



Riding the Tiger

Eve Bunting , David Frampton (Illustrator)

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Esteemed author Eve Bunting brings all her insight, empathy, and storytelling skill to this powerful allegorical tale, set in the streets of an unnamed city and illustrated with striking woodcuts. Danny, new to town, is proud when a glittery-eyed tiger invites him for a ride. He climbs up onto the tiger's massive back, and together they cruise the neighborhood. Everyone gives them respect—shopkeepers and passersby, even other kids. Danny feels powerful and much older than ten. Soon, though, he realizes it isn't respect people feel for him and the tiger—it's fear. And when he decides to get down off the tiger's back, he discovers it's a lot harder than climbing on.

Whether the tiger is interpreted to represent gangs, drugs, or something else altogether, this poetically told, dramatically illustrated book is sure to provoke discussions about temptation, peer pressure, and conformity.

Riding the Tiger Details

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Author : Eve Bunting , David Frampton (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Riding the Tiger for online ebook

Kirstin Kemppainen says

Danny is the new boy in town and is offered by a random tiger to take a ride on his back. The tiger is very controlling and Danny wants off of his back but is scared to tell him no. Finally he works up enough courage to get off of his back. This would be appropriate to read to older kids because it's a book about standing up to bullies or gangs that seem to be a good choice at first, because Danny didn't have any friends, but after someone gets hurt he realizes this isn't a very good idea to be friends with the tiger.

Kelsey Scherer says

A very different but unique story. It teaches a unique concept of being yourself, doing what your heart desires and not falling for peer pressure. It uses great examples and images to teach these lessons. I enjoyed the story line and the characterization with Danny and the tiger. It is a great story to keep for future reference in my classroom.

Dolly says

This is a dark and dangerously ominous story, but an important one that carries a good message no matter how you interpret it. I was a bit nervous about reading this with our girls, but their Elementary school has a very strong anti-bullying campaign and I was able to relate this story to that message. I took it as more of a metaphor for gangs and drugs and we discussed those as well, but I think they understood the bullying aspect more easily. I believe that this is a great story to be read as part of a school curriculum or by parents and children together, with the caveat that the story should be discussed to answer any questions or fears a child may have. I find it hard to say that I liked the story, but the book is terrific, the woodcuts are amazing and the message is very important today.

Jeremy Allen says

Category: Picture Book/ Regional Folk-Fairy Tale

Level: 3rd - 7th grade

Summary: The young boy Danny is new in the neighborhood when a tiger comes by. While slightly scared, the allure of intrigue from the seductive tiger, Danny gets on his back and rides around the urban terrain. Passing several people who give Danny warning and advice to not ride the tiger, Danny does not heed them. He continues on with the tiger watching the tiger flaunt his power grow and listening to the influence the tiger plays in a new neighborhood. When confronted with a moral dilemma, Danny wants to get off but the tiger does not agree. However, Danny jumps to freedom a bit worse for wear and helps a man the tiger had hurt.

Response: Very good book on multiple levels, while reading level adequate for lower level readers, content would be great for upper grades as well. Bunting's use of metaphor for a complex social issue is outstanding. This book looks at an multiple issue many children face and have them examine it on a critical perspective.

Simply the idea of helping children examine perspective in social situations would warrant a good book. The artwork is also a very good example of modern woodcut prints. While enjoying the look of woodcut, in my opinion, is somewhat a matter of preference the arts color and style support the text and carry the story well.

Teaching Idea: Theme Chart, for upper elementary/lower middle school. Student will complete a theme chart, utilize much like a graphic organizer, and then complete a theme analysis essay. After reading the book, the students get into small groups and complete a theme chart as shown below. The students will evaluate the chart and how the theme develops during the story. Students will construct theme analysis essay.

TITLE

Main Character Goals

Main Conflict

Main Theme

Beginning of Theme

Development of Theme

Climax of Theme

Resolution of Theme

Adapted from: <http://teachingreadertothink.blogspot.com/2011/08/teaching-theme.html>...

Skills: Essay writing, higher order thinking, literature analysis, theme analysis,

Cullen Howard says

Summary: "Riding the Tiger" is a metaphorical novel exploring the attractions and dangers of gangs, although I suppose it could be interpreted to refer to any temptation that crosses our path as adolescents (gangs, drugs, etc.). The literal story line follows Danny who is enticed by a tiger while bored one day. The tiger offers to let him ride on his back, and so Danny rides him around town. At first Danny feels like he is garnering respect from the townspeople, but soon realizes it is only fear. When he tries to get off, the tiger pressures and threatens him to stay. As the tiger's actions get more and more egregious, Danny finally gets off the tiger's back. The tiger says he can never ask for help again.

Characteristics That Support the Genre: This book falls into contemporary realistic fiction, multicultural, and picture book categories. Although metaphorical, the book consists of very realistic subject matter (pressure from gangs) and illustrates very real human reactions (fear of gang violence). The book also touches on the realities of gang culture common to inner-cities around the country (wearing gang colors, bullying others, making threats, "with us or against us" mentality). Lastly, the book includes vivid illustrations that echo the fear evident in the text.

Mentor Writing Traits: (1) Conventions – The text of this book is very well written and is very detailed. It would provide a great example for students to learn about grammar and writing conventions. (2) Idea – The topic is one that is very important for today's youth, especially in urban areas. (3) Word Choice – The text paints an especially vivid picture through choice words, such as "landed with a thud", "concrete hit me like a pile driver", "the yellow glitter of his eyes", and "my stomach gave a disgusted lurch".

Classroom Integration: This would be a fantastic book to use in order to explore the concept and uses of metaphorical language. Additionally, the subject matter would be valuable as the basis for a grand conversation about avoiding the temptations of gangs, drugs, and other unethical, harmful things.

Other Suggestions: I would suggest this book as being appropriate for readers in approximately late third grade. As an additional idea for integration in the classroom, this book would provide a good model for teachers aiming to teach about similes and improving word choice.

Kim says

When you get on the tiger, it's awfully hard to get off. Tiger is a metaphor for bad decisions, specifically getting involved with gangs. Great for grade school kids. Led to some interesting discussions with my kids.

Illustrations are wood cuts, which my 7yo does not enjoy, but whatever.

Cheryl says

A metaphor for whatever the reader interprets it to be, or an exciting adventure for the innocent child. Calling the tiger 'gang' is easy. Calling it 'drugs' is common among other reviewers here, and one other person said that it could be called 'bullying.' But really, mean girls & materialistic hedonists & compulsive gamblers could all be seen here.

Trump probably sought out the tiger when he was younger than Danny.

I normally am not a big fan of woodcuts, but these are stunning. And the fact that it's a very old form of art, and that they were used instead of a style imitative of spray-paint graffiti or some other modern/ urban choice, gives the book a more timeless and universal feel and appeal.

I do think it's a good idea to share this with children as young as seven or eight. No need to single it out, to turn it into a big lesson, but do include it in the stack of books you read with them every week. Even if you believe that your children, or your students, have no interest in any tiger, the truth is that other people in the world do, and children do need to learn to see outwards, to gain empathy for all.

I recommend this not just for children, but for parents, teachers, writers, artists, politicians, and citizens of the world.

J.L. says

This is an amazing book! I love how Bunting uses a "tiger" as a metaphor for a gang member. In a way, that does serve to soften the bluntness of the story she's writing for young children. I think it would take an adult, in most situations, to explain what the tiger represents. Yet children will readily respond to the idea of getting yourself into a situation that is more than you can handle, potentially dangerous, and definitely scary—even if they have no experience with gangs and no real comprehension of the topic. Still, is this book for adults or kids? I think it's for both. Adults will have a much greater appreciation of the sophistication

with which Bunting treats the topic—and children will resonate with the overall ideas of fear and danger.

Kristine Kouba says

Plot Summary - this was my picture book selection. Danny is 10 years old and is new in town. A large tiger comes by and tells Danny he wants to give him a ride. The tiger persuades Danny to ride. He and the tiger go around town and the tiger acts big and tough, he seems like a bully, and he claims to have power. To me, he represented a bully, arrogance, and conformity- the tiger tried to intimidate people and power over them. Danny realizes what the tiger is doing and what the tiger believes in, and he gets off at the end. He got off because the tiger was intimating a bum and Danny knew that was wrong

Danny - new in town, 10 years old, proud to be on tiger at first because he felt respected. Also liked attention from the people. He wanted to get off of the tiger's back and play basketball with some kids, but the tiger bullied him and told him he better stay on. Danny got off at the end and helped the bum.. he said he wasn't with the tiger and he didn't want to be associated with the tiger

Key issues - bullying, power, conformity, respect, intimidation

Other interesting information- More books by Eve Bunting include- Smoky Night and Fly Away Home. And more books by David Frampton- the illustrator who uses woodcuts, include- Joshua in the Promised Land, Clouds of Glory, and Whaling Days

Angie Moore says

A presenter at our restorative justice training read this book to us today. We didn't see the pictures so I can't comment on that but the story? Wow! Totally packs a punch!!

Katie Newton says

NOT FOR YOUNG CHILDREN. This book is very dark and contains a degree of violence. It is clearly a metaphor for gangs, maybe drugs. While it did spark some good conversation with my children, I kind of wish I hadn't read it to them, at least yet.

Jennifer (JenIsNotaBookSnob) says

This is a weird one. Seems to be based on that whole "holding a tiger by the tail" thing. Only, in this case it's riding on a tiger. It seems like "riding the tiger" is meant to be a symbol for gangs or drugs. Obviously, it's a bit scary to get off a tiger who doesn't want you to get off of him.

I just don't like obvious morality books for children and this is definitely leaning that way. The illustrations are pretty cool and I remember thinking the text was unique but a little preachy.

This book would be good if you do really need a morality tale or if you just want to see all of Eve Bunting's picture books. (I read this one in pursuit of the latter.. lol)

Rachel says

Bunting, Eve. (2001). *Riding the tiger*. New York: Clarion Books.

Danny moves into a new neighbourhood and is excited to ride on the tiger's back. He feels mature, popular, and respected. He soon learns that the people do not respect him rather the feeling is that of fear.

This book made me think of many of my students. I realize how difficult it is to get off the tiger's back. More disturbing is the realization that so many don't want to get off. The tiger is their only connection to a community. We all have a need to belong somewhere.

This book is a great read aloud for students in grades 3-8. The students will easily understand the allegory being made. The language is sophisticated and word choice helps provide a detailed picture. Reading this book to older students will provide opportunity to begin discussions on situations they are facing in their own world. It will also help students with word choice in their own writing including using strong verbs and adjectives.

Comprehension strategies to help clarify and make meaning are making connections and inferring.

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

Riding the Tiger is a book about the temptation to join a gang. It's a shame that children as young as this book is intended for have to be taught about resisting gangs. Combine this with Bunting's other picture book, Your Move, about a boy who tries to prevent his fellow gang members from recruiting his younger brother.

Mackenzie Rodeghier says

This book was creepy!! I'm sure there's a time and a place that this story could be read and could make a huge impact, but i definitely wouldn't pick it up off the shelf and read it to a group of happy children. This book alludes to gang activity and all its facets; were I ever in a situation where I needed to sway children away from this type of lifestyle, I'd definitely consider this book to be a valuable resource. However, on an everyday basis, I think this story is scary and intense.
