

Grade 4-7. Class clown Bobby is headed for a fall. Pushing him toward the drop are his father, the sarcasm master, and his mother, who is afraid to speak up. He quits doing his homework, continually speaks out of turn in class, is unable to communicate with his parents, and his jokes turn into put-downs. He unintentionally hurts his best friend, and even Mr. Matous, his humor-loving teacher, draws the line. When the principal threatens to transfer Bobby to a special school, Mr. Matous offers him a chance to turn things around with a special project—the creation, development, and execution of a school-wide Laugh-Off. As the boy's ideas blossom into reality, the pressures build, exacerbating problems at home, but also allowing him to exhibit his capabilities and talents. The realistic setting explores the types of family tensions children often face. The characters react consistently, responding to one another and changing situations with believable emotions, and, ultimately, with the self-realization and growth that allows them to spring back to a life that contains love, hope, and true humor. In addition, Levy incorporates a cornucopia of jokes and a wealth of subtle advice on becoming a comic. There is great pleasure in seeing Bobby and his father's earlier sarcasm and angry dialogue transformed by a turn of attitude into universal, and really funny comedy. Darcy Schild, Schwegler Elementary School, Lawrence, KS
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Everything, including school, is a joke to Bobby Garrick. This time he's gone too far and has one month to show the principal that he's serious about his education. His assignment, surprisingly, is to plan a school wide laugh-off--a contest between teachers and kids to choose the funniest person. Bobby slowly realizes that not everything is a joke and learns to forgive his father in the process. Heller splendidly presents students, parents, teachers and the principal. Heller's finesse even makes the corny jokes cute (if not always funny). His timing and delivery are perfect for the targeted audience. S.G.B. (c) AudioFile, Portland

MY LIFE AS A FIFTH GRADE COMEDIAN

Questions:

So, who is Bobby? What does he do in life? What does he do in school? Do you like him?

If there was some one at your school like Bobby, how do you think he would be accepted at your school? If you knew someone like Bobby, what advise would you give him? Why do you think he does these things? What is his purpose for being a class clown or a joker?

Why do you think he wants to be friends with Janeen?

What is his teachers name?.....the teacher that is his mentor? Why does Mr. Matous give Bobby a chance? What is different about Mr. Mataou than other teachers at Bobby's school? What is different about Mr. Matous than any other teacher you have had?

What do you think of Dr. Deal?

What is the School on Intervention? How does Bobby fit into this school and why do you think Bobby doesn't want it? (his brother went)

The famous school I Great Laugh Off. How did he get started and why? DO you believe it was fair? Do you think Bobby handled it correctly?

What happens as a result of the Great Laugh Off? With Bobby's relationship with Mr. Matauos, Dr. Deal, his Mom, his Grandmother and of course, his Dad?