

PencilMan

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FriesenPress

(38pp)

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In the fun and fabulistic picture book PencilMan, technology is subverted by a sneaky team of information thieves.

In father and son team Sean and Darius Ceaser's whimsical picture book *PencilMan*, global glitches might be solved by the unlikely hero PencilMan.

A crack team of thieves is stealing letters, calendars, and other important posts from smart phones. This sends a boy's father into a whirl of confusion, causing his son to wonder what the problem is. The only resolution—which was the grand scheme of *PencilMan* all along—is to create a pencil from all of the stolen material and encourage the frustrated humans to use it to recreate their calendars and lists via the glitch-proof combination of a pencil and paper.

Told in rhymed verse, the story's scansion often stumbles because of added and insufficient syllables, and because of stresses that don't quite match its rhythm. This pairs with word choices that are forced to fit the rhyme schemes. When its rhymes are rolling and galloping, though, the book is fun to read aloud.

The bold animation-style images show the relationship between the story's father and his questioning son: their heads tilt toward each other, with the reflected light of the screen strewn across their faces. The characters' identifiable facial expressions are also engaging. Further, both the illustrations and the text convey the father's confusion in a light, humorous, and audience-appropriate manner. The images become more fantastical as they move away from the home of the child and his father: the houses take on imaginative shapes, and a woman glides by on a bicycle that extends on three horizontal wheels.

In the fun and fabulistic picture book *PencilMan*, a sneaky team steals information from a cell phone to create one of the greatest tools known to humanity: the pencil.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (July 20, 2021)

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