



Dunk

By David Lubar



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Dunk By David Lubar

To the Bozo, the clown who sits inside the cage above the dunk tank, everyone is a “mark.” Once he has zeroed in on his victim, the Bozo comes up with the perfect wisecrack—something funny enough to make people stop and listen, and cruel enough to hook the mark. Now the mark is bent on revenge, and he’ll buy however many balls he needs to hit the target and see the Bozo plunge into the water. It’s a game that fascinates Chad, who lives on the Jersey shore, where the boardwalk turns into an amusement park every summer. He wishes he could shout at the world from the safety of a cage—his dad ran out on him and his mom, and now everyone seems convinced that Chad will wind up a loser, too. He’s determined to get a job playing the Bozo, something he knows he’d be good at. Suddenly, Chad finds himself thrown into a strange and twisted world, where humor has far more power than he ever imagined.

With a crackling plot and smart, funny dialogue, Dunk pulls readers along on a journey that exposes a universal truth: We all need to laugh.



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With a crackling plot and smart, funny dialogue, *Dunk* pulls readers along on a journey that exposes a universal truth: We all need to laugh.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The slightly tawdry world of boardwalk arcades along the New Jersey shore is just one of the attractions of Lubar's (Hidden Talents) engrossing novel. From the first moment soon-to-be-11th-grader Chad hears the boardwalk clown hurling insults ("His voice ripped the air like a chain saw," the novel begins), the teen is mesmerized. The "bozo," whose witty barbs lure passersby to try and drop him into a water tank, represents all that Chad is not: "Nobody ignored him. Nobody looked down on him or told him he was a loser." The boy adds working as a bozo to his list of goals-along with seeing a certain girl again-for what he hopes will be "the greatest summer of his life." But plans go awry when a rival beats him to the romance punch, his best friend is struck with a life-threatening illness, and Chad has run-ins not only with the police but also with the bozo himself, a troubled man who sublets a room in Chad's house. As Chad surmounts each challenge, he shakes off the shadow of his deadbeat absent father and learns the difference between "a laugh that can cut you up worse than a knife" and laughter that heals. Lubar ably charts a watershed summer between boyhood and manhood; the boardwalk bozo serves as a deft metaphor for the power and control for which adolescents hunger. Ages 12-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 7-10-As Chad finishes his sophomore year of high school, he looks ahead to a summer on the Jersey shore boardwalks. Although his over-worked, hard-pressed mother insists she doesn't want him to take a job, Chad is drawn to the dunk tank and the Bozo-a clown whose job is to hook his "marks" with bitter but funny taunts until enough money has been spent to result in a dunking. The Bozo turns out to be hiding from a tragic past, yet ready to try teaching his acting talents to others. Chad quickly finds he needs the skills to evoke laughter as he fights his way out of a depression by trying to save his best friend, dangerously ill with an autoimmune disease. A summer romance, run-ins with the local police, and Chad's worries that he will turn out like his deadbeat absent father provide more problems for Chad to deal with. This full-cast production of the book by David Lubar (Clarion, 2002), complete with carnival music, is very well produced and gives listeners many great voices to listen to, chief among them Matt Golden. He keeps the story moving, and the voiced repartee of the Bozo is another highlight of this audio version. The audio enhances the atmosphere of life along a boardwalk. In the CD version, each disk includes a contents listing matching book chapters to CD tracks, very helpful for those who like to listen and follow along in the book or to facilitate picking up the story at a later time. This captivating story deserves a place in all teen collections. Lubar, who is interviewed by Bruce Coville at the end of the story, showcases a narrow and little-seen slice of life that will fascinate while allowing exploration of the kind of issues confronting teenagers everywhere.

Jane P. Fenn, Corning-Painted Post West High School, NY

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 8-12. Sitting over a tub of dirty water, the Bozo taunts the crowd until some poor fool forks over enough money to finally dunk him. The Bozo is amazing and powerful--and Chad wants to be that Bozo. Full of anger at a father who left him, a mother who works too much, adults who think he is a loser, and the autoimmune disease that is killing his best friend, Chad is sure he could be the perfect Bozo. And master the craft he does, only to find it more useful in real life than in the tank. Chad is the prototype of the hard-luck teen whom police mistake for a petty criminal, teachers think is lazy, and who never gets the girl. The Bozo, too, is classic: the bitter loner who is slowly turning his life around. With painful truth, Lubar has created complex, difficult to understand characters that seem straight from real life. Only the "happy" ending

concedes to formula. *Frances Bradburn*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gary Cornejo:

What do you in relation to book? It is not important to you? Or just adding material when you want something to explain what your own problem? How about your time? Or are you busy particular person? If you don't have spare time to do others business, it is make one feel bored faster. And you have time? What did you do? Everybody has many questions above. They should answer that question since just their can do which. It said that about guide. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is proper. Because start from on guardería until university need this particular Dunk to read.

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