



Baloney (Henry P.)

By Jon Scieszka

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The twisted team that gave the world *Squids Will Be Squids* and *The Stinky Cheese Man* now delivers a whole lot of Baloney. Henry P. Baloney. Henry is an alien schoolkid who needs to come up with one very good excuse to explain why he is late for *szkola*, again. Otherwise, his teacher Miss Bugscuffle promises, it's Permanent Lifelong Detention.

Henry's tall tale of his lost *zimulis*-received from deep space by Jon Scieszka-is told in at least twenty different Earth languages and graphically recreated in Lane Smith's out-of-this-world illustrations.

The unbelievable trip into Henry's wild universe may be the most original excuse ever for being late for *szkola*. Or it might just be Baloney. Henry P. Baloney.

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Baloney (Henry P.) By Jon Scieszka Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Henry P. Baloney needs to come up with a very good, very believable excuse for being late to *szkola* yet again--or he's in big trouble with his teacher Miss Bugsuffle. But never fear! Henry has a doozy of a story. You see, it all started when he misplaced his trusty yellow no. zz *zimulis*. One thing led to another, and before he knew it, he was on a *razzo* blasting off into space, where he eventually landed on the planet *Astrosus*. All went well there, as the intrepid explorer entertained the Astro guys with his funny *piksas*--until they decided Henry and his *piksas* would be entertaining to eat. Things go on in this vein until somehow, miraculously, Henry P. Baloney ends up back in his classroom, a mere seven minutes late--but still one writing utensil short!

Trust the ultracreative author/illustrator pair, Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith (*The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*, *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!*, the Time Warp Trio series, and more), to mastermind a plot this bizarre and yet somehow familiar to any school kid. Sure, Henry P. Baloney is a cute, saucer-eyed, green alien, but he has problems just like you and me--such as the threat of Permanent Lifelong Detention. Remarkably, as Scieszka reports in his afterword, when he received and decoded the transmission of this story (directly from deep space, mind you), it was written in a combination of many Earth languages, including Finnish, Swahili, Latvian, Esperanto, and Inuktitut (decoder included). Go figure.

Caldecott Honor artist Lane Smith must have spent a lot of time in detention, doodling away the hours. His weird, wild, wonderful pictures tell at least half the story, illustrating for readers' enlightenment just what a *zimulis* ("pencil" in Latvian) or *speelplaats* (Dutch for "playground") looks like. Fans of this ingenious pair will not be disappointed and may even make a *twrf* (Welsh for "noise") of joy! (Ages 5 to 9) --*Emilie Coulter*

From Publishers Weekly

This book's gleaming silver cover and little green namesake signal intergalactic adventure. Fortunately, Scieszka and Smith (*Squids Will Be Squids*) prefer innovation to UFO clichés, and this tale of an alien truant is also a language game. Lime-colored, freckled Henry P. Baloney is late for class and faces "Permanent Lifelong Detention" from Miss Bugsuffle. He concocts an excuse that spools across the pages in emphatic, italicized capital letters. "I would have been exactly on time," said Henry. "But... I misplaced my trusty *zimulis*. Then I... um... found it on my *deski*!" Smith's airbrush-speckled collages zoom from a closeup of a pencil to Henry leaning over a kidney-shaped desk; thus, "zimulis" and "deski" enter the vocabulary. Henry goes on to describe being crowned "*kuningas*" of another planet and almost getting shot with a "*blassa*." A "Decoder" at the back of the book reveals that all 20 unfamiliar terms are either non-English (the Dutch "*speelplaats*" means "playground") or wordplay ("flying saucer" becomes "sighing flosser"). Contextual cues allow readers with no prior knowledge of Italian, Latvian or Polish to comprehend Henry P.'s hyperboles: "I jammed the *razzo* controls with my *zimulis* so I could land behind *szkola* and still be on time," says Henry, and Smith pictures a rocket console, a variety of dials and Henry's pencil. Amateur linguists will have a field day exploring this non-nonsense. All ages.

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From School Library Journal

Gr 1-5-A small green alien would have been exactly on time for class, he explains to his teacher, except for the fact that he misplaced his *zimulis* (pencil) and so begins a hoot of a tall tale "received and decoded" from

deep space by Scieszka with "visual recreation" by Smith, his cohort in hip hilarity. This could be the story of any Earthling student with a vivid imagination who needs to come up with "one very good and very believable excuse." In short action-packed sentences, Henry describes an adventure involving a torakku (truck), razzo (rocket), funny piksas (pictures), and a narrowly avoided zerplatzen (you guessed it!) all over the speelplaats (playground). The trusty zimulis makes several appearances throughout the fast-moving narrative, culminating in a final (dis)appearance at story's end. The "outer space" vocabulary is culled from languages from Dutch to Welsh, with a few transpositions and spoonerisms tossed in. A handy word decoder is included. Smith's intricate illustrations/assemblages work perfectly with bold white-on-black text blocks. This title continues the slightly subversive bent of other Scieszka and Smith collaborations like Math Curse (1995) and Squids Will Be Squids (1998, both Viking) with its silly yet sly wit and clever styling. Wrapped in an eye-catching, high-tech silver cover, Baloney is sure to fly off the shelves and out the pordo (door) of your library.-Mary Ann Carcich, Mattituck-Laurel Public Library, Mattituck, NY

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Catherine Kuntz:

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