

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

Issue: May 1, 2009

Disbelief 101: A Young Person's Guide to Atheism.

Hitchcock, S. C. (Author) , White, Leslie (Illustrator)

May 2009. 130 p. See Sharp, paperback, \$9.95. (9781884365478). 211.8.

Sure to outrage religious readers, and not just fundamentalists, this chatty, totally irreverent title, written under a pseudonym, speaks to teen rebels of all faiths who question religious indoctrination. The book is really an expansion of a single statement: “God doesn’t exist.” Readers can dip in wherever they like to find support for their arguments against the nonbelievers or to find their own doubts reflected. The chapter on evolution versus creationism and intelligent design spells the author’s position in clear language: evolution is not a belief; there is factual evidence. Faith is the f-word here: how do we know that hell exists if people only go there after they’re dead? And the author says to forget compromise: science and religion cannot co-exist. Yes, Hitchcock writes, Jesus did preach some wisdom, even if it was not original, such as “love thy neighbor as thyself”; but, he adds, morality is totally separate from doctrine, and much evil is done in religions’ name. White’s black-and-white cartoons appear throughout and are both cheeky and thought provoking. A bibliography of further reading concludes.

— *Hazel Rochman*