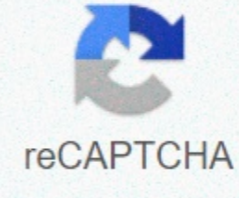




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Old yeller book review

I loved the movie version of Old Yeller when my kids were little. I don't know if I knew then that it came from a book, but I've been wanting to read a book by Fred Gipson for years. When I was looking for a classic about Animal Back to the Classics Reading Challenge, as well as a shorter classic after finishing a very long one, it fit the bill for both counts. The story is told from the perspective of Travis, a fourteen-year-old eldest son of a family in Texas in the 1860s. Although the family lived off the land easily, they didn't have much money for money. Some of the settlers joined the cattle ride to the city about 600 miles away, and Travis's dad decided to go. He left Travis as a man of the house, with the responsibility of a man: shooting a game of food, keeping critters from corn, protecting the family from Indians and wildlife, milking cows, caring for his mom and little brother, Arliss, tending new pigs, and waiting for his mom to tell him to do things. Travis felt pretty off at the grown man and welcomed the opportunity to prove himself. Other than being able to reign in Little Arliss, he put in a full day of work and did a good job. He was particularly pleased when his mother waited for dinner for him, just as she did for his dad when his work lasted late. But then one day a scruffy, yellow ugly dog came to the property and stole some family meat. Little Arliss claimed the dog immediately, and their mom was ready for him to have him. But Travis hated him, especially because of his thieving but also because he was ugly and seemed worthless. But it wasn't long before the dog proved it could learn and be a big help to the family, herding hogs, chasing off bears and wolves, etc. And it wasn't long before Travis loved the dog even more than Little Arliss. It made it all the harder when the tragedy struck what the author was talking about on the first page. I love coming from age stories because the character has to stretch him- or herself farther than they think they can go (Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie, is another favorite along that line.) I also enjoyed a peek at this era. It used to be a regular thing for a teenager trained to do adult work, although they weren't often left with it all on their shoulders like Travis was. Sometimes I wonder if it would be better than not expecting young people to take adult responsibility until they're out of college or later. Then again, it was a hard life, and I like the fact that young people now have opportunities to explore their teens that young people didn't have then. I also can't imagine that there is almost only to the edges of the settlement, but the husband has been away for months without means of communication all this time and having to patch up serious injuries boys and animals and take on additional work, which they cannot do while injured. Perhaps my favorite part of the book is the advice Travis's dad gave him when he came back and heard everything that had gone on in his absence: It was as rough a thing as I ever heard to tell about going with a boy. And I'm mighty proud to learn how my boy stood up for it. You couldn't ask about an adult anymore... It's not something you can forget. I don't think this is the thing you should forget. What I mean is, things like that happen. They may seem mighty cruel and dishonest, but that's how life is part of the time. But that's not the only way life is. Part of the time, it's mighty good. And a man can't afford to waste all the good part by worrying about bad parts. It makes it all bad. I listen to the audiobook very well read by Peter Francis James. he will do a good job with expression as well as accents. It's been a long while since I've seen the movie version, but it seems to have closely followed the book, except drawing the climax more. (Sharing the semicolon's Saturday review books and Carole books you liked) Save Save the Book Review, children, when my thirteen-year-old son told me this month that Old Yeller is one of the best books he has ever read, I knew I had to look at that classic work of fiction. Fred Gipson sets this story in 1860s Texas, where everyday surroundings still include snakes, wolves, bobcats, wild hogs, and raccoons, not to mention fighting bulls that go free from one farm to the next! Fourteen-year-old Travis is now in charge of the family (for caring for Mama and Little Arliss) and holding while his Papa is on a cattle run in Kansas. The daily work of Travis includes cow milking, wood cutting, pig branding, hunting, and a trend towards corn fields – that's just part of his day! Travis has such obvious pride in his work and duties and in honor of moving past a boy and becoming a man. Readers can note their mother's desire to make corrections. However, regardless of the situation, Mama patiently allows Travis to indicate his intentions and then follow through – thus allowing Travis to see the consequences of his decision and at the same time to find out where to make the adjustments. Outside of all his daily duties, Travis also delves into casual life and death protection mode against wildlife, and that's where Old Yeller, a stray dog that moves with his family, helps. On several occasions, the loyal Old Yeller almost gives his life while helping Travis ward off threats to the family. Although initially he saw Old Yeller as a pest, Travis comes to love and trust that faithful dog. They develop a level of communication in which the dog demonstrates an innate understanding of what Travis needs in most situations – whether the situation team building or simply completing the work. Old Yeller also fight off thieving raccoons: He'd be yelling and would be squawling and they would go wallowing and clawing and thrashing both corn, popping the canes as they stopped them off, making such a fuss at night that it sounded like murder. But, usually when the fight was over, the went one way and Old Yeller the other, both of them pretty well pleased to call it quits. Yes, Old Yeller stumbles into many interesting battles throughout the novel and some of these battles are a little more graphic and deadly. Raccoons are not here, too, but they are just thieves. Old Yeller himself sometimes becomes a thief at neighboring farms – stealing food supplies and eggs until Travis heals him for that! While on the first page, Gipson mentions old yeller's fate, move on to the next paragraph if you rather don't read the spoiler..... One evening, a mad wolf with hydrophobia (rabies) gives Old Yeller his last battle. Travis works very decisively and quickly in handling the situation – there is no moral cowardice here and no hesitation – although readers around the world are often known to cry a flood of tears at this point. In Texas today, although our children have other struggles to deal with the unique life and death decisions Travis had to handle in 1860s Texas has long been in the past – yet what an exciting and lost world to read about. I ended up loving this book so much that I purchased copies of my son's best friends as well! Listening to an audiobook takes 4 hours, and the printed book is between 132 and 181 pages (depending on the font size). If readers are looking for a great book and need to meet some accelerated Reading requirements at school, this one gets you 5 points and the Dallas Public Library has many copies! About Author teresa.bocanegra One of the best things about elementary school I was able to order Scholastic books. I was always allowed to order a couple of names every time a little flyer was sent home. My parents said, We will support your good habits, but not your bad ones, and reading was fortunately considered one of my good habits. What you see here is my Scholastic copy of The Old Yeller that I have owned for over forty years. My favorite part of elementary school day was when our teacher read aloud to us. At the beginning of the grade I remember Make Way Ducklings and 500 Hats bartholomew Cubbins. When we were a little older, we heard Wrinkles during the Little House on the Prairie, and the book that became my book, Fred Gipson's Old Yeller. You might know that this is the story of a border boy and a trouble-making dog he grows to love. I read Old Yeller over and over and bragged to anyone who would listen that I'd gone more than twenty times. I read other dog books too: Jim Kjelgaards's Big Red, Irish Red, and Outlaw Red; Greyhound by Helen Griffiths; and Fred Gipson's other books, Savage Sam and Greyhound Dog Man. But nothing got in my head, as Old Yeller did. The language captured me first, followed by a story. For the sheer joy of going forward and read aloud this passage where our eponymous dog hero first described: He was a big, ugly, slick-haired yeller dog. One short ear was chewed clear off and his tail was bobbed so close to his tail that it was almost incomplete enough to be left to wag. But the most I put about him was how thin and starving looking he was, all but his belly. His belly was swell as tight and round as a pumpkin. Any description, including the words ugly, tail, stub, belly, and swell is bound to catch the boy's attention. Also entralling me was the animal violence scene of Old Yeller. How could I resist a story that includes this warning about javelina hogs?: Make a bad shot and wound one so he went to squealing, and you had a whole bunch upon you, ready to eat you alive. I'm not even sure I'd know javelina hog if I saw one, but I'm sure I'll never want to mess with such a creature because of what I read back then in Old Yeller. Or how about the scene where narrator Travis has trampled two enraged bulls?: I sure I was a goner. The roaring of bulls was correct in my ears. The smell of hot, stinking blood was in my nose. The bone-crushing weight of their nails was stomping all around and over me, churning up such a fog of dust that I couldn't see the thing. Throughout the Old Yeller we see all sorts of animals, often in a cross-country fight, or struggling Travis or his brother Arliss, and Old Yeller usually places himself in the fray and saves a day one way or another. The tension of these elementary border conflicts is periodically compensated by Travis's sense of humor. For example, he describes his brother Little Arliss as a screamer by nature. He'd scream when he was happy and scream when he was crazy and a lot of times he'd shout just to hear himself make a noise. Old Yeller is, of course, the most famous in its end, but I believe it has more to do with the movie than the book. This over-wrought screen moment was even satirized for friends when Phoebe was surprised to see the movie denouement for the first time after being told as a child that it ended happily. In this book, Old Yeller's death is handled quickly in one low sentence: I stuck the muzzle of a gun against his head and pulled the trigger. Let's go. Is it really a spoiler when anyone who picks up a dog book needs to know that it will end badly for the dog? It's part of the genre. Yeller's ending is an iconic moment in animal stories and, I believe, a valuable and important example of what Kelly Gallagher calls an imaginative attempt. The power of this moment helped prepare me, and I'm sure countless others make difficult decisions at personal expense and more benefit from the community. Why was Fred Gipson old Cliner with me? Maybe because new readers need to see some versions of themselves in the books they read. Although I didn't have a dog of my own, reading Old Yeller showed me the older brother was working hard and taking responsibility, learning to choose his own struggles, and a brave dog companion who doesn't allow unfair prospects to get in the way of solving opponents or problems. These were good lessons that I probably couldn't formulate in elementary school, but that's clear to me now. When a boy learns his lessons from a big, ugly, slick-haired yeller, they tend to stick with him. If you haven't read Old Yeller, or if it's been a while, give that dog a chance. He'll grow up for you. Gary Anderson is a high school English teacher in suburban Chicago. He is a co-author (with Tony Romano) of Expository Composition: Discovering Your Voice (EMC Publishing). Visit his What's Not Wrong? blog . .