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STARMER, Aaron. *Dweeb: Burgers, Beasts, and Brainwashed Bullies*. 240p.

Delacorte. 2009. Tr \$15.99. ISBN 978-0-385-73705-0; PLB \$18.99. ISBN 978-0-385-90643-2. LC number unavailable.

Gr 4-8—This fun romp is a break from the often-heavy realistic fiction that is omnipresent in today's literature. Denton, Wendell, Eddie, Elijah, and Bijay, collectively known as DWEEB, are eighth graders at Ho-Ho-Kus Junior High School in New Jersey. Just before the Idaho Tests, they are abducted by the vice principal as part of an evil plot to...well, no one is sure at first, but eventually it all becomes clear. Each of the boys is gifted in a different way, and together they solve the mystery of why all the students at their school are suddenly extremely focused, and, of course, the DWEEBS save the day. Engaging, but definitely on the fluffy side.—*Robin Henry, Wakeland High School, Frisco, TX*

http://www.libraryjournal.com/slj/printissue/currentissue/858179-427/grades_5_amp_up.html.csp

THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

STARMER, AARON *DWEEB: Burgers, Beasts, and Brainwashed Bullies*. Delacorte, 2009. 228p.
Library ed. ISBN 978-0-385-90643-2 \$18.99
Trade ed. ISBN 978-0-385-73705-0 \$15.99 R Gr. 4-7

A week before the Idaho tests, five eighth-grade nerds (whose initials combine to spell "DWEEB") with distinct skill sets find themselves assembled in Vice Principal Snodgrass' office, facing ludicrous charges that they have stolen two thousand dollars worth of bake-sale money. They've been framed so that Snodgrass can make them an offer they can't refuse: in exchange for not being turned over to the police, they will be confined to a secret room under the school to study extra hard for the tests so that they can get perfect scores and Snodgrass can get promoted to superintendent. At least that's what they think is going on—the actual plot is far more nefarious, involving stolen DNA that can be combined and administered orally through the water, producing ideal students who demonstrate traits of each

of the five in perfect measure. Okay, so the science is beyond silly, but the themes will all resonate; from the anxiety over high-stakes testing to the unfairness of detention-loving vice principals to the hotness of school nurses, this whacks all of the eighth-grade nerd-boy moles. There's even a barking principal, who was the first experiment with the transfer of DNA through the water. For kids reared on Captain Underpants, this will seem comfortably familiar yet much more grownup; the humor is situational rather than slapstick and the plot involves a complex *Mission Impossible*-style adventure sequence that plays to each boy's unique talents. Give this to nerds and non-nerds who are just beginning to be a little bit cynical about their schooling experience. KC

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