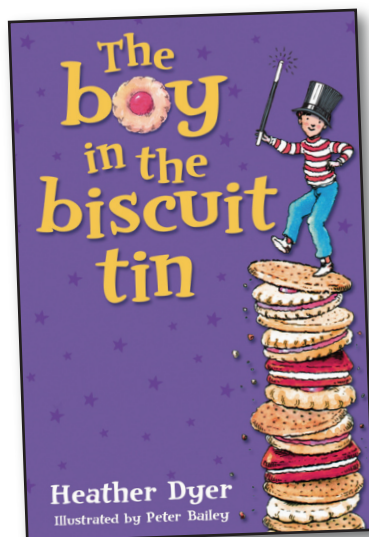


Children's Book Review

Whenever magic is mentioned in Francis' household a cold shiver runs through his mum. Ever since Uncle Godfrey disappeared, any mention of the stuff prompts a change of subject.

So when Francis finds a box of magic tricks stuffed in an old wardrobe, he thinks it best to keep it to himself. But when one of his tricks goes wrong it is impossible to hide it from his brother and cousin and a weekend of secrecy and collusion ensues. Unfortunately for the children this isn't any old magic set: this is a real magic set and when things go wrong, they go dangerously wrong.

Heather Dyer has a talent for narrative that makes her stories exciting yet comforting. Her families and settings have all the charm of the bygone golden age of children's fiction coupled with a thoroughly modern sense of humour. The Boy in the Biscuit Tin is admirable in its attempt to demonstrate the dangers of getting involved in things you do not understand; a message that is slightly undermined by the story's conclusion. This slight disappointment aside, The Boy in the Biscuit Tin would be a perfect recommendation for that tricky 6 to 8 age group.



Heather Dyer *The Boy in the Biscuit Tin*
ill. Peter Bailey
 (The Chicken House, pbk, 2007) rrp. £4.99.

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