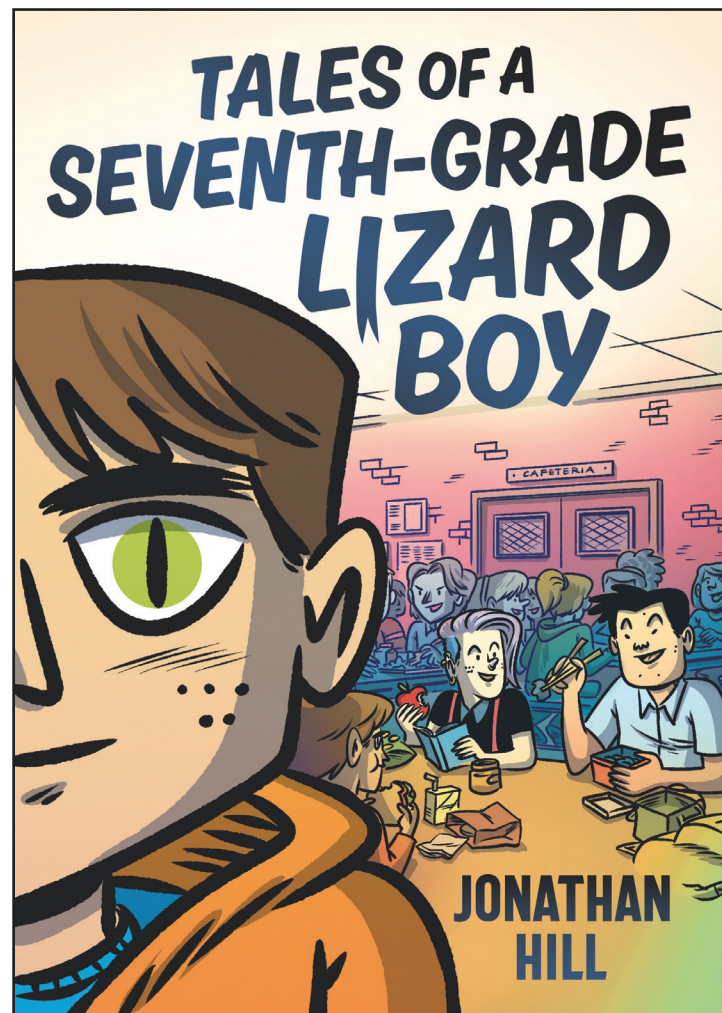


TALES OF A SEVENTH-GRADE LIZARD BOY

ABOUT THE BOOK

Drawing on the experiences of his Vietnamese American family and his love of '80s sci-fi shows, Jonathan Hill crafts a funny, insightful graphic novel about the immigrant experience and the perils of middle school.

Threatened with diminishing resources, Booger Lick't and his family flee their lizard community deep below Earth's crust to survive above among humans. The Lick't family of Elberon now passes as the Tomkins family of Eagle Valley. "Tommy Tomkins" wears a human face to school but can't seem to fit in no matter how he looks. The basketball team becomes a pipe dream when bullies label him a bug eater, and only Dung Tran, an immigrant from Vietnam and fellow outsider, sees Tommy for who he is inside, which is nothing like the outer-space lizard invaders on TV's hottest series. Can their friendship survive the truth? In his first solo middle-grade book, award-winning creator Jonathan Hill perfectly captures the sometimes-dystopian drama of middle school while reminding readers of the universal need for belonging.



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Also available as an e-book

Common Core Connections

This discussion guide, which can be used with large or small groups, will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. These include the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL), as well as the speaking and listening standards for comprehension and collaboration and for presentation of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL). Questions can also be used in writing prompts for independent work.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would *Tales of a Seventh-Grade Lizard Boy* be different if it were written as a novel instead of a graphic novel? How does the fact that it is a graphic novel add to the story?
2. How do the different ways Caleb and Dung play video games reflect their personalities and how they treat others in real life?
3. In what ways is the Lick't family of Elberon different from the Tomkins family of Eagle Valley? In what ways are they the same? Use examples from the book to back up your answers.
4. What does Principal Kurowski mean when she says, "I don't think it should be Dung's job to accommodate everyone else. It should be on the rest of us to try to learn more about the people who are different from us" (page 72)? Why would her words be good for people in real life to follow?
5. How does the theme of accepting those who are different from you run throughout *Tales of a Seventh-Grade Lizard Boy*? What are some other themes and how do they relate to the story?
6. In what ways do Tommy and Dung make life easier for each other when they first became friends?
7. Using examples from the book, explain what happened to Elberon and why the lizard people had to come aboveground.
8. How does Tommy get revenge on Caleb? How does this make Caleb and Tommy more alike?
9. Tommy says, "It's easy to think about moving somewhere and fitting in and it being better. It's really hard to actually do it" (page 125). How do these words ring true for both him and Dung? Consider a time when you or someone you know had a hard time fitting in somewhere. What were things that made it easier or made it harder?
10. Why does Dung challenge Tommy to a fight? Why does he not show up?
11. Describe two of Tommy's dreams. Why did the author choose to include Tommy's dreams in the story?
12. In what ways did Tommy's career presentation inspire other kids in his school?
13. In what ways does *Victory X* mirror life in Eagle Valley? In what ways is the show wrong about lizard people?
14. How do Tommy and Dung become friends with Scarlett? Why do they all get in a fight on Halloween? How do they make up?
15. At the beginning of each chapter are panels that, at first glance, do not seem to have anything to do with the rest of *Tales of a Seventh-Grade Lizard Boy*. What are these panels? How do they move the story forward?



16. Do you think it is ironic that the people in Eagle Valley are scared of the lizard people? Why?
17. How does Scarlett help Tommy figure out who he wants to be?
18. Authors often use foreshadowing to give hints about characters and events that occur later in a story. Look back through *Tales of a Seventh-Grade Lizard Boy*, find an instance of foreshadowing, and trace its clues throughout the story.
19. Why did Jonathan Hill add an author's note to the end of *Tales of a Seventh-Grade Lizard Boy*? How did he weave his own life experiences throughout the book?
20. Are you familiar with the foods shared at the end in the author's note? Do you have foods that inspire similar feelings to the foods Jonathan Hill shares here? If you were creating a note about yourself, what are foods you would include?



ABOUT JONATHAN HILL

Jonathan Hill is a cartoonist, illustrator, and educator who has been nominated for an Ignatz Award. This is the first graphic novel he has written and illustrated for children. He lives in Portland, Oregon.



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These questions were prepared by Mary Kate Doman, a children's and young adult book consultant, author, and professor.

