

KNIGHTS OF THE KITCHEN TABLE (PB)



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From School Library Journal Grade 3-5-- A book from his magician uncle transports Joe and his friends, Fred and Sam, back in time to swashbuckling adventures fraught with dangers at every turn. In the first story, quick thinking and daring-do save them from a fire-breathing dragon and a foul-smelling giant; in the second, an encounter with the dreaded Blackbeard almost causes their demise. Tongue-in-cheek humor, laced with understatement and word play, makes for laugh-out-loud reading, as verbal insults are hurled, and the boys outwit their foes. Villains and heroes clash, as do modern and archaic language and dress, causing misunderstandings and mayhem. Short, easy-to-read sentences and lots of zany dialogue perfectly suit the breathless pace. Smith brings new dimension to black-and-white drawings, as looming villains tower over the trio, brandishing swords or lances, and the boys escape their captors. A true melding of word and pictures, and jolly good fun. --Trev Jones, School Library Journal Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition. From Kirkus Reviews The author of the hilarious *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (1989)

comes up with an entertaining formula in this first ``Time Warp Trio" story: Narrator Joe is given a magic book ("The Book") that transports him and two friends to King Arthur's Britain, where they find themselves confronted by a fearsome Black Knight--who's easy to defeat with some quick dodging when he's in mid-charge. Then Lancelot, Gawain, et al. happen by and take the boys for heroes--a reputation they sustain by tricking the loathsome giant who's menacing the castle into fighting the terrible dragon (Smaug) that has also just turned up. Scieszka unobtrusively slips in several classic references and defines some chivalric jargon by having the boys comically paraphrase it; there is some daring juvenile humor on the subject of the giant's various atrocious smells, and the contrast between the boys' breezy manner and the knights' pseudo-formality is also good for several laughs. A little forced, but this should serve its purpose. Smith's drawings deftly reflect the blend of everyday kid with zany, mock-gruesome adventure. See also a simultaneously published sequel, The Not-So-Jolly Roger, reviewed below (in brief). (Fiction. 8-12) -- Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition. See all Editorial Reviews

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