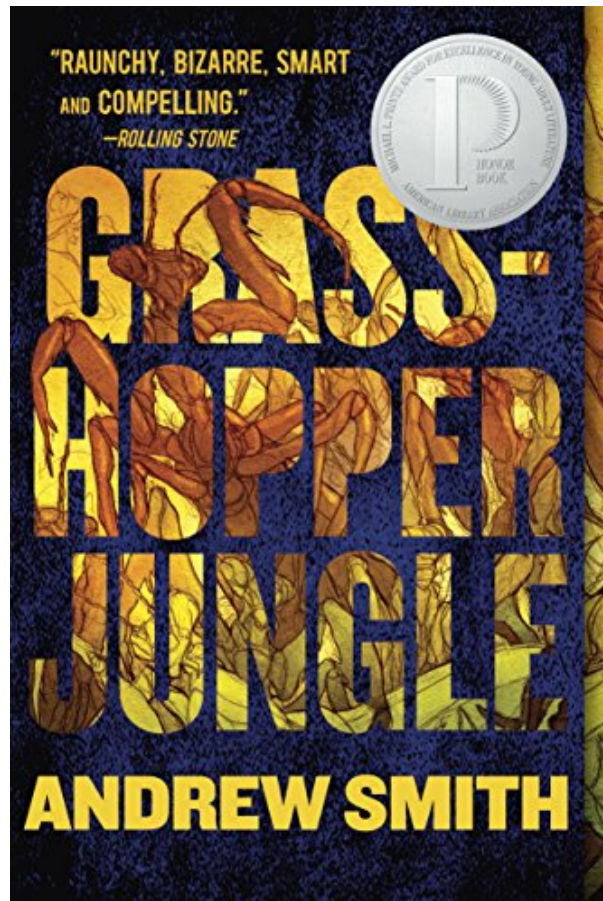
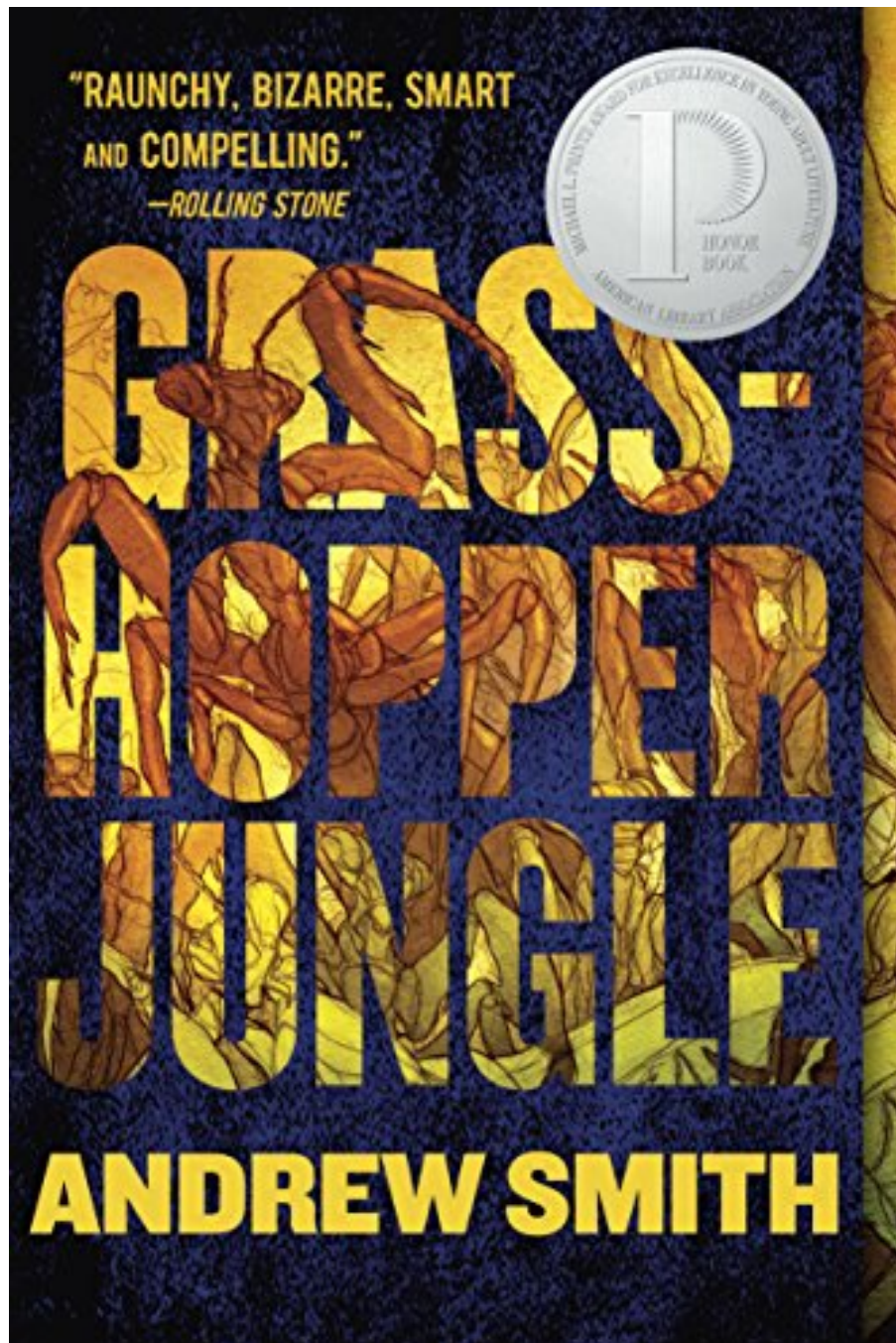


GRASSHOPPER JUNGLE BY ANDREW SMITH



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GRASSHOPPER JUNGLE BY ANDREW SMITH PDF

A 2015 Michael L. Printz Honor Book

Winner of the 2014 Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Fiction

"Raunchy, bizarre, smart and compelling." --Rolling Stone

"Grasshopper Jungle is simultaneously creepy and hilarious. Reminds me of Kurt Vonnegut's in "Slaughterhouse Five," in the best sense." --New York Times Book Review

In the small town of Ealing, Iowa, Austin and his best friend, Robby, have accidentally unleashed an unstoppable army. An army of horny, hungry, six-foot-tall praying mantises that only want to do two things.

This is the truth. This is history.

It's the end of the world. And nobody knows anything about it.

You know what I mean.

Funny, intense, complex, and brave, Grasshopper Jungle brilliantly weaves together everything from testicle-dissolving genetically modified corn to the struggles of recession-era, small-town America in this groundbreaking coming-of-age stunner.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

- Sales Rank: #184463 in eBooks
- Published on: 2014-02-11
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- Format: Kindle eBook

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Others have said it better than me

By Amazon Customer

My copy had some imperfections on the spine but it in no way impacted my enjoyment of the book, which was awesome A+++ best ever thank you Andrew Smith. Probably don't get this book for your ten year old. Maybe not even your fourteen year old.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

One Star

By Sarah Pfarr

I love YA, but this book is too crass. I couldn't finish it.

18 of 21 people found the following review helpful.

Unstoppable giant mantises + unstoppable teen hormones = Unstoppable great read

By Whitt Patrick Pond

Andrew Smith's Grasshopper Jungle is difficult to describe and even more difficult to put down once you start reading it. What it is though is one of the best and most unique things I've read in years. One part teen coming-of-age story, one part gonzo narrative social history, and one part sci-fi end-of-the-world B-movie, complete with mad scientists, secret projects, giant insects and a survival bunker. All that, and it's also got a wickedly dry sense of humor running all through it.

This is the first book I have read by Andrew Smith, so I cannot make a comment on his writing style in general, though if Grasshopper Jungle is in any way indicative of what to expect, I will definitely be reading his other work. The style in Grasshopper Jungle is reminiscent of a number of diverse and unconventional authors, from J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye to Chuck Palahniuk's Fight Club with a good dose of Hunter S. Thompson mixed in for good measure. It's considered a Young Adult read, but it's so much more than that.

The story is told by Austin Szerba, a sixteen-year-old boy growing up in Ealing, Iowa, a small town that is slowly dying due to its main employer closing the factory and transferring all the jobs overseas. Austin's absolute best friend is a boy named Robby Brees, who happens to be gay. Austin's girlfriend is a girl named Shann Collins, whom he constantly dreams about having sex with. And Austin loves them both... and is feeling very, very confused. And as if this angsty teen triangle isn't enough for Austin to have to deal with, the world is coming to an end. Except that, as Austin says, "Nobody knew anything about it."

Smith's style is very subtle but quickly draws you in, and you get Austin's distinctive narrative voice coming at you very clearly from the opening prologue:

"-I read somewhere that human beings are genetically predisposed to record history.

--We believe it will prevent us from doing stupid things in the future.

--But even though we dutifully archived elaborate records of everything we've ever done, we also managed to keep on doing dumber and dumber s***.

--This is my history.

--There are things in here: babies with two heads, insects as big as refrigerators, God, the devil, limbless warriors, rocket ships, sex, diving bells, theft, wars, monsters, internal combustion engines, love, cigarettes, joy, bomb shelters, pizza, and cruelty.

--Just like it's always been."

All of the characters in Grasshopper Jungle are vividly drawn, in no small part because Smith put a lot of thought into their individual backgrounds and into giving them distinct personalities. A lot of this comes through in Austin's obsessions with history, with finding connections in everything, and with telling the truth, recording everything in spiral notebooks, piles of which he keeps in his bedroom closet.

"-Shann and I started going out with each other in seventh grade.

--When I think about it, a lot of stuff happened to us that year.

--There are nine filled, double-sided-paged volumes of Austin Szerba's Unexpurgated History of Ealing, Iowa for that year alone.

--That year, Eric went into the Marines and left me at home, brotherless, with our dog named Ingrid, a rusty golden retriever with a real dynamo of an excretory tract.

--People in Ealing use expressions like real dynamo whenever something moves faster than a growing stalk of corn.

--It was also the same year Robby's dad went to Guatemala to film a documentary about a volcanic eruption. Lots of stuff erupted that year, because Mr. Brees met a woman, got her pregnant, and expatriated to Guatemala.

--And, just like a lot of boys in seventh grade, I started erupting quite frequently then, too.

--A real dynamo.

--And, that year Shannon Collins's mom move to Ealing, enrolled her daughter at Curtis Crane Lutheran Academy (where we were all good, non-smoking, non-erupting Christians), and married Johnny McKeon, the owner of From Attic to Seller Consignment Store and Topsy Cricket Liquors.

--And I fell in love with Shann Collins.

--It was a very confusing time. Id didn't realize then, in seventh grade as I was, that the time, and the eruptions, and everything else that happened to me would only keep getting more and more confusing through grades 8, 9, and 10.

--I will tell you how it was I managed to get Shann Collins to fall in love with me too: My best friend, Robby Brees, taught me how to dance.

--I was infatuated with Shann from the moment I saw her. But, being the new kid at school, and new in Ealing, Shann kept pretty much to herself, especially when it came to such things as eruptive, real dynamo,

horny thirteen-year-old boys

--Robby noticed how deeply smitten I was by Shann, so he selflessly taught me how to dance, just in time for the Curtis Crane Lutheran Academy End-of-Year Mixed-Gender Mixer. Normally, genders were not something that were permitted to mix at Curtis Crane Lutheran Academy.

--So I went over to Robby's apartment every night for two and a half weeks, and we played vinyl records in his room and he taught me how to dance. This was just after Robby and his mother had to move out of their house and into the Del Vista Arms.

--Robby was always the best dancer of any guy I ever knew, and girls like Shann love boys who can dance.

--History does show that boys who dance are far more likely to pass along their genes than boys who don't.

--Boys who dance are genetic volcanoes.

--It made me feel confused, though, dancing alone with Robby in his bedroom, because it was kind of, well, fun and exceptional, in the same way that smoking cigarettes made me feel horny....

--That year, at the end of seventh grade, Robby confessed that he'd rather dance with me than with any girl. He didn't just mean dance. It was very confusing to me. It made me wonder more about myself, whom I doubted, than about Robby, whom I suppose I love.

--At first, I thought Robby would grow out of it -- you know, start erupting like everyone else.

--But there was nothing wrong with Robby's volcano, and he never did grow out of it.

--So it was at the Curtis Crane Lutheran Academy End-of-Year Mixed-Gender Mixer that Robby casually and bravely walked up to the new girl, Shann Collins, and announced to her:

--"My friend Austin Szerba is shy. That's him over there. He is good-looking, don't you think? He's also a nice guy, he writes poetry, he's a really fantastic dancer. He would like very much if you would agree to dance with him."

--And everything, confusing as it was, worked out beautifully for me and Shann and Robby after that."

But it's not all angst-y teen triangle and social history. There is, as I said, a scifi B-movie end-of-the-world scenario going on which is related in Austin's delightfully quirky narrative voice:

"Picture this if you can:

--Robby Brees and I, wearing fur-covered, full-head grimacing lemur masks that helped identify Unstoppables, smoking cigarettes and dressed in matching form-fitting blue-and-white Eden Project jumpsuits, as we carried fully automatic paintball rifles slung over our shoulders. And we were accompanied by a sixty-pound golden retriever that could not bark.

--If we had thought everything out more clearly, we probably would have anticipated the likelihood of being fired upon by real guns and real bullets from my next-door neighbors, Earl Elgin and his teenage son, whose name was Earl Elgin, Jr.

-- Earl Elgin Jr. was fifteen years old; a redheaded Lutheran boy who attended Curtis Crane Lutheran Academy, and fortunately for me and Robby, he and his father were both terrible shots. There were especially terrible shots because they were scared out of their minds after enduring a night-long rampage of six-foot-tall praying mantis beasts with spike-armed claws. And now they had come face-to-face with what they believed could only be alien invader rat boys from Mars....

--"Stay right there and don't move, you mother[expletive]ing rat boys from Mars," Earl Elgin Sr. said.

--He nervously pointed his emptied assault rifle directly at my belly.

--"Dad, we caught us some alien rat f[expletive]s from outer space," EJ added. "Let's shoot them in the balls."

--"Uh," Robby said.

--Both of us had our hands raised in the intergalactic gesture of Please Do Not Shoot Us In The Balls.

All in all, Grasshopper Jungle is a fun, engaging read and totally unlike anything you're likely to have read in years. Highly, highly recommended.

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