

The Haters

Jesse Andrews

Amulet Books, 2016

Reviews

- [Booklist Reviews](#) *Starred Review* (15 February 2016): “Andrews follows up his heartstrings-tugging best-seller turned movie, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* (2012), with an uproariously funny addition to the teen road-trip canon. Wes and his best friend Corey are attending jazz camp, and—let’s be blunt—they aren’t exactly standout musicians. But when they meet the mysterious Ash, who is driven by the beat of her own internal drummer, and have an epic jam session, they do what any teenager at a band camp wishes they could do: take off on a road trip for an unofficial tour. The three of them venture to various seedy venues in the South, cycling through all the highs and lows of a more established band: hookups, heartbreaks, unanticipated nudity, and drug-induced crazy times. Are some of the circumstances of the story preposterous? Quite possibly. But readers will be sucked into this story, a raunchy bromance in the vein of *Superbad*, which celebrates friendship and adventure. Andrews’ knack for quippy, smart, and never-too-clever dialogue is a perfect match for this voice-driven book. Intertextual asides, whether lists of potential band names, fake Wikipedia entries, or screenplay-like flashbacks, only enhance this very of-the-moment novel. Effortlessly readable, deeply enjoyable, and, given the years since Andrews’ fantastic debut, well worth the wait.”
- [Horn Book Guide](#) (1 October 2016): “At a jazz camp of ‘mostly dudes’, bass player Wes and his drummer best friend Corey meet Ash, who has her own unique musical style and refuses to play with the condescending guys. Frustrated, she leaves--and Wes and Corey go with her. What follows is both a classic road-trip novel and an inventive teen adventure that subtly addresses race, family, and socioeconomics.”
- School Library Connection (1 May 2016): “Wes and Corey are at a jazz band camp in New York. The musicians are divided into groups named after famous jazz musicians, and Wes and Corey find themselves in the Gene Krupa Band with Ash, the only girl at the camp. They soon realize the Krupa band is for musicians who are considered the worst ones there. When Ash suggests they go on the road to play gigs, they quickly agree. Along the way they sleep in the car, make new friends, pick up a new band mate, and con their way into performing at various dive bars. Relationships are complicated and all the characters have different attitudes about life and love, but for the most part they are all unlikeable. The swearing in the book is excessive and uncomfortable. I’m not sure there is enough to draw students to this book. Harolyn Legg
ADDITIONAL SELECTION
- Voice of Youth Advocates *Starred Review* (1 April 2016): “Wes and Corey did not expect to make it into Bill Garabedian’s prestigious jazz camp. They only tried out because their jazz teacher made them. But accepted they are, and they are the worst musicians in the group, stuck at camp with a bunch of dudes who try very hard to be “jazzy.” Things look up for the two friends when they have a jam session with Ash, who also does not fit the mold of jazz camp. Ash wants to escape from camp, create a new band (with Wes and Corey), and go on tour until camp ends. She

comes from a rich family and has unlimited resources to fund this excursion. And so begins their road trip, looking for gigs anywhere they can find them. What could possibly go wrong? Filled with adolescent boy angst and their preoccupation with male genitalia, rock and roll, and girls, this book is an adventure full of laughs. Andrews, author of *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* (Abrams, 2012/VOYA February 2012), has another winner with his use of absurdity to draw readers in for a great ride filled with music, name-dropping, endless cash, and an epic road trip. Think of *The Haters* as John Green's *Looking for Alaska* (Penguin, 2005/VOYA April 2005) meets Libba Bray's *Going Bovine* (Random House, 2009/VOYA October 2009) kind of adventure. This is recommended for upper-middle to high school realistic fiction collections and will appeal to music buffs and readers who love to laugh.—Dianna Geers.

- [School Library Journal](#) (1 April 2016): “Recommended for Grades 10 and up. The author demonstrates his unique voice in his follow-up to the popular *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*. Like that debut, this work features a similar trio: a narrator, his somewhat clueless friend, and a girl who changes them both. Wes and Corey are “jazz-nerd chaff” at Bill Garabedian’s *Jazz Giants of Tomorrow Intensive Summer Workshop*. They don’t know that, of course, until they discover that this highly selective camp accepted more drummers and bassists to support other, better musicians. They’re not hopeful about the next two weeks until they meet Ash, a guitarist in their ensemble who seems uninterested in playing jazz. Inevitably, the three misfits form a band and escape from camp to launch their world tour. As with most road trips, tensions rise, rivalries form, and jealousy blossoms. Ash is clearly the alpha in the group, making Wes a passive narrator. This works occasionally for the story, especially in the more surreal encounters; however, it also creates a meandering feeling that may wear out some readers. Although not every journey needs a purpose, the characters are not hugely different after what would be a life-altering event for most people. Wes learns to appreciate music rather than simply hating on it; he’s a better listener. It’s a subtle shift, but perhaps that’s Andrews’s point. VERDICT Teens who are music nerds or fans of *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* will appreciate this novel’s sharp wit and playful style.—Joy Piedmont, LREI, New York Copyright 2016 Reed Business Information.
- [Publishers Weekly](#), (18 January 2016): “After meeting at jazz camp, what might be the world’s worst musical trio decides to ditch the camp and go on a road trip, determined to play at any venue that will have them. Teenage best friends Wes (bass) and Corey (drums) join up with a mercurial, dynamic girl named Ash (guitar) and head out on the highway, aiming for adventure but finding wacky hijinks and weird people. There’s yelling, bad decisions, marijuana-fueled interludes, impromptu jam sessions, and way too much caffeine and junk food, and it all comes to a head when they realize it’s time to face the music. Andrews (*Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*) loads his gonzo road trip with offbeat humor, philosophical musings, and musical references and debate, augmenting the narrative with fake Wikipedia entries, flashbacks, and screenplay-format exchanges. Wes’s narrative voice is casual and believable, and while not all of the stylistic quirks pay off (such as an extended “drug experience gone wrong,” as Wes puts it), but as a love letter to music and following one’s dreams, it’s just right. Ages 13–up. Agent: Claudia Ballard, William Morris Endeavor. (Apr.)
- [Kirkus Reviews](#) (5 April 2016): “Wes and Corey are haters. They are obsessed with music and even more obsessed with finding the reasons why everything they encounter falls short of greatness. At

jazz camp they meet fellow hater Ash, an intriguing, guitar-playing, older girl. They form a band and then proceed to make a series of dumb decisions that range in severity from bad to awful as they ditch camp to search for the perfect gig. It quickly becomes clear that this tour is a pressure cooker in which everyone's ugliest traits will appear and start wreaking havoc. The banter among the three is often grating, laden with sexual frustration, dick jokes, and musical one-upmanship. Each of the three is pampered with privilege, yet something is awry. Ash is stupendously rich, the daughter of a Brazilian billionaire and a French model, both absentee. Wes was adopted from Venezuela by white, Buddhist parents who don't make him the center of their universe. Corey is white and Jewish with overattentive musician parents who sometimes can't pay all the bills. Though there are some truly hilarious scenes (such as Wes' biting observations about the awkward ways in which well-meaning white people want to talk about race or his internal, self-scathing dialogue while high), other attempts at humor, such as casual jokes about suicide bombing and rape-y behavior, while believable as adolescent banter, strike the wrong chord. A teen road trip packed with music and drama. There's plenty here to both love and hate." (Fiction. 14-17) Copyright Kirkus 2016 Kirkus/BPI Communications. All rights reserved.

Crowdsourced Reviews

[CommonSense Media](#)

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Lists

- Best of Mackin

Response to Challenges

[Rockwood School District Committee](#)

- "If we want to engage readers, this is the perfect book. It was funny and I was sucked in immediately. I assume any other student would be as well. It was relatable. Maybe a little out there, but it was about coming of age. The main characters get to do crazy stuff, and you get to go on the journey with them."
- "Good book to get someone into reading."
- "The main character learns that it's not ok to do some of the things they did in the book. They made stupid choices, but it was not glorified. It is important to read books like this so you get to experience things second hand and you don't have to deal with the consequences of bad choices."
- "The relationship between the three of them showed value in the kind of relationship they have. We all need straight talkers and this book did a great job of showing how this is done."
- "Our language arts curriculum talks about windows, mirrors and sliding doors. The book appeals to different groups of students. This book is so accurate about a high school boy and identifying with them. A lot of the story about music and blues was a total window, and a mirror for the kids to identify with that. I really wasn't sure why this book was an issue."
- "Living vicariously through those mistakes helps students learn from them."
- "Identity as a black kid adopted by a white family is one that isn't often represented in books."
- "Chapter 27 stuck out to me - drug experience went wrong. That chapter definitely reads about a trial done wrong. It was such a great moment and kids can relate to that. The author's

portrayal of insecure feelings was really well done. I would love it if my kids could read this book. I laughed throughout most of the book.”