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Books aimed to inspire boys to read

BY – CHRISTINA BARRON January 28

Getting boys to read has become a mission of author Jon Scieszka (pronounced SHESS-ka). Scieszka, who wrote “[The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales](#),” noticed boys’ reluctance to read at an early age.

“I had some brothers who didn’t like reading so much,” he told the crowd at last fall’s National Book Festival on the Mall. “Having grown up with a bunch of brothers, I realize that boys read in a different way. . . . They just might like different things.”

Scieszka started a program called Guys Read (www.guysread.com), which encourages boys to read. Following Scieszka’s example, KidsPost has found some recent books that boys might enjoy.

“[Guys Read: Other Worlds](#)”

Edited by Jon Scieszka, ages 8 to 12, 331 pages.

The guy behind Guys Read has assembled a series of short stories to expose boys to a variety of authors. Themes of earlier books have included humor, suspense and sports. The latest — a collection of

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fantasy and science fiction tales — features Rick Riordan, Eric Nylund, Kenneth Oppel and several other popular authors. The last is a story by sci-fi pioneer Ray Bradbury, a writer who inspired Scieszka himself to read.

[“Boys Camp: Nate’s Story”](#)

By Kitson Jazynka, ages 8 to 12, 141 pages.

Outdoor adventures are the attraction in a series about boys who meet at a summer camp. The second book, by KidsPost contributor Jazynka, focuses on Nate, who is afraid to tell his camp buddies that he’s fascinated by birds. He’s also afraid to admit his fear of horses. Will he be able to handle an overnight trip on horseback? The book celebrates friendships formed while exploring the woods, staying up late and taking as few showers as possible.

[“The Year of Billy Miller”](#)

*By Kevin Henkes, ages 8 to 12,
229 pages.*

Billy is worried. The second-grader fell on his head just before school started. The doctor said he was fine, but Billy has a lump as a reminder of the incident. His mother is concerned, and so is Billy. It doesn’t help that a girl in his class calls him “dumb.” As Billy’s lump disappears, he has other worries: dioramas, a pesky little sister, a frustrated-artist dad and a poetry contest. How could this be, as his dad had promised, the Year of Billy Miller?

[“Travels With Gannon & Wyatt: Egypt”](#)

By Patti Wheeler and Keith Hemstreet, ages 9 to 12. 192 pages.

Real-life twins Gannon and Wyatt inspired a fictional travel adventure series that started with visits to Botswana in Africa and a Canadian rain forest. The third installment takes the teens to Egypt for a fellowship with an archaeologist who is looking for Cleopatra’s lost tomb. It’s no

easy task, especially with booby traps and grave robbers in their way. The boys, who take turns narrating the story, learn about ancient and modern Egypt while continually teasing each other.

— **Christina Barron**