

The Mayor of Central Park

Avi

Reviewed by: Deidre Norman, 15

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Field of Dreams meets *The Godfather*—squirrel style! Or rat style depending on whose side you're on. I was on Oscar's side for the most part as he meandered from the neighborhood hangout to his mother's house, setting up the big game and falling in love with the mob boss's daughter along the way. In a nutshell, Oscar's star player is missing and Big Daddy Duds made him that way. Big Daddy Duds' daughter, Maud, goes missing; his second-hand man helped make her that way. On the field of contention, Oscar meets her, falls in love, and has to go to war against her dad to save his home, his neighborhood, and his heart. In the end, good wins over evil with Maud's unexpected assistance.

The sounds of a heavy Brooklyn accent jumped right off the page—you couldn't help but sound (in your head) like a New Yorker from the 1920s as you read this book. The language made it all the more fun. I didn't think it was necessary to have a narrator, but I enjoyed his narration all the same. I liked that a quiet, competent, thinker like Maud ended up saving the day using a skill she didn't care for to help those for whom she did.

I read a lot of books from my school library, my local library, and from my home library when I was in elementary and forward. For this reason, some books that I read in elementary may have been middle school level and vice versa. However, because this book mentions guns and other criminal and violent acts, parents would probably only allow 4th and 5th grade students to read this book. It's in my library at home; we bought it but not as a gift. I think Avi's books are better in groups, because once you read one you'll want to read similar ones. Here's a few more like the Mayor:

Recommended Titles:

The Tale of Despereaux by Kate DiCamillo

The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents by Terry Pratchett

A Rat's Tale by Tor Siedler