Student Reviews

Kimberly Burke
Jenny Young
Karen Crockett
Rodney Shaw
J. David Neal

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Burke, Kimberly; Young, Jenny; Crockett, Karen; Shaw, Rodney; Neal, J. David; Pagley, Paige L.; Stone, Linda B.; Tate, Julie H.; and Everett, Jessica (1993) "Student Reviews," Children's Book and Media Review: Vol. 14 : Iss. 4 , Article 5.
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol14/iss4/5
Student Reviews

**Authors**
Kimberly Burke, Jenny Young, Karen Crockett, Rodney Shaw, J. David Neal, Paige L. Pagley, Linda B. Stone, Julie H. Tate, and Jessica Everett

This book review is available in Children's Book and Media Review: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol14/iss4/5
Student Reviews


A 5-6  FI

Reviewed by Kimberly Burke

On a fairly ordinary night, eleven-year-old Jessica is helping her little brother Tycho make a sign for his room. Her mother is looking at wallpaper for the new house, and her father decides to go out for a jog and to pick up some ice cream for the family. Things change drastically, however, when the family receives a phone call telling them that the father has been hit by a car. Jessica can’t believe it; she won’t believe it. The man at the funeral isn’t talking about her dad and she knows it. Certain that her father is still alive and determined to find him, Jessica takes Tycho on a journey through the large state park to their old house in Old Minesville. After all, where else would Daddy go but to the house where he grew up? In the end, Jessica doesn’t find her father; instead, she finds some tender memories and comes to a peaceful acceptance of his death.

The fact that Jessica will not initially accept her father’s death is frustrating, but this book expresses some realistic feelings of denial that many children feel after the death of a loved one. The book is valuable in validating these feelings, and it may help children to work through their own feelings and to accept death as a natural process. With the exception of some details of the children’s journey, the book is realistic and even touching.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦


A+ 7-12  FI

Reviewed by Jessica Everett

Fourteen-year-old Amy’s life has gotten a little messy. Her favorite cousin, Shelly, is dead; and Amy struggles to deal with the loss that the adults around her can’t even accept. Amy’s Hollywood father is moving her family all the way across the country from New York to Los Angeles, and to make everything worse, she seems to be losing her best friend. She escapes by going
roller skating in Central Park. There she is drawn into a magic kingdom that has been created by a bully from her past, Kevin Malone. He has escaped his painful real world and created a reality of his own. In his kingdom, the Fayre Farre, he is the hero, the Promised Champion, but the evil White Warrior has been strengthening his forces, and Kevin is losing control. Now he needs the help of Amy and her friends to regain his throne.

This book is for anyone, young or old, who has ever imagined another world or has ever dreamed of castles and magic swords and cryptic riddles. It is for anyone who has ever looked for secret, hidden passageways. I loved this book because it is a fantastic tale of magic and adventure; it is precisely the kind of book that sparked in me a passion for reading at a young age—the kind of book that made me love words. It sensitively addresses the issues of coping with a loved one’s death, child abuse, and friendship, while teaching about imagination, memories, and forgiveness.


Reviewed by Julie H. Tate

Sookan is a fifteen-year-old refugee who lives in Pusan, Korea, during the Korean War. She is not only a refugee, but she is also an adolescent girl who faces the problems that are typical of adolescence. She has been separated from her father and three older brothers since she and her mother and younger brother fled from Seoul. Although she longs to return to Seoul and be reunited with her family members, she creates a life for herself in Pusan and is determined to make the best of her situation.

This book deals with a situation that is foreign to many of today’s youth, but it also deals with the familiar problems of adolescence. Sookan finds herself having to help her best friend through the death of her parents, helping to build a school in Pusan, and experiencing romance for the first time. She continues to feel and dream and think while the war rages on, swallowing up many of her loved ones. Yet she dreams on, a resilient human being, and learns and grows. Sookan is a free-thinker in a strict society, and whether she ever really overcomes that is questionable. This story also reflects the role of women in Korean society and Sookan’s life as she becomes a woman.

B 7-9 FI

Reviewed by Linda B. Stone

Seth Barham, a high school baseball player, tells how he first met and became best friends with Jimmy Winter. From sixth grade to high school, both boys live for baseball. Seth comes to realize that no matter how he tries, he will never be a gifted ball player like Jimmy or his baseball idols. Determined, however, to become "the best lousy baseball player" he can, he earns a position on the varsity team. He also learns valuable lessons about life, family conflicts, and superstition as he strives to do his best.

The book is enjoyable and easy to read, but those who are not familiar with baseball might find the action hard to follow. Sports fans, on the other hand, will enjoy the exciting baseball action. Characters are well developed, and much can be learned through Seth's experiences. The problem of alcohol abuse on Seth's team is addressed, but no mention is made of chewing tobacco, drugs, and the gang-related issues that face today's athletes.

★★★★


A 7-9 FI

Reviewed by Paige L. Pagley

Ever since Gary can remember, Uncle Rob has been his hero. Uncle Rob was the father Gary never had. Gary's admiration for his Uncle Rob is shaken when he discovers that his uncle is dying of AIDS. As his Uncle Rob battles the disease, Gary must also battle his feelings of anger against his Uncle Rob for having AIDS.

Gary experiences denial and anger before he is finally able to accept that his hero has AIDS. Then he begins to question how Rob contracted the disease and he learns that his uncle is gay. This leads Gary to question his own sexuality and to wonder if he too might be gay. Gary is starting to be attracted to a girl in his literature class. Experiencing the awkwardness and shyness of his first romance and questioning his own sexuality, Gary desperately needs his Uncle Rob's advice. But will his hero be able to help him now? Gary's vulnerability and feelings about his relationship with his uncle leave Gary wondering if Rob will be there for him this time. Uncle Rob is truly a hero, and through his death, Gary learns there is a hero in each one of us.

Reviewed by J. David Neal

Clay Lancaster and his brother Mike leave Seattle in search of their missing uncle. The journey, which they have named "The Big Wander," takes them to the rugged slick-rock regions of Southern Utah. When Mike decides to return home, Clay continues the search on his own. The courageous boy ventures deep into the red-rock wilderness. During the course of his quest, Clay meets and befriends several individuals who aid him in his search for his uncle and himself.

Hobbs has done a remarkable job of weaving several stories into the quest motif. Clay’s journey into the wilderness becomes a metaphor for two themes in the novel. The venture symbolizes Clay’s search for himself. By learning self-reliance, responsibility, and the value of true friendship, he soon learns what it means to be an individual in the world of adults. The journey also symbolizes his search for love. Early in his quest, Clay is jilted by a girl whom he feels he can trust. Near the end of the novel he meets a girl who is truly a friend and partner. The themes are presented in a realistic yet gentle manner. The book gives an excellent opportunity for young adults to think about these themes while also enjoying a fun story.

★★★★
Children’s Book Review 39


Reviewed by Rodney Shaw

Fagel Fatrizsky is a Russian-Jewish immigrant who comes to America in 1907. She struggles as a new immigrant and deals with the problem of identity in the large new world. Although she has aunts and uncles in America, she still feels very alone. She works to save money to bring her "real" family to America. *Goodbye to the Trees* is a vivid tale about immigrant work, struggles, and family identification. Most of all, it is a story about finding yourself. This book brings a period of American History into perspective. Many children today can relate to Fagel because they too are struggling to find an identity. The book also deals with the issue of family principles and values. Fagel’s mother asks her before she leaves Russia not to take a job as a servant because a servant is the lowliest kind of worker. But Fagel must disobey her mother in order to bring her "real" family to America. A great exploration into the family unit in the Jewish community, this would be a good reference book for any class that is studying immigration. One problem in the book is the dialogue. However, the action sometimes lags, and the book is written in short, choppy sentences. In some places it reads more like a journal than a novel. Yet, overall, this is a very good book.

---


Reviewed by Karen Crockett

*Peter* is a story about the sexual development of Peter Dawson, a fifteen-year-old Australian boy. Peter hasn’t decided yet whether he is more attracted to males or females. He seems to like girls until he meets his brother’s friend, David Rutherford. Peter is intrigued by David. He is attracted to the way he dresses and does his hair and the way he talks and moves. He begins to desire physical interaction with David. When Peter discovers that David is gay, he is alarmed and begins to think that maybe he has been gay all along. Peter decides that he has to find out once and for all whether he is gay. He approaches David, hoping to have his sexual inclinations affirmed. David tactfully refuses Peter, explaining that Peter is too young. David advises Peter to take some time to see whether he retains his tendency to be attracted to men.

This is a good book. I was as interested in the developing relationship between Peter and David as I would be in any good romance. The dialogue and
40 Brigham Young University

the situations were realistic and tactful. Realism and tact may be offensive to some readers, but I appreciated the honesty. There are no particularly graphic scenes.

◆◆◆◆


B 6-7 FI Reviewed by Jenny Young

Rob desperately wants to start seventh grade with an image of being "normal." This proves more difficult than he thought because he feels his family members are a bunch of wierdos. The first day of school, Rob (Christopher Robin) is driven to school in his mother's van (the Heffalump), which has pictures of Winnie-the-Pooh characters on it. Rob is humiliated. He walks up to the school with his best friend, Logan, and meets the "Shark," who decides to make Rob his "prey." Rob meets an eighth-grade girl, Jenner, whom he comes to like. He is afraid of letting her (or his friends) see his wierdo family and his house, because he thinks he'll be disliked. Rob must also deal with his genius sister, who at age five invented a board game that has made her rich and famous. On Career Day, Rob's father gives a presentation to the whole school, and Rob is amazed that everyone really likes him. From then on, the Shark leaves him alone, and Rob finally feels comfortable with his family and the way they are.

This book is simply enjoyable. Some of the events appear a little farfetched, but the characters are developed enough to make the story believable. Sixth- and seventh-grade boys would be able to relate well to Rob, but the book may also be enjoyed by other readers, including adults. Down-to-earth and humorous, the story captures your attention and makes you want to find out what happens next.

◆◆◆◆