



BROWSE



 ***Cinderella Smith (review)***

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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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Barden, Stephanie. *Cinderella Smith*; illus. by Diane Goode. Harper/Harper-Collins, 2011. 154p. ISBN 978-0-06-196423-7 \$14.99 R Gr. 3-5.

Due to her propensity for losing shoes (which began on her way home from the hospital at birth), Josephine-Kathryn Smith has always been known as "Cinderella." When new girl Erin Devlin comes to town, she logically assumes Cinderella's expertise extends to all components of the fairy tale and thus seeks out Cinderella's advice to prepare for the arrival of her potentially wicked new stepsisters. Though Cinderella's actual knowledge is pretty thin, her desire to please Erin encourages her to give the topic a go, and the two girls end up as friends. Cinderella's narration **[End Page 456]** carries this early chapter book, and her upper-elementary woes are perfectly captured in her eager and personable voice. While a pair of friends on a problem-solving mission is hardly novel for the intended readership, Cinderella and Erin's approach to the stepsisters' impending arrival is well crafted and playfully presented (if at times straining credulity a bit). A side plot about Cinderella's dance class and the all-important casting of the Pumpkin Blossom Fairy adds further to the friendship story as well as highlighting Cinderella's plucky personality to great effect. Goode's energetic sketchwork adds to the spirited narrative, showcasing Cinderella and her pals as well as offering occasional spot art. Present this to fans of Pennypacker's *Clementine* (BCCB 11/06) or McDonald's *Judy Moody* (BCCB 5/00) who are ready for something new.

just like her deceased mother. The indignity of her assignment as a fairy slayer—they're tiny! they're harmless! they keep mooning her!—is only compounded by that fact that she's paired with newly minted dragon slayer Curtis for a team learning assignment. That proves more interesting than she expected, though: Curtis has his own secrets, and while regular fairies pose little threat, a heretofore-unheard-of giant fairy called a darkhel ("seven feet of pure venom . . . sinister red eyes . . . razor-sharp teeth squished into a wide, misshapen mouth") proves a worthy foe and may even shed some new light on Emma's mother's death. Curtis is a low-key, good-natured man of mystery, and while his romance with Emma is nothing if not expected, it—along with the deadpan incorporation of generic high-school concerns—is a welcome balance to the seemingly unstoppable demonic peril. The littler fairies have a whiff of the Wee Free Men about them—that is, if Pratchett's bantering tricksters were mall rats instead of drinkers. There's a slight emotional tug in Emma's relationship with her father and revelations about her mother, but the demon-fighting high-school hijinks are where this book is really at. Hand it to fans of Hawkins' *Hex Hall* (BCCB 5/10) or Clement-Moore's *Prom Dates from Hell* (BCCB 7/07). CG

ASTON, DIANNA HUTTS *A Butterfly Is Patient*; illus. by Sylvia Long. Chronicle, 2011. 36p.
ISBN 978-0-8118-6479-4 \$16.99 R 5-8 yrs

Following the format adopted in her debut *An Egg Is Quiet*, Aston explains the life cycle of a butterfly through a series of themed spreads on the insect's various attributes. The opening phrases characterize the caterpillar as "patient" in its emergence from its egg casing, "creative" in its stages of metamorphosis, and "helpful" in the butterfly's role as pollinator. While the anthropomorphized keywords are sometimes pretty fanciful, they've got their moments of clarity—"poisonous," "spectacular," "thirsty," "big" and "tiny," and "scaly" are self-explanatory and apt, as are the discussions of the insect as a "traveler" and a creature quite different from a moth. Though some young audiences may prefer Nic Bishop's resplendent photography in *Butterflies and Moths* (BCCB 5/09), Long's marvelously detailed nature painting will win its share of followers as it exploits the advantage of being able to share various settings and stages in proximity. The neatly trimmed nuggets of information are well suited to primary-grade group sharing, and the double-page spreads of labeled caterpillars (at the beginning) and butterflies (at the end) invite children to flip back and forth, matching the eerie little creepers with the glorious creatures they will become. EB

BARDEN, STEPHANIE *Cinderella Smith*; illus. by Diane Goode. Harper/HarperCollins, 2011. 154p.
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