

A conversation with the Noodlehead creators, Tedd Arnold, Martha Hamilton, and Mitch Weiss

People of all ages enjoy a good numskull tale—because we’ve all been caught not using our brains at one time or another! When we hear a story in which someone else is the fool, we are reminded that we’re not alone. In our Noodleheads series, we have used some of these traditional tales, often referred to as “noodlehead stories,” as inspiration. In each book, we freely rework and combine parts from a few folktales. For the curious minded, we include an authors’ note detailing the origins of each story from which we’ve borrowed. We hope to show children that anyone can find inspiration in these stories that are as old as the world—and turn them into something as fresh as morning dew.

WHO IS A NOODLEHEAD?

TECHNICALLY, I'M A PASTA. I SHOULD KNOW. I USED TO WASH DISHES AT A RESTAURANT.

NOT I, AHHHHHBVIOUSLY.

PICK ME! PICK ME! WAIT, WHAT ARE WE PLAYING?



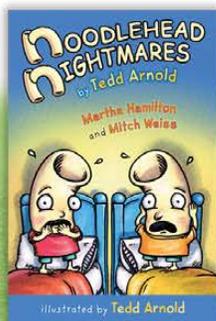
Mitch: As storytellers, we have always loved the “noodlehead” genre. If we say, “We’re going to tell a noodlehead story,” to any group of elementary school children, we always get a big laugh. Before telling one of these stories, we ask our listeners if they have ever done something foolish—and every hand goes up. We also share a silly thing that we have done to make clear that the whole idea of these stories is never to make fun of someone who might not be as smart as you, but rather to laugh at the “noodlehead” in all of us. It would be hard to insult someone by calling them a “noodlehead” because the word itself makes people laugh.

Martha: While doing research, we found *The Book of Noodles* by W. A. Clouston, a scholarly work published in 1888 on the history of these stories. Even the idea that such a book existed was funny! One of the most interesting things about noodle tales is how often the same stories are told in different cultures.

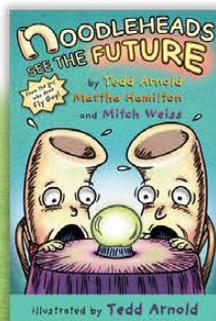
**The stories of Mac and Mac are based on folklore.
What made you decide to tell these stories in comic-book style?**

Tedd: These stories are so hilariously visual. I wanted to capture all the great slapstick images behind the words. The comic-book form is perfect for that. And although these are based on old folktales, I wanted to create a more modern-day context for our readers—to remove the Noodleheads from “the old days” and place them closer to, oh, I don’t know, SpongeBob maybe. The comic-book form does that for me.

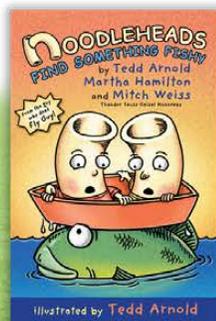
In comic form I am able to depict so many more scenes. A picture book may have one scene—or less— per page but my comic pages often have five or six scenes each. I am also able to depict many, many changes in facial expression. So much humor can be conveyed in a character’s face. And so many action scenes are depicted that fewer words are needed to describe the action. I will confess that the comic form is a lot more work for me, but it was my suggestion so I guess that makes me a noodlehead!



HC: 9780823435661
PB: 978082347689



HC: 9780823436736
PB: 978082344016



HC: 978082343379

NOODLEHEADS

Books by Tedd Arnold,
Martha Hamilton, and Mitch Weiss
Illustrations by Tedd Arnold

#READNOODLEHEADS

HolidayHouse.com/Noodleheads

© 2018 by Tedd Arnold

Reproducible



What do you hope readers learn from the Noodlehead series?

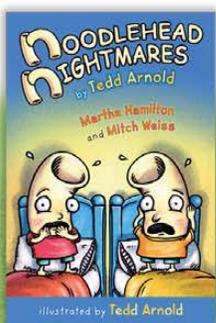
Martha: There is an old expression, “Fortune, that favors fools.” This is certainly true in the classic noodlehead genre of folktales where everything seems to turn out okay for fools in spite of the mistakes they have made. Perhaps this is because noodleheads always are kind and well meaning, so we don’t want to see them punished. For example, in “Jack and the Beanstalk,” he foolishly trades the valuable family cow for a few beans, but the beans turn out to be magical. So one message that we hope kids take away is that it’s okay to make a mistake, and that it will not mean the end of the world. Mistakes are how we learn, after all. And sometimes a mistake will eventually lead to something better—and it would never have happened but for the mistake.

Mitch: Even if Mac and Mac don’t always learn from their mistakes, children who read about their adventures do. Everyone has awakened from a dream and thought, “Was that real? Did that really happen?” However, we quickly realize that it was just a dream—but not the Noodleheads! When we told our original version of *Noodlehead Nightmares* to children, they immediately got the humor in the idea that someone would assume a dream was real. Noodlehead stories help children understand humor, logical thinking, and the importance of distinguishing between what’s true and what is a lie. They quickly see that they should not always believe what they hear, especially when the source is a bully like Meatball.

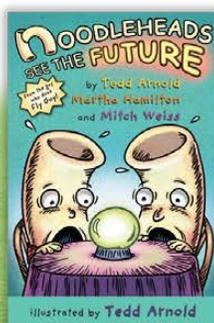
Tedd: My hope with ANY of my books is that young children learn books can be fun and reading is what makes that fun possible.

The activities in this event kit are in the spirit of the Noodlehead series, full of creativity and humor! Thank you for sharing the Noodleheads series with kids everywhere.

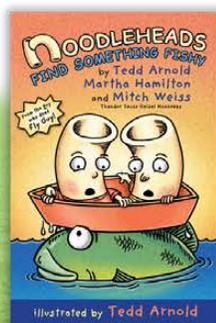
Martha, Mitch, and Tedd



HC: 9780823435661
PB: 978082347689



HC: 9780823436736
PB: 978082344016



HC: 978082343379

Noodleheads

Books by Tedd Arnold,
Martha Hamilton, and Mitch Weiss
Illustrations by Tedd Arnold

#READNOODLEHEADS

HolidayHouse.com/Noodleheads

© 2018 by Tedd Arnold

Reproducible

