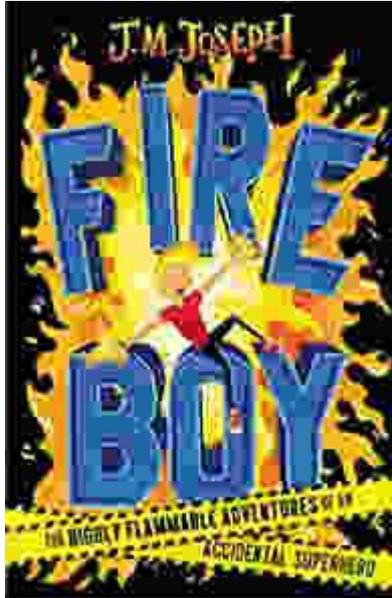


# Fire Boy

J.M Joseph



*Fire Boy? Oh yeah, a superhero book. I know how this goes. Well.... Yes and no. With big tops, crime capers, cantankerous grannies and a corker of plot, this is way, way more than a formulaic hero-saves-the-hour kind of story.*

It all begins when young Aiden Sweeney receives a strange package in the post. It contains sweets, made in Peru. But these aren't just any old sweets, and, as it turns out, they weren't really meant for Aiden. But, kids being kids, Aiden and his excellent friends Sadie and Hussein, get scoffing. And it's not just a sugar rush they're hit with. Now possessing quite brilliant powers, they need to navigate home-life and school-life and circus-life (yes, I did just say circus-life) and more importantly, LOW LIFE.

Mwa-ha-ha! Yes, meet the terrifically evil and disgustingly greedy Ash Aitken. And now forget I ever mentioned him, because really, I don't want to give anything away.

*With snappy lists and notes and brilliant chapter-heads, this book will suck you in, fire up your imagination and take you all the way to the bank. That's not what happens, it's an expression.*

*Fire Boy* is a perfectly crafted story, avoiding predictability and satisfying all those what-abouts that fast-moving tales often leak. Best of all, it's FUNNY. It really is. The comic timing is terrific. And the humour comes in part because of situation – who doesn't like a 'get caught naked' scene or a few fart mentions? – but it's mainly down to the characters. Granny in particular is a source of great amusement; she's sardonic, sarcastic and bombastic; a hilarious handful of a battleaxe. And even Ash Aitken, so slippery and maniacal, gets you giggling. Then there's the funny business at circus, with its line-up of excellent characters and my favourite act, Mathilde the fortune teller.

This is a chunk of a book (superb value for money, I'd say) but I suspect any kid with a love of face-ache fun will race through it. And they might learn something too. Because while fire is most certainly the show-stopper, the heart is in die-hard friendships and the determination to do what's right.

It's a joy.

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Reviewer: Rachel

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