



Dodgeball High

Bradley Sands

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Justin Lucas just started at a new high school, but there are no classes in really important stuff like English literature, mathematics, science, or history. Instead, the entire curriculum is dedicated to playing dodgeball. Justin is...perplexed. Where are the pencils and textbooks? Why are there so many explosives strapped to the balls? And what's up with the barbed wire? Does the school administration really think it's appropriate to wrap the balls in barbed wire?

Dodgeball High does not seem like a safe environment for a young man. But his classmates don't care. They kinda remind him of junior Mafia dons, little serial killers, and pint-sized dictators from third world countries. And they are all really good at dodgeball (and the shedding of their classmates' blood), while Justin totally sucks. And to make matters worse, Justin's parents are like...total dicks. They won't let him go to a different school because they think he's full of crap about this "dodgeball nonsense." Not to mention that Dodie Manson, the greatest player in the school, has a gigantic crush on Justin. And whoever Dodie wants, Dodie gets, and her BFs have a habit of experiencing intense pleasure prior to their "mysterious" decapitations.

Does Justin have what it takes to survive and make it to the top of his class before graduation? Or will he be eliminated permanently? Read Dodgeball High to find out, but watch out for the ball that's coming at your head!

Praise for Dodgeball High:

"Justin Lucas may just be one of the best narrators in contemporary fiction." - Cultured Vultures

"Bradley Sands has a knack for writing likeably dislikeable characters and throwing them into wacky situations. If you haven't read any of his books yet, this is a great place to start." - Razorcake

"Whatever you think is going to happen in Dodgeball High? Yeah. Just forget it. You'll never see where Sands is taking this thing. Of this, I am certain." - The Next Best Book Blog

"Dodgeball High reminds of a John Hughes writing a teen movie set in the dystopian future of movies like Rollerball." - Shelf Inflicted

"Like a high school sports movie parody as conceived by the writers at Adult Swim." - Adventures in SciFi Publishing

"Read Dodgeball High and introduce yourself to what may be the funniest and most accessible book in the Bizarro genre." - Hellnotes

Dodgeball High Details

Date : Published October 1st 2014 by Eraserhead Press

ISBN : 9781621051619

Author : Bradley Sands

Format : Paperback 188 pages

Genre : Horror, Bizarro Fiction, Humor

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From Reader Review Dodgeball High for online ebook

Lori says

Read 11/4/14 - 11/5/14

3 Stars - Recommended to fans of bizarre high school rituals and rowdy-ass teen know-it-alls

Pages: 188

Publisher: Eraserhead Press

Released: October 2014

As a kid who moved around a bit during my middle-to-high school years, I know a thing or two about being the "new kid". I also know that being new is an awesome opportunity for the extroverted teenager to completely reinvent themselves - in my case, over and over and over again. No one knew who you were. And you could be whatever or whoever you wanted. Z Cavaricci's and permed 'do not working out so hot? That's ok. When you move to a new school district next year you can totally trade them in for the skater-grrl look - long straight hair, stove pipe jeans, and chucks. Hanging with the jocks and straight-edger's a little too boring for you? Cool, this time I'mma hang with the theater crew and hippies. I can blend in or stand out. And no one's the wiser.

Too bad that's not the case for Justin Lucas - the self proclaimed most handsome, nicest, smartest, most athletic, funniest, coolest kid on the planet. Foul mouthed and blessed with a mustache that'll make Tom Selleck cry, Justin's prepared to make the students of Lungville High take notice of his awesomeness. Except, well, wait. Why isn't anyone taking any notice? And why, all of sudden, is he getting whipped in the face by dodgeballs? As he cowers behind his desk in homeroom, plotting revenge - while stealing glances at some of the girls' derrieres while he's down there because hey, why not - and as he moves on to first period, "The History of Dodgeball", and definitely by second period, "Psychology of Dodgeball", it begins to dawn on Justin that Lungville High is not your typical high school.

Enter the bizarre world Bradley Sands has created. A world in which a school exists whose sole curriculum revolves entirely around the sport of dodgeball. One where the rules as you know it are bent, broken, and mangled beyond recognition. One where the student groups - Stunt Team, Model UN, even Math for crissakes - are actually dodgeball groups, and where gym class can be straight-up deadly. No, seriously. Dodgeball death-matches are a thing. Dodgeballs wrapped in barbed wire, dodgeballs stuffed with explosives, you name it, Bradley Sands has thought of it... and if you don't play well, you can forget about going home, ever. Because you'll be dead. Because you'll have gotten hit in the throat with a razorblade dodgeball that practically decapitated you, and your teammates will all be slipping and sliding in your escaping lifeforce as you lie there on the gymnasium floor bleeding out. Oh, this shit just got real, yo.

In the midst of all the madness, Sands has created one of the most obnoxious, self centered characters I've ever had the displeasure of reading, ever. Like, ever ever. Through Justin, he portrays every ego-driven, nothing-but-sex-minded, laugh-at-my-own-jokes, awkward teenage boy I knew in high school, while continuously feeding the story line with just the right amount of WTF-ery. A goth chick who takes Justin on a date to a restaurant that only serves steak, and not only do they walk the cow you'll be eating right over to your table, but they also slaughter and cut it up right there in front of you! A detention room that is only accessible through the floor in a stall in the girls' bathroom! And past year valedictorians stored in the basement of the school in blocks of ice?!

You've got to have a wicked sense of humor for this one, and a super forgiving sense of reality, although when compared to the other Eraserhead Press books I've read, this one's mighty tame. The gore factor is a two or three. It's really lightweight, nothing to lose your lunch over. The goofball factor is at least triple that, and the "he did not just take it there, did he?" factor is through the roof. Whatever you think is going to happen? Yeah. Just forget it. You'll never see where Sands is taking this thing. Of this, I am certain.

Read this book, not as an intro to bizarro fiction (because I really don't think it's a good example of the genre), but as a gateway to another dimension. One that looks like this one, and seems like this one, until the homeroom bell rings. Then all bets, and some of the students' clothing, and definitely some major body parts and a huge portion of your sanity, are off.

Douglas Hackle says

Dodgeball High tells the story of Justin Lucas, a vainglorious teenager who transfers to a new school during the middle of his senior year, where he discovers classes and social life are all centered around the sport of dodgeball—or, to be more specific, an extreme form of dodgeball where opponents often fight to the death using barbed wire-wrapped dodgeballs, explosives, chainsaws, fire, etc.

Right from the get go, Justin informs us that he is “very handsome, nice, smart, athletic, and funny,” that he’s basically “the coolest kid on the planet,” and that he has every intention of ruling his new school by the end of his first day. The absurdity of Justin’s inflated, deluded ego is symbolized perfectly in the “marvelous” and “formidable” Tom Selleck mustache he sports and grooms with great pride. But though Justin is not nearly as handsome, nice, smart, or athletic as he thinks he is, he *is* funny, just not always for the reasons he thinks he is funny. Rather, his ego and cluelessness make him funny. Hilarious, in fact. Since Justin is the first-person narrator, all of the events of the story are relayed through the distorted lens of that massively inflated, self-deluded ego, which makes for some really great humor, humor that often comes in the form of Justin denying his mistakes, oversights, and shortcomings.

By the time I was about twenty pages into *Dodgeball High*, I'd already lost count of the how many times I'd audibly chuckled. Just open the book to a random page and you'll find gems like this:

I'm so deep in thought about my superiority as I walk to homeroom that I get hard. So I hide it with a textbook to avoid a girl riot that will cause the end of the world (because I am also very courteous).

And this:

Like two hundred years go by and I try to kill myself by pulling off my head. And of course the moment I start tugging, the [waiter] says, "Here we are, sir and madam. Enjoy your meal."

Indie Editor Nancy says

"Crazy High school in a Crazy Town"

If you could sum up Dodgeball High in three words, what would they be?

Chuckle-worthy story! This story grabbed me from the get-go, and never let me go. Listened in the car on a long road trip, and it was very entertaining and although gross at times, it was written in a way that wasn't so dark that it was disturbing.

What other book might you compare Dodgeball High to and why?

I could compare this book to some written by Brett Williams, but Dodgeball High is not anywhere near as dark but more comical as our hero figures out why he is at this school and what the heck is going on in his life.

Have you listened to any of Joe Hempel's other performances before? How does this one compare?

Joe is an amazing narrator and my absolute favorite one! He rocks all the voices in this book and he is so easy to listen to.

If you were to make a film of this book, what would the tag line be?

Dodgeball High, where Dodgeball reins supreme!

Any additional comments?

Don't take this book too seriously, it was a great way to pass the time in the car without the nightmares that can come with seriously dark books.

Danger says

Holy cats! This is the funniest book I ever read.

End of review.

Okay, fine. I'll review the book a little bit more. Jeesh, you people want too much from me...

So this is maybe the 4th Bradley Sands book I've read, and far and away, this has got to be his best.

The main character is this ridiculously narcissistic dude named Justin Lucas who thinks he's the greatest human being of all time, but in actuality, he's rather comically inept at everything. Think Ignatius Reilly from A Confederacy of Dunces if he were a teenager stuck in an ultra-violent living cartoon. IN FACT, I think this book is even funnier than A Confederacy of Dunces because this book isn't concerned with things that tend to bog down comedy, like "logic" and "reality". This is BALLS OUT (yes, pun intend) fiction.

And here's the weirdest thing of all. Although Dodgeball High is mostly concerned with being absurd, and thusly, doesn't really try to come at you with any sort've heavy emotional catharsis, you still kinda bond with Justin Lucas. I mean, when he's acting all egotistical and bombastic, you can see it's him OVERCOMPENSATING for feeling inferior, even if he won't admit to himself. It's in between the chinks in his armor that you really dig into the heart of this book. And then, in true absurdist fashion, that heart is exploded like Wile E. Coyote pushing down on a plunger box of TNT.

If you like your books silly and your dodgeballs...bally....then you can't go wrong with this book. For me, this is a strong recommend.

Rick says

While this book was action-packed and it was fun to follow the story I found that personally the narrators overly cocky teenager attitude, egomania and excessive bravado made it a bit annoying to read. I liked the idea of a dodgeball-focused school and really enjoyed the history of dodgeball as laid out near the beginning of the book. The other characters outside of Justin (the protagonist and narrator) were really fun as well.

Outside of my complaint above about Justin's attitude (which I understand is part of his character but that doesn't mean I can't be annoyed by it) the book was enjoyable up to the end. I thought that the end was a bit abrupt and was expecting more from it. Certainly a fun read and if you are more tolerant than I then you will probably like it so I'll go with four stars.

Lisa LeStrange says

I am a very cool person. And very cool people read very cool books. This book falls into that category. Are you a very cool person? Because if you are, you should read this book

John Bruni says

This is my second Bradley Sands book, the first being **RICO SLADE WILL FUCKING KILL YOU**. Judging by these two books, he is an expert at depicting self-delusional fools with inflated senses of ego, suffering from the greatest of delusions of grandeur. This time out, we have Justin Lucas, who is the perfect unreliable narrator due to his douchiness. He is utterly clueless about his place in the universe, although he subconsciously leaves us plenty of clues. He thinks he's the greatest thing to happen since . . . well, anything, really. He's transferred to a new school, where he thinks he's going to be the master and commander of the social scene. Much to his surprise, he finds himself lower on the totem pole than even the nerdy kid, which he finds unacceptable. He also finds the school's unnatural dedication to dodgeball unacceptable. In fact, by the end of this book, he'll find a lot of things unacceptable, including lifelong lies his parents have been telling him. All of this in the midst of bizarro dodgeball battles that leave many students dead, mutilated and, in some cases, eaten by walruses. Maybe I'm reading too much into this, but it seems to me that this is Sands's scathing indictment of American academia's obsession with athletics at the cost of education . . . with explosions and blood and stuff.

David Nicholls says

A story about an ordinary high school... just kidding. Dodgeball high is a story about a high school where every lesson revolves around dodgeball.

Sands' writing is splendid, the characters are great, Justin Lucas is brilliantly funny, crazy egotistical, and really relatable. The story is playfully bizarro, filled with psychopaths and gorey violence, but at its heart is

about fitting in.

I would definitely recommend reading *Dodgeball High* (particularly if you were ever the awkward kid in class)

Marvin says

An open letter to Holden Caulfield

Hello, Mr. Caulfield.

It's been a while since we first communicated. Over 50 years to be exact. That was when you were slumming away on your forced vacation by expulsion from Pencey Prep . Thanks to your friend, J. D Salinger, you have become the world's most famous slacker. All this time and you haven't aged a bit. That is one of the advantage of being a literary fictional icon. But another thing the years hasn't change is this...

You are still a whiny bitch.

Well, it is time to get over yourself because in the 21th century you have a replacement. His name is Justin Lucas and he is, in his own words, "Very handsome, nice, smart, athletic, and funny. I'm the coolest kid on the planet". He is a lot like you. He clearly thinks he is cooler than he really is. But he doesn't whine about no wimpy private academy. He goes to a real school...

DODGEBALL HIGH!

Yes! The same school immortalized in Bradley Sand's novel of the same name. (That mean that the title of the book is *Dodgeball High*, Holden, since you are a slow learner) While you are bummed about losing fencing equipment, Justin is dodging exploding and spiked balls in a game where losing is often fatal. Where you moan about the hypocrisies in life, Justin is maneuvering in a school that celebrates them while grooming its students to be world class psychopaths. Where you just moan about having sex, Justin is screwing a girl that likes to kill her partner and eat his heart. Now that is real teenage angst!

And *Dodgeball High* is funny too. Justin has enough to worry about with just staying alive. But he still has time to prim his awesome mustache and cover his stupid lines with "Just Kidding!". Plus considering how violent this school is, Justin always knows his priority...

Girls punching dudes in the face is kind of messed up but sort of sexy, which is even more messed up since my turn-ons usually include giant titties shaking rather than extreme violence.

So here is what I think you should do, Holden old buddy. Read *Dodgeball High* and enter the 21st century. Introduce yourself to what may be the funniest and most accessible book in the Bizarro genre. A book where extreme violence and extreme laughs exist on every page. A book that asks the question; Does true love exist or is it just a depository for dismembered body parts? And don't worry about finding a hidden message that will transform the next generation. There may be one but I doubt it. If you do find one, don't tell me what it is. It might mess up the fun.

So Holden. that is pretty much it. Don't take me wrong. You are still OK for a whiny bitch and *Catcher in*

the Rye is actually a very cool book. But it doesn't hold a candle to deadly dodgeball games, a homicidal principal, and genocidal sport teams. Enjoy, old buddy.

Four and a half stars.

karen says

dodge THIS!!

welcome to dodgeball, bizarro-style.

here's the opener:

The first thing you should know about me is that I am very handsome, nice, smart, athletic, and funny. Basically, I'm the coolest kid on the planet. And I've even got the coolest name in the universe.

Are you ready for it?

It's...

Justin Lucas.

Whoa, I flip out a little every time I think about it.

justin lucas is what you might call ...confident. and why shouldn't he be?? he is all of the above, he's got a marvelous mustache, the most awesome collection of novelty t-shirts ever, says cool words like "tarnation," and he's basically god's gift.

he has just transferred from his old high school in orlando (where he was the most popular kid, naturally) to finish out his senior year at one of the best schools in new jersey: lungville high. he's ready to kick ass and take names, to be the center of everyone's attention and admiration.

he muses: *Sometimes it's really hard being the coolest kid on the planet.*

poor justin lucas.

especially since some of the kids at this new school don't seem to recognize how very cool justin lucas is, and that they are lucky to even be attending the same classes as he is. classes like the history of dodgeball, dodgeball lit, psychology of dodgeball and yoga. see, lungville high, one of the best schools in new jersey, is completely structured around dodgeball. and all the kids there are a little strange. chicks in three-piece suits smoking cigars, kids with mohawks and skull-patched jackets, kids who stab other kids.

because this isn't your pansy-ass momma's dodgeball

it's not even the kind of dodgeball you might still have nightmares about

this is full contact, no holds barred dodgeball, and killing someone is just smart strategy.

things are about to get dodgy.

will justin find himself on the winning team? will he get the girl? will he get to the bottom of his family's secret legacy? will he learn where meat comes from? will he catch his parents in the most compromising situation ever? will he crack up over the word "tutu?" will he say things like

Those guys are probably gonna watch child pornography after this and kiss each other's dodgeballs.

I didn't really mean their dodgeballs. More like their testicles. I was trying to be hilarious. And I succeeded, because I am hilarious.

will he ever have a single moment of self-doubt??

only one way to find out! well, two i guess. you could read it or you could ask someone who has read it. but you should read it.

as a quick aside, this book reminded me of Sideways Stories from Wayside School. that book creeped me out as a kid, and i like to think that this is what those kids grew up to be.

fun fun bloody fun

Ame says

Holden Caulfield sports a sweet 'stache and attends Ender Wiggin's Battle School, only Battle School is in New Jersey, and it's all about dodgeball and murder.

A raucous coming-of-age tale describing the trials of your own ignorance in high school and the pains of being "the new kid".

Melanie Catchpole says

I always scan the other reviews before leaving my own to see if I can be inspired with some witty comment or say something different that no-one else has thought of - but my reviews suck and I'm pretty sure they will

stay this way lol. All I can say is what I like and dislike about stories. Short and sweet.

So... I liked quite a lot about this story. First there wasn't many errors that I noticed and it flowed quite nicely. The main character was kind of obnoxious but in a way you cared what happened to him. The story was crazy! A fair bit happens in a short amount of time, this isn't a normal school and this isn't a normal game of dodgeball.

It took me a little time to get used to how the book reads but really enjoyed the story despite that.

Scott Unfried says

"Training you was a huge waste of time. I could have been doing something more productive...like picking my nose."

The above line is burned into my memory, extremely hilarious. Bradley Sands finds productivity in the most unexpected places. And he finds redemption where others find only repulsion.

I finished this almost exactly one month ago. It took me this long to write the review. On one hand, the wackiness of his writing seems to defy the quest for redemptive value. On the other hand, nobody has me turning the pages like Bradley Sands.

This is the story of Justin Lucas, the new kid at a very unusual high school, Lungville High, where dodgeball is at the heart of the curriculum. However, this oddness is just the tip of the iceberg. This story also gives new meaning to detention, which is more of a psychological training ground than punishment.

I think Bradley Sands may have pushed the material farther than it needed to go, in terms of twists and turns and escalating action and stakes. Yet, he taps into the nearly universal experiences of high school, love, the need to belong, survival, and the need to be taken seriously.

Early on, the book seems to be autobiographical, in my estimation. Justin, the protagonist says something serious and others misread his seriousness and laugh. Justin is unintentionally hilarious to others, and he learns to be relatively proud of this; I believe this is similar to what Bradley Sands has experienced in the past. Most of us have some of these moments, but some of us have more than others. I've had these moments too. You try to write horror (or something), but, when it's read aloud, people laugh their asses off. However, as the book progresses, these elements get overshadowed by much more preposterous developments.

There are bodybuilders, restaurants where cows are slaughtered for diners' satisfaction, nuclear bombs, erections, serial killers, and so much more in this sandy cocktail brought to you by the connoisseur of crazy, Bradley Sands.

Bradley Sands' story unfortunately suffers from an inherently sexist perspective, a teenage boy who heavily objectifies girls. This closed first-person approach will have feminists cringing, and this is nothing new for Sands or Bizarro fiction. However, I'd love to see Sands write a book that is satisfactory to feminists. He claims to have run out of creative gas lately. Well, I challenge him to write a book featuring women protagonists whose conversations and thoughts rarely involve men as a focus. Bradley Sands' inner woman yearns for expression.

Dan Schwent says

When Justin Lucas, owner of a marvelous mustache that puts Tom Selleck's to shame, changes schools in the middle of his senior year, he finds himself at Lungville High, where everything revolves around dodgeball...

Dodgeball High is the latest book from that bearded madman Bradley Sands and is his most accessible book to date. It's also a hilarious send-up of team movies and the exaggerated importance of high school sports.

With Justin Lucas, Bradley Sands does an accurate job of capturing the awkwardness and insecurities of being an asshole teenager. Will he get the girl? Will his team win the most important (and lethal) dodgeball game ever played? Will he ever stop saying "just kidding" after every damn one of his jokes?

Dodgeball High reminds of a John Hughes writing a teen movie set in the dystopian future of movies like Rollerball. Lungville High's brand of dodgeball features chainsaws, explosions, and assorted gore and mayhem. Even still, Justin Lucas and his clueless douchebaggery are what kept me most entertained.

Not only is Dodgeball High pretty damn hilarious, it's a good introduction to both Bradley Sands and the world of Bizarro literature. Four out of five stars.

Haddie Harper says

The book follow main character, Justin Lucas, a very witty, sarcastic, and very funny kind of dude. Or better said, Justin is the cocky-confident dude, with a super cool mustache. Justin speaks directly to the reader, interjecting his ever thought of those surrounding him. Here is Justin's introduction to himself:

The first thing you should know about me is that I am very handsome, nice, smart, athletic, and funny.

Basically, I'm the coolest kid on the planet. And I've even got the coolest name in the universe.

Are you ready for it?

It's...

Justin Lucas.

Whoa, I flip out a little every time I think about it.

Like the book description says, Justin starts a new high school with a curriculum dedicated to playing dodgeball. The description basically tells the entire story, but it does go much deeper than the surface. This book is very funny, especially the moments when Justin gets caught up in his sense of humor.

My Honest Opinions/Thoughts: Truth to be told, some of the chapter titles came at a slight offense, probably because I try to refrain myself from using such language. But of course, to each their own. I loved the book. I wish Justin were a real character. He kind of reminds me of one of my brothers, who is just as confident as Justin, but at a lower level. I have a small inkling that this is kind of throwing the school system to the spotlight; 'They are not teaching the curriculum that you thought they were.' Of course, I could be wrong. All the same, this book gave me a good laugh. I would not recommend this for under age readers. I found it a little inappropriate, and I skipped over many paragraphs so that I would not have to stop reading. I probably won't be reading this book again, personal reason.
