

T H E B U L L E T I N

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY
AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

LERANGIS, PETER *wtf.* Simon Pulse, 2009 [272p]
Paper ed. ISBN 978-1-4169-1360-3 \$8.99
Reviewed from galley

Ad Gr. 7-10

New Yorkers Cam and Byron convince weak-willed Jimmy to drive them to a suburban party under the pretense that he will get lucky. Really, they are trying to off-load some fake drugs (aspirin, in fact) onto unwary suburbanites to make the cash they need to pay back Waits, a softish high-school-aged small-timer who deals in real drugs and needs to pay off an honest-to-goodness, bodyguarded, black Hummer-driving, New York gangsta. Alas, they never make it: a deer crashes into their car, and since it appears that Cam is dead and Jimmy doesn't have a license and the party is near enough to walk to anyway, Jimmy and Byron abandon the scene—and Cam—after stashing the drugs in the dead deer's mouth. Meanwhile, back in the city, Reina, a girl who somehow knows all of these people and has a cousin who owns a club, gets caught up in Waits' money drop. Complications ensue. This is plot-rich and quirky, with echoes of the Coen brothers and *Weekend at Bernie's*. It's difficult to ascertain the tone, though: there are certainly moments of both high and low comedy, and the entire affair devolves into much ado about nothing, culminating in a light-hearted, what-happened-to epilogue. However, the book often doesn't manage enough distance from the darkness to sustain the humor, and characters themselves aren't finding the funny in car accidents, friends left for dead, being held at gunpoint, muggings, drug deals gone bad, and being menaced by seriously angry, murderous thugs. The result is therefore cognitive dissonance as often as dark absurdity, but readers with a taste for finding the goofiness in the random and seemingly serious may appreciate Jimmy and Byron's elaborate adventures. KC