



The Scarecrow and His Servant

By Philip Pullman, Simon Reade

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Outrageously zany and filled with non-stop surprises, Simon Reade's theatrical adaptation of *The Scarecrow and His Servant*, renowned author Philip Pullman's fictional children's tale, is an enchanting play for young readers and performers. Delve into the magical world of Scarecrow as you accompany him as Jack, his trusty help-mate, and together you can embark on adventures that will make your head spin. From dodging dangerous bandits and surviving terrifying shipwrecks, to soaring through the skies with wild birds, this play is a roller-coaster ride of never-ending escapades. But when the river-polluting Buffaloni tyrants catch up with you for a final showdown, who will come to your rescue and save the day?

A production of *The Scarecrow and His Servant* ran at the Southwark Playhouse in December 2008-January 2009.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 4-6—Old Mr. Pandolfo, feeling that life is getting too difficult—what with troublesome weather, troublesome soldiers, and very troublesome cousins—decides the time has come to create a scarecrow. At least a scarecrow would take care of the birds. Mr. Pandolfo creates a fine scarecrow, indeed, with a large turnip for a head, a broomstick for a backbone, dressed in a tweed suit stuffed with straw. Hidden within it, carefully wrapped in oilskin, is a mysterious letter. But how can this extraordinary creature—who comes to life when struck by a bolt of lightning—fulfill his destiny if he's stuck out in the middle of a field? Enter Jack, an enterprising, intelligent, and practical young orphan fleeing the soldiers who robbed him of home and family. Jack's motto, It could be worse, comes in handy as he agrees to become the servant of the rather egocentric scarecrow, setting off to find excitement and glory. Scarecrow's excellent opinion of himself sets the stage for a variety of silly, yet dangerous, adventures. Run-ins with government officials, soldiers, and unscrupulous business people provide plenty of opportunities for moralizing on the evils of society. In another setting, this story line might seem over-the-top, but Pullman's clever employment of fairy-tale conventions, his superb use of language, and his engaging dialogue make it a wholly satisfying yarn of ridiculous proportions, and Bailey's line drawings provide just the right feeling of long ago that every good fairy tale deserves.—*Sharon Grover, Arlington County Department of Libraries, VA*
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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Gr. 4-6. Pullman seems equally at home whether creating high fantasy, Victorian mysteries, or old-fashioned stories in the fairy-tale fashion. Here he excels in the latter mode, creating unique characters to charm young readers. When Scarecrow (reminiscent of his relative in the *Wizard of Oz*) meets orphan Jack, both the boy and straw man see the wisdom of Jack's attending to the scarecrow as a servant. Together the pair contends with "danger . . . followed by glory . . . leading to sorrow" as promised by a fortune-teller. It's Jack who keeps Scarecrow's head on (literally at times) as his master blithely takes a turn on the boards, becomes an officer in the army, and finds treasure on an island, even as he keeps his inner conviction rolled up on a scroll stuffed in his shirt. The umbrella story about Scarecrow's raison d'etre (to rescue his polluted valley from an evil ruling family) is purposive, but its sharp point is cushioned by the flimflam and fancy pervading the tale. Best of all, however, is the charm exuded by Scarecrow and the boy, two memorable fellows who may seem familiar, but are utterly their own. *Ilene Cooper*
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Review

"The book is a perfectly made gem, full of fun, fireworks, and wit. We continue to be lucky to have Philip Pullman writing for us."—*The Guardian* (U.K.)

"Philip Pullman, now acknowledged as one of the greatest children's authors of our time, is also one of the funniest and most accessible."—*The Times* (U.K.)

"[Pullman's] touch is so sure, his plotting so flawless, that you know a new Pullman means a rare treat. *The Scarecrow and His Servant* does not disappoint."—*The Herald* (U.K.)

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Keiko Whitchurch:

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