



BROWSE



 **Hey, Presto! (review)**

Jeannette Hulick

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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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*Jeannette Hulick*

Shireen, Nadia. *Hey, Presto!*; written and illus. by Nadia Shireen. Knopf, 2012. 34p. Library ed. ISBN 978-0-375-96905-8 \$19.99 Trade ed. ISBN 978-0-375-86905-1 \$16.99 R 5-8 yrs.

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When pals Presto the cat and Monty the dog notice that a carnival is soliciting new performers, Monty proposes that they join up with their magic act and take turns at being the star. Although Presto is a model of patience and helpfulness (he quietly ensures that Monty's tricks will work), he gets no respect from Monty, who continues to star night after night and grows so pushy and arrogant ("Hey, Presto! Get me a chocolate ice cream with extra sprinkles—now!") that Presto sadly leaves when Monty is offered "a big bag of money" to do a magic show on TV. Though Monty is sure he will succeed, his show is a flop—until Presto shows up to save the day and Monty sees the error of his ways. Shireen's clever and charismatic illustrations are what really make the story work, as her big-eyed, big-headed animal characters trot their way through the amusing, richly hued world she has created. Sweet, muted blue Presto is particularly endearing, whether faithfully assisting Monty, peering out from under his rumpled black hat, or humbly taking a much-deserved bow. Even small details get funny touches, such as Monty's bag of money that is labeled "Cold Hard Cash," Presto's dragging away a resigned-looking bunny by the leg when Monty demands a new one for the act, and a pyramid of helmet-wearing penguins on a bike at the carnival. This could easily be plugged into pet-themed or **[End Page 262]** magic-themed storytime lineups, used as a prompt for discussion about friendship issues, or simply enjoyed as a diverting readaloud.

**SHEINKIN, STEVE** *Lincoln's Grave Robbers*. Scholastic, 2013 [224p] illus. with photographs

ISBN 978-0-545-40572-0 \$16.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 6-10

It's not too much of a stretch to surmise that an audacious 1876 plot to steal the mortal remains of President Abraham Lincoln would have its roots in the Civil War, but the connection is far from intuitive—fortunately, Sheinkin lays it all out for the reader in this lively true-crime story. The Civil War necessitated the issuance of paper money in lieu of gold, making the work of counterfeiting more difficult but also more lucrative. Larcenous master engravers were suddenly much in demand, and former Ben Boyd's arrest and incarceration sent the earnings of high-stakes scammers such as Joe Kennally into a tailspin. Joe hatches a plan to steal Lincoln's corpse (vulnerable in its crumbling, lightly guarded Springfield, Illinois mausoleum) and demand a ransom of \$200,000 and the release of Ben Boyd. The plan's first iteration fails due to the loose lips of a drunken conspirator, and the second plan, in which Lincoln's coffin is actually pried partly out of its sarcophagus, goes awry due to the bungled attempt by the Secret Service to catch the culprits red-handed. While not exactly presenting the crime as a comedy of errors, Sheinkin nonetheless revels in its absurdities and delights in employing the jargon of the nineteenth-century criminal class (glossary provided). The result is a flamboyantly fun read, spun with gusto and supplemented with an introductory cast of characters to help sort the good guys from bad guys at a glance. An illustration or two is included in each short chapter, and an index and source notes are forthcoming in the final volume. This will be a first choice for all Lincoln enthusiasts and required reading for school groups and tourists making their pilgrimage to Lincoln's tomb. EB

**SHIREEN, NADIA** *Hey, Presto!* written and illus. by Nadia Shireen. Knopf, 2012 34p

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Trade ed. ISBN 978-0-375-86905-1 \$16.99

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[muse@press.jhu.edu](mailto:muse@press.jhu.edu)



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