## *THE MISCHIEVIANS*

## By William Joyce

Illustrations by William Joyce

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## Louisiana Young Readers’ Choice Nominee 2016

**Grade 3-5**

Submitted by Jessica Rushing, Student

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**Title:** *The Mischievians*

**Author:** William Joyce

**Publisher:** Atheneum Books for Young Readers

**Pages:** 56

**SUMMARY**

Have you ever wondered how your homework disappeared? Where the TV remote ran off to? Or why songs you hate get stuck in your head? Dr. Zooper, in a Q&A session with a young boy and girl, has an explanation for all of our everyday annoyances…it has always been the Mischievians! In his underground laboratory, Dr. Zooper reviews his Encyclopedia, which contains creative and detailed figures of 19 Mischievians from the past and the present. Be aware, though, for once the secrets of the Mischievians are known, you will see them everywhere you go! Make sure you record your own sightings to discuss with Dr. Zooper on your next visit.

**AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY**

Local Louisiana author, illustrator, and filmmaker William Joyce has been imagining unique worlds that indulge the minds of children across the world for the past three decades. With more than 50 children’s books to his credit and several film and television adaptations (including *Rolie Polie Olie, George Shrinks, Rise of the Guardians*, and *Epic),* he is lauded as a highly creative and original author/illustrator. His creative spark began early when he wrote his first illustrated story about boogers in the fourth grade, but he did not gain momentum until he moved to New York as an illustrator. Joyce credits his unconventional ideas to his eccentric upbringing in Shreveport. He currently continues to work on several projects while he resides in Shreveport with his family. He originally studied art at Southern Methodist University, but graduated in Film studies before moving to New York to become an illustrator. His illustrations have graced the covers of the *New Yorker* numerous times, and he also received both the 2008 Louisiana writer award and an Academy Award in 2012 for the short animated film“The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore.”

Biographical information taken from

[www.notablebiographies.com](http://www.notablebiographies.com)

<http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/joyce>

Accessed October 7, 2014

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Author/Illustrator website <http://williamjoyce.com>

**OTHER TITLES BY AUTHOR**

*George Shrinks* (1985)

*The Leaf Men and the Brave Good Bugs* (1996)

*Rolie Polie Olie* (1999)

*The Guardians of Childhood* books (2011-2013)

**OTHER TITLES BY ILLUSTRATOR**

*Tammy and the Gigantic Fish* (1983)

*Shoes* (1986)

*Humphrey’s Bear* (1987)

*Buddy* (1997)

# RELATED TITLES

*Creepy Carrots* byAaron Reynolds

*Mr. Wuffles* by David Wiesner

*Super Hair-P and the Barber Doom* by John Rocco

*The Stinky Cheese Man and other Fairly Stupid Tales* by Jon Scieszka

**CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS**

**Language Arts:**

* *The Mischievians* utilizes an interesting narrative structure. Students will examine various encyclopedias to determine the elements of this type of source.
* Students will create their own audio book. Each student will be in charge of reading a portion of the book into an audio/video recorder.
* Students will compose a Q&A about problems they have and create silly answers to these problems.
* Students will create their own postcard to send to William Joyce. On the postcard, students will include a picture of their favorite mischievian or a mischievian of their own creation and an explanation of why they liked the book.
* Students will create a skit using the Q&A format. In their skit, students are to use body movement and voices to communicate their character.
* Dr. Zooper provides us with some silly answers to some common problems, but is he convincing? Students will learn about constructing a convincing argument:

[http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/activities-projects/convince- 30648.html](http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/activities-projects/convince-30648.html)

**Art:**

* Students will draw, name, classify, describe, and develop the history of their own Mischievian (see the last page in the book).
* Students will identify the “silly” elements in the pictures and discuss what feeling these elements create.

**Science/Technology:**

* Dr. Zooper presents silly answers to common problems; however, some of the problems presented have real scientific answers. Students will be broken into groups and research the following problems to find the real reason why these things exist and how they happen: boogers, blisters, itching, funny bones, pain, laughing, and yawning.
* Students could conduct an experiment to create fake snot:

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/experiments/fakesnot.html>

**Vocabulary:**

Laboratory

Mayhem

Mischievous

Literally

Genius

Emancipated

Troupe

Fiendish

Odors

Evade

Dreaded

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Is *The Mischievians* fact or fiction? How do we know?

2. What is the main message of *The Mischievians*? How does it compare to other stories, such as fairytales, fables, and myths?

3. Describe Dr. Zooper. Is he a reliable doctor? How do we know?

4. Are Mischievians real? How do we know?

5. What makes the story funny? Describe what parts are funny.

6. How do the pictures help us understand the story?

7. How is the book organized? Discuss how it does or does not help you understand the book.

**RELATED WEB SITES**

**Moonbot Studios The Mischievians**

<http://moonbotstudios.com/the-mischievians/#.VHYXw74l820>

Publisher’s website with a brief book description and a book trailer video.

**Smashing Interview Magazine**

<http://smashinginterviews.com/interviews/authors/william-joyce-interview-when-things-go-missing-mischievous-creatures-may-be-to-blame>

The interview with William Joyce asks questions about the creative process, information about Dr. Zooper, and more information on various Mischievians.

**Moonbot Studios Pinterest Board**

<https://www.pinterest.com/search/pins/?q=the%20mischievians&term_meta%5B%5D=the+mischievians%7Ctyped>

Pinterest board has linked reviews, pages of the book, and some new Mischievians found since the publication of the book (student designed).

**The Naked Scientists**

<http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/questions/>

Podcast answers to common questions we have about the world around us. Questions range from simple to advanced.