until now, now that I'm an adult and have went through terrible things and those best friends are still alongside me. This story will be a heartprint book for middle grade readers who need to be reminded to be true to that best friend and why they are/were your best friend to begin with. The plot was all woven together perfectly. I can't wait to share with my students next fall.

Jean-Marie says

This is a sweet, feel good, humorous middle school buddy story. My 11-year old really enjoyed it and laughed out loud quite a bit. Popular cultural references help the story feel relevant to today's middle grade readers. While my son and I loved best friends Addison and Devin, it was the Gs who stole the show. Triple G and her dentures...ha! In fact, the author did a great job developing all the characters in the story. Each one had his or her own unique narrative. This is a fun read that also touches on anxiety, illness, death, money, friendship, and family. Two thumbs up. I received this book as an advance reader's edition through a goodread's giveaway.
