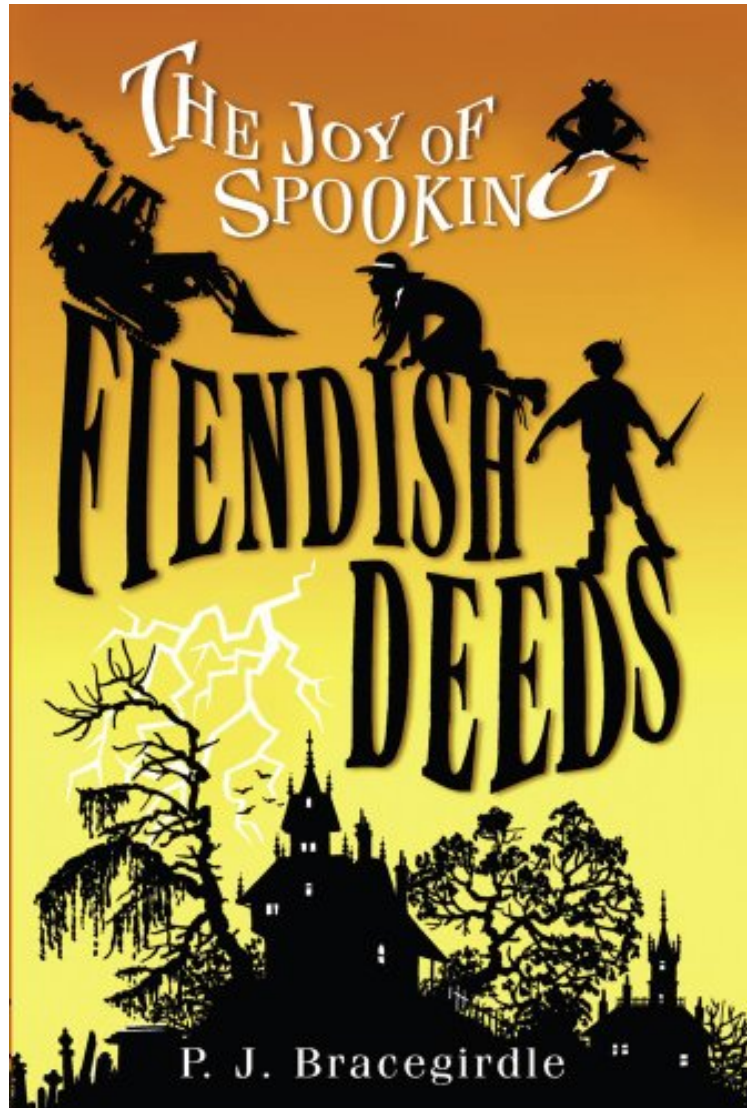


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Fiendish Deeds (The Joy of Spooking)

P.J. Bracegirdle

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P.J. Bracegirdle : Fiendish Deeds (The Joy of Spooking) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fiendish Deeds (The Joy of Spooking):

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. The Joy of SpookingBy Allison M. CampbellThe minute I saw the creepy, Tim Burton-reminiscent cover, I desperately wanted to read this book, and reading the first chapter only made it more appealing. Bracegirdle (an unlikely name if I ever heard one) can write very, very well, and he has an imagination that just won't quit. Chapter one opens with an Edgar Allen Poe quote, and it's clear that Bracegirdle is channeling classic horror writers (he references Poe, but Lovecraft also jumps to mind). Joy Wells lives in Spooking,

the "hideous hill" surrounded by the newer, suburban, cookie-cutter town of Darlington. The Darlings, as they call themselves, fear Spooking and mock the kids who come down for school at Winsome Elementary. Joy, a devoted horror fan, loves Spooking and has nothing but scorn for the neat, boring lives of the Darling kids who torment her at school. She becomes convinced that her favorite horror writer, E. A. Peugeot, set his stories in and around Spooking, and decides that the Bog Monster in her favorite story must be real. Meanwhile, plans to drain the bog and replace it with a water park are afoot. The brilliance of this story is in sharp, accurate prose (often infused with delightfully dry wit) and a masterful sense of creepiness (I actually got shivers at the very end). The characters are classic, but complex. Joy's attitude about Spooking is balanced by Bracegirdle's descriptions of the town's decrepitude, and by one Darling child who is shockingly nice to her. Phipps, the villain, is one of the best horror villains in kids' literature. Parallels to Joy's attitude and situation make it apparent that they would have been kindred spirits, but something in Phipps's past changed him, and I can't wait to read about his background in one of the future books. Phipps is a toadying, bitter assistant to the mayor with his own agenda for getting rid of Spooking, and an annoying, Dursley-ish (but smarter) boy cluelessly helps him. Joy tries desperately to save the bog through a variety of means, involving several memorable side characters. The preservation of the bog brings in an environmental element, but it doesn't dominate the story. The balance between Spooking and Darlington is rich and complicated, and there is more than enough to fuel a trilogy. Joy is a delightful heroine with her stubborn Spooking pride and moments of self-awareness. I highly recommend this book, and I can't wait for Book Two next summer.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Congratulations - You just found your new favorite book
By Pop Bop
I don't know why this series of books has so little buzz, but I do congratulate you on finding whatever list, blog, or review site it was that sent you out here to find it. This book turns almost every stock middle school character and predictable ghostly plotline on its head. Our heroine, Joy Wells, is smart, touchy, funny, romantic, delusional, silly, determined, and absolutely great company. She has a wonderful relationship with her little brother, who is a tough and loyal sidekick. Her parents are both lame and understanding at the same time, and add a bitter/sweet touch to Joy's homelife. The villain is complicated, hilarious, devious, cruel and profoundly sad. Every secondary character has a surprise or two built in, so the story is never predictable, and every exchange has a freshness to it that is rare in books aimed at the middle school reader audience. Many of the observations and most of the dialogue have a pithy sharpness that is rare and refreshing. This is satisfying, subversive stuff, and well worth a try.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fun
By Scott
Delightfully dark and enjoyable.

Joy Wells is a proud resident of Spooking, the terrible town at the top of the hideous hill. At the bottom of the hill is Darlington, a plastic suburban "paradise" where Joy and her brother go to school. When the mayor of Darlington announces that a water park is going to be constructed over the Spooking bog, Joy is horrified. She decides that she has to save the mysterious bog and the endangered species in it—but someone is determined to stop her! The Addams Family meets Carl Hiaasen in this quirky mystery with an environmental twist.

From School Library Journal
Grade 5–7—Joy Wells, 11, loves the town of Spooking. It is dark, damp, full of crumbling mansions, and has a gothic atmosphere that suits her perfectly. Joy does not love neighboring Darlington, where she and her brother go to school and are treated poorly by students and teachers alike; nobody likes "Spookies." She is convinced that her favorite horror writer, E. A. Peugeot, was inspired by Spooking and that the bog fiend from his most famous tale endures in its bog. When Joy learns that a planned tourist attraction will destroy the area, she takes action. Her opposition to the project brings her to the attention of the villainous mayoral assistant, Mr. Phipps. He is a bitter, complicated man whose motivations stem from a deep hatred of and desire to destroy his hometown. He sees his childhood self in Joy's odd ways and simultaneously wants to save and defeat her. The themes of conformity and environmentalism versus business opportunity are explored with sophistication. This novel is for fans of black humor and real horror, perfect for those looking for a more literary R.L. Stine. With the help of a fortune-telling hermit woman, Joy manages to save the bog, but further mysteries are left for future novels about Spooking.—Caroline Tesauro, Radford Public Library, VA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "FIENDISH DEEDS hits the ground running with a feisty protagonist, unlikely allies, and a sinister adversary as it introduces a grand adventure touched with mystery, action, horror, and the barest hint of romance." -- Teensreadtoo.com "Bracegirdle . . . is a witty, intelligent voice that reads like a not-so-bloodless Lemony Snicket." -- Montreal Mirror
About the Author
P.J. Bracegirdle has done everything from tending the stage door of a haunted old Scottish theater to pushing laundry carts through dark tunnels under an insane asylum. His last job involved writing thick manuals that nobody really read for products that few people ever used. He lives in Montreal--a spooky old town with a cemetery at the summit. For more information, visit pjbracegirdle.com and joyofspooking.com.