

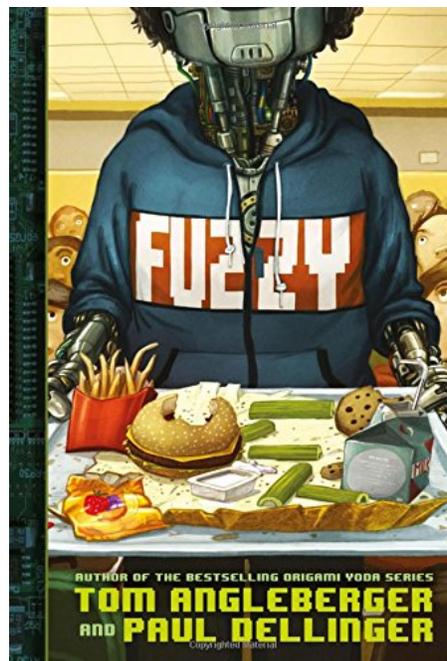
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Review of *Fuzzy*

By Tom Angleberger & Paul Dellinger

Adult/ Educator Reviewer: Dr. Sara Kajder
Mom, Reader, and Clinical Assistant Professor, English Education
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Student Review: Brennan Kajder, 4th Grade



Angleberger, T., & Dellinger, P. (2016). *Fuzzy*. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams.

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Adult Review: Sara Kajder

Tom Angleberger's books first became a part of our family's reading lives with his *Origami Yoda* series, beginning an expectation that the books that delight my sons with their antics and humor were made even better when we passed them around to laugh together, to talk about unexpected moments, and to simply share. We eagerly jumped into *Fuzzy* in the hope that this collaboration between Tom Angleberger and Paul Dellinger would bring more of the same.

"This book quickly and solidly earned a permanent home on our family bookshelves..."

The true delight is that this is a very different book. And, as a result of the on-going and very real discussion it invited across all four members of our family, it lead us to think together about schools, testing, technology and how we really show what we learn.

On the surface, *Fuzzy* is the story of a created robot who goes to middle school with the goal of learning how to be a typical student. His new friend, Maxine, the kiddo assigned to help Fuzzy navigate the school day, decides to get to the bottom not only of why Fuzzy would be assigned to the school but to also figure out how his arrival ties to the evil Vice Principal's single-minded focus on raising school test scores. Within this system, Max is penalized for the tiniest of infractions, leading to a tense relationship with her parents who ratchet up the pressure for her to "turn things around." Tunneling in more deeply, the satire the book presents subtly calls the reader's attention to the automation of the school and the school's assessment program, the "big brother" nature of the computerized Vice-Principal's surveillance and plotting, and the tensions between humans and technology. It was an equally important discussion for us to talk about what we value as a family when it comes to

performance in school - and, larger, in relationships between people.

This book quickly and solidly earned a permanent home on our family bookshelves, and it challenged our thinking both about what it means to be an ally to others and what ways we demonstrate empathy.

Student Review: Brennan Kajder

Fuzzy is a book by Tom Angleberger and Paul Dellinger that is based on a time in the close future. There is a robot named Fuzzy who is assigned, like a kid, to go to Vanguard One Middle School as a student. As you'd expect, the students there watch excitedly as the robot walks down the hall. But there is another robot already in the school - evil vice principal Barbara. She is determined to stop Fuzzy and his friends from discovering the real reason Fuzzy is there. This begins an epic battle between students and a test-obsessed Vice Principal set on making students miserable - but excellent test takers.

"I would recommend this book to people that like reading about science, school, and adventure."

As a kid who has gone to a school that went a little too test crazy, I liked that this book showed some kids who took a stand along with their robot friend who sure was a lot more like a person as the book kept going. Fuzzy became their actual friend as he learned to be a middle school student, which you and I know means more than taking tests at school. This book is the best balance of funny scenes, suspense and some sad moments, too. You can't stop reading it.

I would recommend this book to people that like reading about science, school, and adventure. This book is full of twists and turns and cliff-hangers which keep you reading. It is great for boys and girls even though the main human character is a girl. It is

also a book that I would recommend for adults who went to middle school, who might be able to relate to the characters in the story, or who have ever been the new kid in school. It's probably important for adults who make tests for schools to read it too. For kids, if you are going to middle school or you must take a lot of tests as a part of school, then you should read this, too. I actually wish there were more people in the world like Fuzzy. You'll finish this book and feel that way, too.