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 ***Crash and Burn* by Michael Hassan (review)**

Karen Coats

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REVIEW

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**In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:**

Reviewed by:

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*Karen Coats*

Hassan, Michael. *Crash and Burn*. Balzer + Bray, 2013. [544p]. Trade ed. ISBN 978-0-06-211290-3 \$17.99 E-book ed. ISBN 978-0-06-211292-7 \$9.99 Reviewed from galleys R\* Gr. 8-12.

Steve Crashinsky, known to his friends as Crash, is a hero: he convinced his mentally unstable classmate, David Burnett, not to set off the explosives that would have destroyed their high school and everyone in it, and he did it with the cameras rolling. Now he has a book contract, and, if his ADHD will let him, he'll tell the whole story of his relationship with David, which started in elementary school when he tried to befriend David and David tried to kill him. The story Crash tells is deeply disturbing in its searingly accurate portrait of boys in contemporary society; Crash's voice is insistently authentic, documenting the life of an upper-middle-class, medicated teen reared in a world where values are determined by media standards of appearance and privilege. His relationship with his father, in particular, offers a chilling indictment on the failures of intergenerational communication and masculine values. Though his father continually accuses Crash of being a disappointment, Crash is an exact copy of his dad, who, as Crash's friend opines, has everything a man could ever want—a sexy young wife, a great job, and all the perks that money can buy, including far better pot than the boys can afford. **[End Page 336]** Every mistake Crash makes turns to his advantage, and the only thing he learns is that fame forgives all sins and opens doors to sex and money without commitment or consequence, as long as he keeps his cool. As cynical as this book ultimately is about where we are as a society, it is a must-read for teens and adults alike who want to understand the lack of empathy that permeates contemporary culture; it offers no answers, but the mirror it does present may be chilling enough to awaken readers to the costs of not getting it right.

illustrations keep the focus on Sadie, leaving her the only spot of color (she's always in a bright red top) amid the otherwise black and white scenes. This tale of a lie gone very wrong will strike a chord with readers who have fudged the truth to get attention. AM

**HART, CAROL.** *The Princess and the Pea*; illus. by Sarah Warburton. Nosy Crow/Candlewick, 2013 [32p]  
ISBN 978-0-7636-6532-6 \$16.99  
Reviewed from galleys R 5-8 yrs

In this rhyming story, little Lily-Rose May leads an idyllic life in her cottage in the wood until "one day, her daddy tried feeding her peas." Lily's aversion to the wee green monsters is swift and complete ("I'm going to be terribly, horribly sick!"), to the point that her father calls in the doctor. The doctor assesses Lily-Rose May as being allergic to peas, which means, as he supports with a slightly altered version of "The Princess and the Pea," that she's a princess. Off to the palace Lily-Rose May goes, only to find that royal life is an awful lot of d r u d g e r y and that ultimately she'd rather be back home with her dad, even if it means she must eat peas. A goofy fairy-tale mashup with some modern touches, the story gets away with its logical peculiarities because the rollicking anapestical verse is so much fun ("We know you've been having a terrible time./ Your own dad gave you **peas!** What a hideous crime"). There's also plenty of humor to be mined from the oversized illustrations, a pell-mell combination of sweet digital hues (with an emphasis on pink, of course, when Lily finally makes princess) and spindly scrawled lines; the overstuffed scenes have a slightly homespun, off-kilter look that adds to amusement, and viewers will appreciate details such as the doctor's splay-legged run and the colony of Disney-esque critters that surround Lily's woodland home. Don't try to figure out the message in this one; just prepare for a dramatic readaloud and use it as a springboard to talk about dealbreakers for princesshood. DS

**HASSAN, MICHAEL.** *Crash and Burn*. Balzer + Bray, 2013 [544p]  
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Reviewed from galleys R\* Gr. 8-12

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Crash and Burn by Michael Hassan, the location of the episodes obliquely neutralizes the fractal.

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