

Will at the Battle of Gettysburg 1863

By Laurie Calkhoven

The second book in the Boys of Wartime Series is an exciting novel based on historical fact and an excellent read for the middle grade male reader. William Joseph Edmonds, Will for short, is 12-years old and lives in the quiet town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He has been left at home to be the man of the household as his older brother is off fighting the Confederate rebels and his doctor father is off tending the Union wounded. Will who wants to play a part in the war is excited to see all the soldiers advancing towards Gettysburg, but as the battles breaks out he finds out that war is not glamorous and death is not pretty. Will's home is set up as a temporary hospital and his mother sets to helping the injured soldiers. When Will finds a Union soldier hiding in their wash house he devises a plan to help the officer through the enemy line only he soon finds himself in one of the biggest battles of the war. This civilian eye view of the Battle of Gettysburg describes many details not found in other volumes concerning civilian life during war times. Calkhoven has done extensive research on the time period and created an attention grabbing novel. She has added notes, a timeline of the war, glossary, and further reading to conclude the book. Written for 5th grade and up anyone with an interest in the Civil War will find the book a "good" read.

Pat Thompson, WSC

Fleabag

By Helen Stephens

This the sweet story of a dirty puppy that no one loves who finds a boy and earns his home protecting him from himself. The illustrations are wonderful and the story is one every child can relate to. This is recommended for preschool and early elementary children and could be a fun addition to any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Don't Spill the Beans!

By Ian Schoenherr

This is a fun book that follows the old game of "Telephone" (sharing secrets down the line). This book is a fun rhyming book with lots of new animals to learn and it has a fun surprise ending. This book also introduces figures of speech called idioms that have to do with telling secrets.

Recommended for preschool and early elementary kids, this would be a great addition to any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Alfie Runs Away

By Kenneth M. Cadow

This is the very realistic story of a little boy who is being stubborn about giving up his too small shoe, and ends up solving the problem by running away only to decide that he can do what his mother says with a happy heart. A great book for Pre-K to early Elementary students to listen to and learn from. Suggested for any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

The Usborne Book of Famous Paintings

By Rosie Dickens

This is a great book for elementary students (on up) who want to get a good overview of traditional and modern art. There is just enough information (a page or two) on each painting that the children can learn something of the painter, his style and basic art concepts. This would inspire many young artists and would be wonderful in any collection. Recommended as a great basic book to have on hand in a personal collection for kids studying at home.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Crossing: How George Washington saved the American Revolution

By Jim Murphy

This book tells about the Revolutionary War and General Washington from the time he became general to the end of the war. It has lots of well known illustrations, photos and maps. The reading level is not too difficult and is broken up into good sized chapters for younger readers. This book is recommended for intermediate elementary readers—especially those who love this period of history. This is a great book for any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE (with the help of Isaiah Reid, 3rd grade)

Thunder from the Sea

By Jeff Weigel

This is the comic book style story of a boy who is aboard the HMS Defender, a British Navy vessel, during the war with Napoleon. It's a great way to interest kids in history and whet their appetite for more difficult and detailed history study.

This book is recommended for intermediate grade readers and would be a good book for any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE (with the help of Isaiah Reid, 3rd grade)

Pick Your Path: Race to the Rumble

By Tracey West

I did not like this book very much because you have to read a page or two and then turn to the back of the book to finish what you were reading. This book is recommended for fourth grade and up at any library. I liked what the wrestlers had to say to the rookies trying out for a spot.

The Ultimate Guide to the WWE

By Jake Black

I loved every page of this book. I liked the way it named the wrestlers and had all the information on them, and their families. Most of them came from wrestling in the family- their dads. I would say there is no certain age group, this book is for everyone! I recommend this book for both school and public libraries. This book includes great pictures of the men and women in the WWE and all the facts, I found that very interesting.

The Night before Preschool

By Natasha Wing

A cute story in rhyming form with text based on "The Night before Christmas" tell of little Billy who is shy and nervous about going to preschool. As the events of the first day of school progress Billy soon finds that he had a great time and is excited about coming back the next day. Amy Wummer's illustrations are colorful and full of detail and will lend the reader and listener to some meaningful conversation.

Written for 3 years and up this book would be useful for parents getting their children ready to start school.

Pat Thompson WSC

Bear with Me

By Max Kornell

Owen's world is turned upside down, when his parents bring home a bear named Gary, without even asking his opinion! Because of Gary, things break, messes happen, and he snores! However as the days progress Owen soon sees Gary as an asset that makes playing better and Owen can soon say surprises are OK. A story written for 3 years olds and up will be a good volume to have if there is to be a change in the family membership. Many colorful pictures add to the simplistic text of the book.

Pat Thompson WSC

Goyangi Means Cat

By Christine McDonnell

Soo Min from Korea is now living in her new American home with her new American family and she is lonesome. As she teaches her new parents Korean words and they teach her English words, she also struggles with unfamiliar surroundings, but finds comfort in the family cat that she calls Goyangi. When Goyangi disappears for a day Soo Min is heartsick, but that soon turns to joy when the cat reappears and life at home gets more comfortable. Large colorful illustrations containing Korean word fill the pages along with the simple text. Written for preschool and up this story will help others understand some of the struggles a child goes through when familiar surroundings change.

Pat Thompson WSC

Take me to the River

By Will Hobbs

Dylan Sands who is fourteen-years-old has just come all the way from North Carolina to Texas to canoe down the Rio Grande River with his uncle and cousin, Rio. As soon as Dylan gets off the bus in Alpine, changes start happening to the carefully planned trip. Dylan first has to hitchhike 80 miles south to the ghost town where his relatives live. Soon he finds out that his uncle has taken a month job in Alaska which leaves the boys home alone. The boys decide they can make the trip by themselves with a canoe and raft so they raid the home pantry, gather their trusty guidebook and get a friend to drop them off at the slow moving river. As they start out they are warned that a hurricane may be coming to shore in area surrounding the river and also they are dropped information from a Black Hawk helicopter that there are dangerous men in the area and to be cautious. Rio soon confesses that he has only traveled part the way on the river but is confident that they can make the trip. The river trip takes many twists and turns and is an excellent adventure story filled with many canoeing terms. Hobbs has a way of writing that makes the reader feel they are sitting in the canoe helping paddle. The fast pace story will keep 5th graders and up flipping the pages until the very end. Will the boys make it down the storm filled river? Will their unexpected guests be friendly? What will their parents think when they find out what that have done? All these questions will be answered in Hobbs' great river adventure.

Pat Thompson WSC

Baby Shower

By Jane Breskin Zalben

Zoe wants a pet so bad. She helps out with her aunt's baby shower but incorporates her love for a pet into it. I think the book's ending was a perfect one. This book is recommended for preschoolers and in a public library. Baby animals are cute and so this book's illustrations are adorable.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Last Night

By Hyewon Yum

For a book with no words you understand the story. The little Korean girl doesn't want to eat her dinner. She is sent to her room to bed. With her stuffed bear she has a dream of going with him to the forest. Her adventure starts out fun but soon turns dark, cold, and scary and she wishes for home. She wakes up and all is ok and she's glad to see her mom again. This book is recommended for preschoolers - 1st grade and in both school and public libraries. This book had some interesting pictures. I think many kids go through a time of wishing for something else only to find out they are right where they want to be.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Zoomer

By Ned Young

Zoomer is playful and energetic who is always busy thinking up and creating adventures. He has a huge imagination and his brothers think he's crazy at times. The dad is doing his best trying to get them ready and off to school, only to find out Zoomer was right about not going to school today. This book is recommended for preschoolers – 2nd grade and in both school and public libraries. This book's pictures are so colorful and detailed. You can find funny things on each page if you look long enough. The pups remind me of many boys I know!

Amanda Hank, WSC

Super Babies on the Move

By Salina Yoon

This book is two stories in one. Mai has an adventure before naptime and Max has an adventure before bath time. This book is recommended for toddlers - preschoolers and in a public library. This book has a special feature of each story and is told from a different end of the book and upside down to each other to not get them mixed up. Clever! This is an interesting baby adventure. Not too real but very young kids would enjoy having it read to them.

Amanda Hank, WSC

The Mud Fairy

By Amy Young

Emmalina is a fairy trying to find her gift to earn her wings as a fairy. She tried many things the other fairies were doing to earn their wings. But she was different and had no luck with those tasks. She loved playing with the frogs and getting muddy unlike the other fairies that stayed clean and perfect mannered. But in the end, being just who she was became her gift to get her wings and everyone relished in it.

This book is recommended for Kindergarten – 2nd grade and in both school and public libraries. I enjoyed reading this book. Emmalina seemed like a “tomboy” fairy and that is easy for many girls to relate to. It also shows that not everyone has to have the same likes and characteristics to get the same reward. Good Story.

Amanda Hank, WSC

The Invisible Man

By Arthur Yorinks

Sy Kravitz had a fruit stand and loved giving fruit to people to help them heal whatever was ailing them. He knew all the tricks of fruit and many people came to Sy for help. One day though Sy becomes invisible and people are not sure about him being able to help them anymore when he can't help himself. No one Sy went to could figure out how to make a cure to make him visible again. Sy turned angry and starting taking advantage of his invisibility. But then he got blamed for many things he didn't do and Sy became wanted. Sy went to jail for things he didn't do and then just when all hope was lost, he becomes visible again. He reopens his fruit stand to help people once more. This book is recommended for 1st – 2nd grade and in both school and public libraries. This is kind of a kooky story and I'm not sure I'd read it to my kids. The newspaper headlines were entertaining but otherwise I did not think the story was very good.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Homework

By Arthur Yorinks

This is a weird little story of a boy who never seems to do his homework so one night after he falls asleep his pens, pencil, and eraser come alive and try to write a story for school for him. None of them can agree or get along on how the story should be written. When a story is finally written the boy reads it, throws it away, and writes his own story anyways. This book is recommended for 1st – 3rd grade and in a public library. Not sure the name calling and arguing the pens, pencil, and eraser do with each other is appropriate or teaches anyone good manners so that's why I opted to have it left out of school libraries. I really didn't care for this story.

Amanda Hank, WSC

My Uncle Emily

By Jane Yolen

Gib and his Uncle Emily, who is really his aunt, have a very special relationship. She often writes poems for him and passes them along with a dead bee. Something just the two of them understand. One day she passes him a poem he is to take to his teacher to have read to the class. It is a confusing poem and he's worried what will be said about her or the poem. By chance he does defend Uncle Emily to an older classmate, Jonathan, and they are both punished for their actions. Jonathan writes a nice thank you to Uncle Emily for the poem as does the rest of the class. The story of Gib defending Uncle Emily comes out, in partial at first, then in whole. Gib learns a good lesson again from Uncle Emily and her poetry. This book is recommended for 3rd – 6th grade and in both school and public libraries. I enjoyed this story, even more so since it was about real people and a real occurrence. Gib calling his aunt Uncle Emily is unique and wonderful.

Amanda Hank, WSC

The Trucker

By Barbara Samuels

A little boy, Leo, only has one thing on his mind at all times- Trucks! He loved playing with them, looking at real ones, and reading books of them. His mom tried to get his thoughts on a pet cat. That didn't work so well, at first. When there was no avoiding the cat, things changed and they became partners. This book is recommended for preschool-Kindergarten and in both school and public libraries. This was a cute story. The pictures are real and detailed and I enjoyed looking at all the little details on each page.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Which Way to Witch School?

By Scott Santoro

Young witches gather together to go off to Miss Thornapple's Witch School. They learn all the important things that make a witch great and they have many fun witch adventures. They then depart but they will be back the next year. This book is recommended for Kindergarten – 2nd grade and in both school and public libraries. This book's consistent 4 story lines at a time that also rhyme add to its character of witches and spells. This is an enjoyable story with colorful and fun illustrations.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Time for Bed Baby Ted

By Debra Sartell

Ted's dad tries many times to put him to bed. Ted wants his dad to guess what he is instead. Ted pretends to be many different animals as he accomplished his tasks of getting ready for bed. He does eventually end up in bed too! This book is recommended for toddlers – Preschool and in a public library. It is an adorable story to read to toddlers at bedtime. They will like all the animal sounds and recognize the tasks of getting ready for bed.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Dog and Bear

By Laura Vaccaro Seeger

This book has three stories about a Dog and a Bear. They are friends and seem to look out for each other. Dog seems to be daring and energetic and Bear seems to be the smarter more organized one. But they work well together. This book is recommended for preschool-Kindergarten and in both school and public libraries. It is a silly story and I think little kids will enjoy it.

Amanda Hank, WSC

What if?

By Vaccaro Seeger

A story with few words and many pictures that need interpretation. In the story there are three seals and one ball. The story could go many ways, but thankfully it goes the best way in the end. This book is recommended for Kindergarten-2nd grade and in both school and public libraries. This wouldn't be a fun story for pre-school age children cause instead of a story that would be read to them it's a story they'd have to or the story reader would have to interpret to them.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Far Far Away!

By John Segal

Pig gets in trouble from throwing things out of the grocery cart so he's no longer allowed to ride. He pouts and says he's going to run far, far away. They talk of everything he's going to take and how he will get there. His mom listens and asks questions while she bakes a cake. After he's all done she mentions the cake and how he's going to miss out. That's enough for Pig to get out of his running away mood and realize he has everything he needs right at home. This book is recommended for preschool-Kindergarten and in both school and public libraries. It was a cute story. I can see many kids relating. Getting angry and wanting to run away then realizing it would be better to stay home.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Pirates Don't Take Bath

By John Segal

Pig pretends to be many different people to get out of taking a bath. His mom reminds him of one not so good characteristic of each thing and he keeps changing to something different. In the end she gets him to pretend to be someone who does end up in the water. This book is recommended for toddlers-Kindergarten and in both school and public libraries. Most kids like baths but there are some that don't. This would be a good book to read a young child to get him motivated for a bath. Lots of imagination in this read!

Amanda Hank, WSC

Tickety Tock

By Jason Robert Brown

Schmuel was rushed to grow up and work, work! That is what he did, ignoring other things that might make him even happier. One night a magical clock sees he needs a second chance to be truly happy and turns back the time. Will Schmuel ignore it or take the chance for a happier time? This book is recommended for Kindergarten-1st grade and in both school and public libraries. Makes people think about how they need to slow down in life and make more important moments happen before they are too late.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Vampire Boy's Good Night

By Lisa Brown

Bela the vampire is friends with Morgan the witch. They go off one night in search of real children. Morgan says they don't exist but Bela says they do. They come across a Halloween party of children but they are all dressed in costume so they think those children are just like them. Only when it's late and the party is ending do costumes come off and Morgan sees that children do exist! This book is recommended for Kindergarten-1st grade and in both school and public libraries. This is a cute story with cute illustrations.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Snowmen All Year

By Caralyn Buehner

This little boy wants his snowman around all year round. He doesn't want him to melt. He wants to take him to the fireworks, the zoo, an amusement park, trick or treating. He wants to teach him how to swim, play his favorite game, and fly a kite. This boy wants his snowman to be his best friend. Will his snowman be the one to stay all year? This book is recommended for Kindergarten-1st grade and in both school and public libraries. This reminds me of the frosty the snowman story. Because those kids loved Frosty and always wanted him to be there through all weather.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush

By Jane Cabrera

A little Dalmatian pup does many tasks with the story, telling it in a familiar song type of way. This book is recommended for toddler-preschool and in a public library. A special feature is this book uses a family song as the base to tell a story. I think it was be fun to read to young children and they'd like saying the words out loud with you.

Amanda Hank, WSC

One, Two, Buckle My Shoe

By Jane Cabrera

A little bunny does many tasks with the story, telling it in a familiar song type of way. This book is recommended for Preschool -Kindergarten and in both school and public libraries. The familiar nursery rhyme one, two, buckle my shoe with an added 10 numbers and sayings. Small kids would like to read along with this and find the chicks on every page!

Amanda Hank, WSC

Small Fry

By Jaime Adoff

Many short poems of many different young kids' points of view on wanting to be bigger and why. Some tell of themselves being small and those benefits. All these short stories hit home to many. Some want to be big to see better in the movie theatre, some to avoid bullies, or to ride certain rides others like being small to sneak places and dodge balls. This book is recommended for 2nd - 6th grades and in both school and public libraries. I can relate to this book and see my children relating to it. It is a good read for those kids on the small side. It will also let them see it's ok to be who they are! Small packages are just as amazing!

Amanda Hank, WSC

Big Rabbit's Bad Mood

By Ramona Badescu

Big Rabbit had a very bad mood. He tried many things to get it to go away. But his bad mood just continued to hang out with him and grew bigger. He wondered where his friends were. He tried calling a friend and his mom. He tried watching TV, eating, and listening to music. Nothing would make his bad mood leave. Finally the doorbell rang and it was all his friends and his mom! They came with gifts and a pancake cake because it was Big Rabbit's birthday and he had forgotten! That certainly helped his bad mood leave. This book is recommended for 1st - 2nd grades and in both school and public libraries. It was a good story because it showed many ways to try to get a bad mood to go away. Helpful!

Amanda Hank, WSC

Mimi

By Carol Baicker-McKee

Mimi has a pet bug whose name is Frank. One morning Frank didn't show up to eat his banana smidge. Frank was missing. But Mimi still has to go to school with bunny. She does all her daily activities still wondering where Frank could be. When she gets home that night, she does things to keep her happy still wondering about Frank. That night when Mimi gets ready for bed Frank makes his appearance! This book is recommended for K-1st grades and in both school and public libraries. This is an OK story. Could be fun to read to kids and have them guess where they think Frank is.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Panda & Polar Bear

By Matthew J. Baek

Panda and Polar Bear lived in two different places. One day Polar Bear got too curious and close to the snow cliff and ended up sliding down into Panda's land. He fell in so much he looked like Panda. They had a great day playing and soon Polar Bear showed his true self. Panda still liked him and helped him get home. This book is recommended for Pre K-1st grades and in both school and public libraries. This is a cute story of two similar yet different bears. I enjoyed it.

Amanda Hank, WSC

The Mitten

By Jim Aylesworth

There was a boy whose grandma knitted him a set of mittens, hat, and scarf. He went out to play in the snow and when he was done he realized he had lost a mitten. During the night many animals found the mitten and wanted to keep warm in it. The mitten could only stretch so big before it popped! The next day when the boy and his grandma went out in search of the lost mitten they found just pieces of yarn. So the Grandmother knitted the boy a new mitten. This book is recommended for Preschool-1st grades and in both school and public libraries. A special feature of the book is the use of the same lines from the animals of them asking to get in the mitten and being told no or yes. I enjoyed the story when all the animals piled in the mitten.

Amanda Hank, WSC

Headlong

By Kathe Koja

Lily Nobel, as her mom before her, has always attended Vaughn. This year as a sophomore she is boarding for the first time. Hazel Tobias arrives on the scene as a scholarship student. She is a rebel with an unusual family who doesn't fit in. Lily sees in Hazel all of the things she finds missing in her own life. They soon become fast friends and Lily starts to see things in a different light. This book is recommended for 9th grade and up and has an AR level of 5.9. The story bounces back and forth between the present and the past, which can be confusing.

Diane Limoges

Saxby Smart Private Detective in The Treasure of Dead Man's Lane and other Case Files

By Simon Chesire

Saxby Smart is on the case once again. Charlie Foster's brother has had his valuable comic stolen from the wall safe. Saxby is there to solve the mystery. Saxby may claim not to have a sidekick but his friends Izzy and Muddy are always there to give him a helping hand. The reading level is 3rd- 5th grade; the mystery level is only about 1st or 2nd grade level it seems hard to believe that the reader will be truly entertained. There are much better and more entertaining writers out there. Don't waste your time on this title.

Diane Limoges

Jet Set

By Carrie Karasyov and Jill Kargman

Lucy Peterson is tired of bouncing from school to school every time her army dad is transferred. Using her talent as a tennis player she applies for a scholarship to Van Pelt Academy in Switzerland. Now she must find a way to fit in with royalty and the elite in general. Lucy must struggle with what is right and what is wrong when she discovers her only friend at school isn't who she appears to be. The AR level for this book is 5.1, and the subject level is recommended for 8th grade on up. This is a pretty juvenile book written about high school subjects; it isn't a great read but it will keep the young reader entertained

Diane Limoges

King of Ithaka

By Tracy Barrett

Sixteen-year-old Telemachos has never known his father, Odysseus, as he had left for the Trojan War when Telemachos was only a baby. But he always hoped and prayed for his father's return. Accompanied by Brax, a centaur, and Polydora, his best friend's sister, Telemachos sets off on his quest to find Odysseus. On his ocean voyage, he is beset by sea creatures and dishonorable kings and princes. Throughout his harrowing travels, he learns what it means to be a friend and a king, and on his return what his father was really like. This book is recommended for grades 6-8 and any library collection. This tale is based on characters in Greek mythology and was interesting and fun to read. It's full of adventure and introduces readers to some of the creatures found in mythology. Boys might find this a little more interesting than girls, but for anyone who likes mythology; it was a hard book to put down.

Deb Daehnke

Darkwood

By M.E. Breen

Annie runs away from her cruel aunt and uncle seeking refuge in the forest where the "kinderstalks" live. She fears she will not live the night as many people have been taken by the "kinderstalks". Through her journey she learns the "kinderstalks" aren't what she thought they were. She begins to realize her special powers and they help her to survive, and find her sister that she thought was dead. Most surprisingly of all, she learns who she really is and how she will be able to help others with her new found powers. This book is recommended for grades 6-8 and for any library collection. This is a great fairy tale. I think both boys and girls would enjoy this book. Mystery, resourcefulness and coming-of-age are all rolled into this wonderful adventure. It's fun to read a book where the main character is strong and resilient, especially when that character is a young girl.

Deb Daehnke