

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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★ **The Downside of Being Up.**

Sitomer, Alan Lawrence (Author)

Sep 2011. 224 p. Putnam, hardcover, \$16.99. (9780399254987).

At 13, Bobby suffers from a typical developmental concern: he is plagued by inopportune timed erections. What is atypical is Sitomer's fearless comic treatment of this taboo subject. When not bedeviled by wayward woodies, Bobby also suffers from second-rate parents, a school staff that would give any kid nightmares, and a guilty conscience about how his younger sister came to miss so much school that she's been left a grade behind. When Bobby fails to talk his math teacher out of forcing him to walk up to the board during one of his unwanted episodes, she responds to his tented trousers by taking a tumble. This leaves the school no choice but to hire a counselor named Dr. Cox (yes, really) to provide Bobby with "erection correction counseling." It is impossible to dislike this pun-filled tale of how Bobby reigns victorious over his parents, his pants, and the new girl, whose dad objects to her accompanying Bobby to the school dance. While it isn't (ahem) hard to imagine that some schools will worry about the effects of this story upon innocent middle-schoolers, the truth is that this fiction provides some long-needed realism, served up by a narrator who knows what he is talking about.

— *Francisca Goldsmith*