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TITLE INFORMATION

CREEPLES!

Patrick D. Pidgeon

Greenleaf Book Group Press (344 pp.)

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BOOK REVIEW

In this middle-grade novel, teens at a prestigious academy inadvertently create knee-high humanoids that gleefully run amok on campus.

Thirteen-year-old Johnny “Spigs” Spignola’s mischief has gotten him kicked out of several schools. He plans a fresh start at the Aberdasher Academy of Science in New York, where he can study “wonderfully weird” science. Surprisingly, a renowned geneticist professor chooses Spigs—along with his roomie, Pablo “Peabo” Torres, and Theresa Ray “T-Ray” Rogers—as her research assistant. But when the academy shuts down the professor’s department, the trio preps an experiment to validate their prof’s research. This involves a 3-D bio-printer and a mysterious serum. Before they know it, the teens have six 20-inch creatures with sprouts of neon hair and a penchant for wreaking havoc. It gets worse: like Steven Spielberg’s gremlins, these “Creeples” ultimately transform into darker, much scarier versions and incessantly use their abilities to zap inanimate objects (e.g., gargoyles) to life. Spigs, Peabo, and T-Ray aren’t the only ones trying to capture the miniature hellions. A secret organization on campus wants them for its own sinister purposes. Pidgeon’s comedic tale is thoroughly entertaining. The teenagers, for one, are relentlessly cynical, even in danger: “This is NOT how I envisioned my freshman year playing out,” notes T-Ray. Still, Spigs and his friends are a dynamic team. Despite the constant humor, characters find themselves in unquestionable peril, especially during the final act, which amps up the action and the supernatural component. The ending hints at a sequel, which readers will certainly welcome. Bucci’s black-and-white artwork perfectly captures the quirky Creeples, who resemble trolls with impish grins and pot bellies.

Indelible, charismatic humans and creatures populate this colorful adventure.

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