

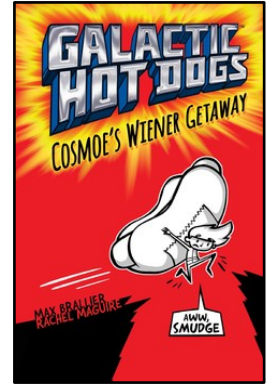
A Teacher's Guide to

Galactic Hot Dogs, Book 1:

Cosmoe's Wiener Getaway

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Book Description

Strap into the Neon Wiener intragalactic food truck and get ready for a wild ride with Cosmoe the Earth-Boy and his sidekick, Big Humphree, on a series of adventures through outer space! The excitement starts when Princess Dagger, daughter of the Evil Queen, kidnaps herself onto the Neon Wiener, leading to a showdown with some wicked-fast fighter ships. Next up, the crew must hunt down and defeat the “Ultimate Evil,” and also sell some snacks along the way. The hybrid graphic novel format packs action into every page, with speech bubbles and humorous asides adding to the fun of Cosmoe’s first-person narrative. Readers will happily dive into this zany tale of friendship, courage, . . . and giant hot dogs.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe Cosmoe in terms of appearance and personality. Give examples of his strengths and weaknesses, using details from the text. What role does Goober play in Cosmoe’s exploits? Discuss whether you think Cosmoe is a hero.
2. Cosmoe is the first-person narrator of the story. Find some of the ways he describes himself, such as “an awesome space guy.” Find other places where he talks about his mistakes. What does his narrative voice tell you about him? Discuss how the story would have been different with a third-person narrator.
3. Use the stats graph in Chapter 1 to talk about Humphree, his background, and his personality. Do you agree with the analysis of his traits on the graph, including sense of humor, awesomeness, and so on? Point to specific scenes from the book to back up your opinions.
4. Describe the relationship between Cosmoe and Humphree. When do they agree with each other? When do they disagree? Give examples of scenes in the book where Humphree helps Cosmoe, and others where Cosmoe helps Humphree.
5. The Evil Queen insists that her daughter, Princess Dagger, is evil. Cosmoe disagrees. Describe the princess and some of her actions, discussing whether you think she’s evil. Give examples of how she may or may not change over the course of the story. In what ways do Cosmoe and Humphree help her reveal her true nature?
6. Cosmoe says, “Our duo has become a trio” at the end of Chapter 5. What does he mean, and why does he say it then? Find a scene where the three characters work together, and describe what each of them contribute.

7. How important are villains to the plot? Describe Queen Dagger, her actions, and how you know she's evil. Discuss General Krax Von Grumble and what he does to Cosmoe and Cosmoe's friends. Are they effective villains? Why or why not?

8. Pictures supply a lot of the action and setting for the story. Take a close look at the first ten pages, and describe what you learn only from the pictures that aren't in the text. What do the pictures add besides information? Talk about whether you think the pictures work well with the text.

9. In most novels, the print is the same size throughout the book, except for chapter titles and headings. In this book, the print varies in what kind and size of font is used. At times the print is in all capital letters. Some of the text is in speech bubbles. Analyze the impact of these design choices and what they add to the story. How different would it be if the print size and font were the same throughout?

10. The author uses strong verbs to convey action and keep the story moving fast. Find an exciting scene, list the active verbs, and analyze the impact they have on the reader. For example, the scene on pages 16–17 includes *frapping*, *pressing*, *spinning*, *rocketing*, *whipping*, *lassoing*, and more.

11. The story is fast-moving but it's also funny. Cosmoe mixes up "genes" and "jeans" and yells about "evil jeans." Instead of World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE™), there's the Mutant Worm Wrestling Federation (MWWF). As you read, write down other wordplay and humorous scenes, and discuss what makes them funny.

12. The characters have imaginative names that in some cases reflect their personalities. Go through the major characters and discuss their names in terms of what they add: humor, menace, or other qualities.

13. The narrative weaves in figurative language that suits the story and helps paint imaginative pictures. In Chapter 2, Cosmoe describes an explosion as "King Kong-sized" and Humphree says, "We're lucky we're not applesauce." Find other metaphors and similes, talk about the comparisons they make, and how the figures of speech enhance the story.

14. As you are reading, take note of unfamiliar words and try to understand them in context. If that doesn't work, look them up in a dictionary. Here are some possibilities:

- symbiotic
- intergalactic
- interstellar
- buccaneers
- eerie
- coordinates
- colossal
- detonation
- malevolent

- convoy
- plummets
- protrude
- esophagus

Activities

Buy 'em Here!

Have students imagine their own intragalactic food truck and create a poster to advertise it. They need to decide what kind of food they would sell and what they would name it. The poster should show their food truck, which might reflect the food itself, and include a menu. The text should include words and slogans that would attract customers.

And Then What?

In the last chapter, Princess Dagger suggests they start on a new adventure. Cosmoe responds, “Let’s find us some trouble.” Working in small groups, have students brainstorm the next adventure, including a new villain. Once students have decided on an idea, they should write a narrative with some description and plenty of dialogue. Have them present it as reader’s theater, with a student as the narrator who sets the scene and supplies transitions, and other students reading the parts of the characters. Costumes and props can be fun, but reader’s theater works well without them too.

Intergalactic Itinerary

Cosmoe and his friends travel great distances in the course of the story, starting from Space Port Funketown. They escape the Jacks, enter the worm wrestling contest, and more. Introduce the idea of a travel itinerary to the class and have students create one that lists in order the places Cosmoe and his friends go. The itinerary, which serves as a kind of graphic organizer, should feature a short description of each place. Have students decorate their itineraries and post them on a “Travel the Galaxies” bulletin board.

Hot Dog Headlines

If there were a newspaper in outer space, Cosmoe and his friends would constantly be in the headlines. Have students work in groups of eight to ten to create their own newspaper. They should give it a name and then, in pairs, write stories based on Cosmoe’s adventures. The stories should follow the newswriting model of who-what-where-when-and-why, drawing details from the book. Have students write headlines and print the stories out in columns. The group can work together to create a big front page with lots of Galactic Hot Dog news.

Stellar Stats

Big Humphree has a stats graph in Chapter 1 that resembles a sports trading card. It lists information about him and ranks his qualities. General Krax is ranked on a similar graphic in Chapter 11. Have students choose another character in the book and create a trading card about him or her. It should give physical facts, place of origin, other details, and rankings of various kinds. The students should write a paragraph explaining the details and choices, then decorate the cards and share them with each other.

Guide written by Kathleen Odean, a former school librarian and Chair of the 2002 Newbery Award Committee. She gives professional development workshops on books for young people and is the author of Great Books for Girls and Great Books about Things Kids Love.

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