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Still one of the immortals of children's literature - Professor Branestawm's continues to amuse generations of young readers.

The wonderfully nutty, fabulously entertaining mishaps of Professor Branestawm. He's madly sane and cleverly dotty. Professor Branestawm is the most absent-minded inventor you'll ever meet and no matter how hard he tries his brilliant ideas never seem to keep him out of crazy scrapes.

The Incredible Adventures of Professor Branestawm Details

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Sue says

Funny stories about the escapades of Professor Branestawm who is an ingenious but incompetent inventor, his housekeeper Mrs Flittersnoop and his best friend Colonel Deadshott.

Cleverly written with lots of puns and silly scenes and a laugh every few seconds.

The illustrations by Heath Robinson are wonderful.

My original copy of this book isn't an edition available on Goodreads, it's from the early 1930's and is rapidly falling to pieces.

Rhonda says

Incredible serendipity! Being a strong bibliophile, just lately (I am a senior) have been acquiring as many children's classics I once knew and loved and re-reading them. I make the rounds weekly of every used bookseller within a few local towns. Having not previously been familiar with Professor Branestawm, and seeing this book in a shop once or twice before, took absolutely no particular notice. Now as a new Goodreads member, I've been scrolling through some reviews of children's books. Imagine my delighted surprise when I read some regarding this one. Returning to the shop in hopes the copy was still available, I pounced upon it and triumphantly made the purchase for fifty cents. Arriving home I devoured it cover to cover (thank goodness it's the weekend) and am happy to confirm what many others have reported---this is a terrifically funny book and Heath Robinson's illustrations, as always, are fantastic. Especially love the libraries' books and the burglar trial. Thanks, Goodreads!

Alan says

Miss Harrison, my temporary teacher in Junior 3 read this to us at the end of the day and I loved every minute of her readings of the whacky professor and his five pairs of spectacles and his coat done up with safety pins and his great inventions. I think Heath Robinson (hang on I'll check - yes) did the illustrations and Wikipedia have reminded me that the Professor invented a clock that didn't need winding up (this was the 30s)- 'but the omission of an important component ("I forgot to put a little wiggly thing in") means the clock doesn't stop at twelve but continues striking thirteen, fourteen and so forth until it can't keep up with itself.' There are many more of these type of inventions.

Ah Miss Harrison. She said I was a good writer (I was 9) and set me up on a project to write a long story (over 10 pages she said but i think I did 30) and had another pupil do the illustrations, another one to bind it and so on. It was a Dr Who story (the Doctor was new then) and she said it was so good she was going to get it published. And then she vanished, after Easter she didn't come back and my MS had disappeared. Scarred me for life. And set me out on the quest to be a published writer. I always wondered what happened to Miss Harrison.

Meo says

Fourteen stories of an absent-minded professor, his madcap inventions and his long-suffering friends, vintage 1930 or thereabouts, and still causing laughter off the scale for today's youngsters. Being mistaken for a living waxwork, inventing a pancake machine and trying to borrow one book from 14 libraries in sequence are just some of the bizarre situations he finds himself in. Still funny after all these years, both boys pronounced it very funny.

Michael says

I read this when I was about 7, so there's not much I remember about it now, some 40-odd years later. However, I *do* remember it so it obviously made a favourable impression on me at the time. Or maybe it's where I was reading it that makes it memorable, as I have a very strong sense of place about this book. I was staying with my Nana at the time and I recall reading it in my makeshift bed, which was a broken lilo at her bedside. Snuggled under a blanket with her pet chihuahua, Mecksie, the light is subdued and I'm comfortable, safe and secure. This is my favourite thing: reading! It's my refuge.

Dorothea says

I've had this book since I was a child and decided to re-read it when I realized that the illustrations are by W. Heath Robinson.

It was lovely to revisit these stories, especially "The Wild Waste-Paper" (Professor Branestawm invents an elixir of life, which the housekeeper, Mrs Flittersnoop, accidentally knocks over into his wastepaper basket), "The Professor Borrows a Book" (the Professor loses the copy of *The Life and Likings of a Lobster* from the library at Great Pagwell; checks out the Little Pagwell library's copy and returns that at Great Pagwell, then checks it out again and loses it; checks out the Upper Pagwell library's copy, and so on until all fourteen Pagwellian libraries are involved), and "Colonel Branestawm and Professor Dedshott" (in which the Professor and his best friend, Colonel Dedshott, are invited to a fancy-dress ball and decide to dress as each other).

I'm not quite sure what I think about Professor Branestawm as a character. He doesn't hold up to much examination! For example, he isn't a professor *of* anything, and he isn't attached (it seems) to any institution. He is simply very learned (but with large spots of ignorance in the places best suited for humor) and spends all of his time "inventing things" at home. Really he is just the popular stereotype of an absent-minded brain, exaggerated even more than usual so that the knowledge he does have is almost completely worthless, and his utter incompetence at most parts of life creates problems which inspire him to invent things that make everything worse in comic ways.

Put that way, Professor Branestawm sounds like the sort of character that makes me cross. I don't like laughing *at* characters and I don't like stereotypes about what science is. But I do like Professor Branestawm. I think it's because the other characters like him, too. Especially Colonel Dedshott (a stereotype in his own way) who persists in thinking of him fondly even though whenever the Professor talks it makes the Colonel's head go round and round.

Also, the Professor's misadventures don't carry the entire weight of the humor. A lot of that is just Norman

Hunter's writing, which is stuck full of unexpected conversational tags and miniature paradoxes. The stories were first broadcast on the Children's Hour, and I would have loved to hear them read out by somebody talented.

(To avoid being reminded of British imperialism, skip "The Professor Invents a Machine" and "Pancake Day at Great Pagwell"; to avoid being surprised by a casual racist epithet, skip "Colonel Branestawm and Professor Dedshott.")

Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance says

How is it that this book has eluded me all my life? It should be in every library in the world. Yes, a worthy choice for 1001 Children's Books You Must Read.

Professor Branestawm (his last name, I learned, is a homophone of the word "brainstorm") is a classic absent-minded professor. The professor spends his days creating amazing inventions like a Spring-Cleaning Machine and an Elixir of Vitality and a Clock-That-Doesn't-Need-Winding, always accompanied by his patient housekeeper Mrs. Flittersnoop and his loyal friend Colonel Dedshot.

I can see movie makers eating this movie up.

A 1001 Children's Books You Must Read Before You Grow Up.

Jon Blake says

These stories possess a lovely logic whereby all the professor's inventions become Frankenstein monsters taking the Professor and Colonel Dedshott to places they would rather not go: I still have my battered old copy from the Sixties which I treasure as my favourite book from junior school days. Norman Hunter has certainly influenced my own writing, particularly my short stories where processes of degeneration abound. I wouldn't say Professor Branestawm is likely to greatly enrich anyone's emotional life, but for sheer fun and inventiveness these stories stand up there with the best children's books.

Ana Rînceanu says

The zany sense of humor really stood out in this delightful read for all.

Henry says

Not one for me in particular. I found the stories a little outdated and the slightly odd language he used at times made it distracting to follow.

Alice says

Re-reading for a fanfic project. I had forgotten quite what a wizard of silliness Norman Hunter was, and how he can be hilariously funny using simple, childsize words and sentences.

GaiasWonderland says

I've finished this book over a month ago but I still remember how utterly silly this Professor Branestawm is! He gets into all sorts of misadventures and troubles - all of them crazy, weird and hilarious - but at the end always gets out of them.

He's a silly, funny and wacky character who is (almost) always working on new inventions.

Then there is his housekeeper Mrs. Flittersnoop who tries to help the Professor but she doesn't know that she's not actually helping him at all but making things worse.

The Professor's friend Colonel Dedshott also comes into most of the stories who really adores the Professor but doesn't half understand what he's saying most of the time.

This book was definitely fun even though it took me sometime to finish it.

Overall I recommend this book to people who enjoyed The Magic Pudding, Pippi Longstocking and Alice in Wonderland. They all have a wacky sense of humour and adventures.

Amber Scaife says

Professor Branestawm is an absent-minded inventor who has five different pairs of glasses (at the same time) and gets into all sorts of crazy situations.

This one didn't do much for me. It seems like a bedtime story that a parent is making up haphazardly as he goes along, without much thought invested and while trying too hard to be silly.

Aljaž Podgornik says

I just couldn't get into this book. I didn't find it funny, I didn't like the characters, I found it too random and I felt like I was wasting my time. I cannot say if all of the stories are like this, but because I have given up after the 3. story I can only rate this book a 1 star (reserved for books I didn't want to finish).

Yorky Caz says

I know this is a kiddies book but it was v entertaining!

Ludmila Marton says

4.5 stars. I cannot believe what a jewel of a book I have discovered. Very imaginative, charming and funny read. The writing style is perfection.

Clinton Smith says

I read this first as a small boy and have not ceased to dip into it with great joy, despite my now considerable age.

Norman Hunter wrote many books about the Professor but this is his first and greatest appearance. *Branestawm*, aided by the brilliant Heath Robinson illustrations, is a children's delight that deserves to sit just a little south of *The Wind in the Willows* and *Alice in Wonderland*.

The addle-pated professor is an inventive genius. He can knock up everything from a burglar catcher to an endlessly convoluted pancake maker. But his inventions always have consequences far beyond their simple purpose. He is aided by his long-suffering housekeeper, Mrs Flittersnoop and his indomitable and bumptious friend, Colonel Dedshott of the Catapult Caviliers.

Inimitable.

Helen says

As sometimes happens, a random conversation at work about lost glasses led to me talking about a book I'd read at school MANY years ago. I never forgot daft old Prof Branestawm and his five pairs of glasses, including one pair to help him find the other four. Maybe it was just the rose-colored hue of nostalgia, but I remembered having enjoyed the stories - first read to the class by a favorite teacher, then re-read for myself. The conversation led me to look up Branestawm on the library catalogue, to find that only two titles were available - both from reserve store. I requested them and have been reading the short stories at the bus stop on the way to and from work.

They are most definitely dated. The story of the lost library books could NOT happen today, with every copy having its own unique bar code and number.

But they are still fun.

The original absent-minded nutty Professor, Branestawm is delightfully silly, Deadshott is pompous, Flittersnoop is flighty.

It is a slice of the past, and I'm glad I revisited it.

Jemima Pett says

I love the theory of Professor Branestawm - the nutty professor who gets into all sorts of scrapes when his inventions go wrong. The inventions, brought to life so beautifully by Heath Robinson, more or less lived up to my expectations. I don't know whether I'm a little jaded, or I really have lost my humor mojo, but I found some of the stories mildly amusing, more of them irritating, and a couple, just a couple, had me laughing out loud.

There are 14 incredible adventures, and I laughed at the Pancake one (partly because I love pancakes and would have loved a machine making them for me - so would my mum, I reckon) and the Too-many

Professors, which was a wonderful confection of chaos I could really imagine. I also delighted in no.3 The Professor Borrows a Book. I suspect the intricacies of the library system described would be lost on today's youngster, since libraries are under threat, and the thought of each village having its own library is just a pipe-dream. We still have a mobile library in our rural area, which you have to be ready for on the right day of the month for the right half hour when it is scheduled to be in the village! Otherwise it's a bus to the main library in the city, although there is one attached to a school in a nearby town. I digress. But the Professor's principle of getting a copy of the same book out of one library in order to check it back into a different one is not unlike the way some people use credit cards, so I expect people will relate to it.

I kept wondering whether the book is too dated for the modern MG reader. Frankly, I was surprised that it is given a 9+ reader designation, since I felt the stories were suitable for six and upwards. Some of the words are quite long, and there is a lot of reflective narrative that is eminently suitable for a bedtime story, but I'm not sure how well it would be received by a young reader. I will give my copy to a friend of the right age and ask for feedback. He's already read it, I expect!

The quote from Charlie Higson on the front cover "Can still make a modern kid laugh like a drain" is something I bear in mind. Charlie Higson writes hugely popular kids books featuring vampires and seriously messy stuff. I assume he knows what a modern kid laughs at. It's just that I can easily put four words in front of that quote, which makes more sense to me. Those are: "I wonder if it" .

No, I'm being too hard. The plots are ridiculous in the slapstick tradition and very clever. The names of people, places and organisations are full of delightful puns. It is beautifully written. And I laughed out loud at some of them. What more do you want?

Helen says

Loved this... with several exceptions. The first chapter "The Professor Invents A Machine" has the Professor & his friend Colonel Dedshott killing off people for a bit of sport. Then there is a cracking racist slur in Chapter 11 "Colonel Branestawm and Professor Dedshott", as well as some other sexist & racist comments in Chapters 12 & 13 ("The Professor Moves House" & "Pancake Day At Great Pagwell").

But don't let that turn you away! As a read aloud, this is fantastic as these are great stand-alone stories (perfect pre-bed!) & the offending sections can be omitted with no impact on the narrative. Well worth seeking out.

(I would have given a much higher star rating, but the dated attitudes really jarred. I know I'm probably causing plenty of tut-tutting amongst purists, but I can only base my rating on a contemporary reading. Sorry.)
