

by Dominick

In a book which only really attracts English teachers, Paul Fleischman crafts a slow tale of forgiveness and restitution. He uses the experience of Brent to drive in a moral as obvious as a whale falling in one's yard. Forgive. But for that, you need bad decisions.

In the beginning, Brent does several unintelligent things. Brent first goes to a party populated by popular high school students, only to be ridiculed. Brent then drinks himself into near oblivion, an illegal action, and to add to that, he tries to drive home. He has a sudden attack of suicide, and instead racks up a pile of collateral damage.

As a result of this, Brent is sent on a round-country tour to build whirligigs. Brent starts off with a heart heavy as a large bomb, and about as volatile, too. Brent resents going, but soon makes his first. Brent gets happier after each whirligig, and in Florida, he decides to challenge himself with a whirligig more complex than his other two. These whirligigs cause life-changing good to many people, giving a boy relief from his strict instrumental regimen. His next provides relief to a grieving girl and her dying grandmother. His third saves the sanity of a street sweeper, and his last brings happiness to a Maine girl. They went on after the brief window of the book to do what Bill and Melinda Gates would call "real and permanent good."

At the book's end, Brent essentially says "Fie on ye" to his instructions and continues to tour the country until his bus pass runs out. It is likely that his parents, those kind, sheltering people who didn't want him to go in the first place, will not like this. It is probable that Brent will make more whirligigs in this time, too.

In truth, I found the book to not be informative, as it is plain as a rain of fish that it is not good to do as Brent did, and obvious as an octopus falling in your face that actions have consequences, at least

if your father has been drilling it into your head since you were two.