



The Loner

Ester Wier

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The boy with no name doesn't remember his past; all he knows is that he has to survive, and that means picking fruit on various farms across the southwest. Staying with anyone who'll take him, he gives up all his wages for food and a place to sleep. Then he finds a loving home and realizes he is no longer a loner.

The Loner Details

Date : Published January 1st 1991 by Scholastic (first published 1963)

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Author : Ester Wier

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From Reader Review The Loner for online ebook

Josiah says

"Someone will care if you just give 'em a chance. There's always people who need you as much as you need them. Don't you forget that. All you got to do is find 'em. And when you do, you find you're happier carin' about someone else than just about yourself all the time."

—Tex, "The Loner", PP. 34-35

I would give three and a half stars to "The Loner".

This book takes its deep, permanent emotional roots in the absolutely heartrending events of the first chapter, and builds from that strong emotional base throughout the rest of the story. Rarely have I been so drawn in or empathized so completely with the characters and their losses after only a single chapter, but Ester Wier lays out the story of this unnamed loner boy with such openness and stark clarity that I could feel his loss and his pain and his loneliness deep down from the get-go. In fact, the author's appeal in this regard is so strong that it would be difficult for anyone who has experienced loss not to be swept up in the narrative.

Ultimately, "The Loner" is a quietly simple story about a boy who has known nothing but self-preservation for as long as he can remember, and the string of events on which he embarks that just might lead him to people who love him, and can teach him what it means to care deeply for others and live as part of a real family. The ways in which these things come to pass make for a book to which I very likely would have given the 1964 Newbery Medal.

What I will remember most about this book is the first chapter, and everything later on that referenced that chapter. Raidy is my favorite person in the story, and in my opinion it is the emotional effects of her presence that make "The Loner" the truly fine book that it is.

"There was no end to the things that happened to sheep unless they had a shepherd who cared more about them than anything else in the world."

—The Loner, P. 150

Monica Fastenau says

Read the full review here: <http://newberyandbeyond.com/newbery-e...>

The nameless protagonist of this book is a nomad. He has no family, so he lives by his wits, picking crops to raise money to convince families to let him travel with them. His goal is to get to California, but when he finds himself alone again in Montana, he latches onto a brusque sheepherder and finds out that maybe belonging isn't so bad after all. The story was definitely interesting and unusual—what's the last book you read with a 13-year-old kid living on his own (that wasn't a dystopian book)? I'm not sure if I'll be reading it again, but I'm glad I read it once, at least.

Jesse Franzen says

I read this when I was 10 and loved it then. As an adult, I've been looking for this book for many years, because I couldn't remember the title or a whole lot else, but I figured it out, read it again, and loved it like I was 10 all over again.

Matt says

The Loner

By: Ester Wier

Date Published: 1963

Genre: Action, Mysterious

A boy is left to roam across the states and he doesn't even know his name. He travels places to places with people but they ignore him. He doesn't watch out for other people because he was left by himself so he only worries and cares about himself. But he ends up meeting a girl that is about his age and she cares for him like no one else but then a horrible accident happens and he's left to roam the states again. But when he's roaming the states again he meets a big and tall lady named boss. He grows a relationship with her and he herds sheep with her. They both end up having a good relationship with each other and by the end of the book Boss adopts the boy.

The theme of the book is that not always you wont trust people but you may end up having a relationship or a friendship with them and you begin to trust and care for people. A quote from the book is "I found boss and juno in a hole with scratches and there legs and arms hurt. I helped them to a good place to sit and rest." It shows that the boy cares for Boss and the girl.

By the middle of the book the boy takes on the name David. And all through out the book Boss grows more and more attached to David. Audiences that may be interested in this book are people who like sad but action and mysterious books. The writing style the author uses is like sad but gripping your attention while your reading the book. This book is like no other books because ive never read a book with such a sad but attention gripping sentences and chapters.

My relationship with the book is that sometimes I don't trust people but when I get to have a relationship with them I begin to trust and care for them

Like the David and Boss. The book has affected me by that when you should see the good side of people and should look out for them. What I enjoyed about the book is that the boy roamed the states free. I liked that because ive always wanted to roam the states with no rules and no one telling you what to do.

Gale says

BAPTISM IN THE WILDERNESS

A homeless, friendless, even Nameless youth travels alone in rural America as a migrant worker, with the vague idea of reaching the golden promises of California. Priding himself on his ability to look out for himself without any adult aid, the boy finally reaches Montana's sheep country, where he meets some people who actually grow to care about him as a person--not just as a day laborer. Can he overcome his natural (or acquired) suspicion and enforced independence to allow human emotions to enter and flow freely from his embittered heart?

Coming of age in the rugged wilderness of Montana this youth learns more than the responsibilities of the shepherd; he battles not only the primitive forces of hostile nature, but his own reckless impulses, plus an unreasonable jealousy of a young man he never even met. This unlikely protagonist determines to temporarily settle down and win the respect of the Boss. Many of the characters are driven to hunt down and destroy the Bear which killed the Boss' son. This Newbery Honor book includes plenty of action, as it presents a struggle for survival on two fronts: physical and social. For thoughtful readers from Middle School up.

(June 21, 2011. I welcome dialogue with teachers.)

John Irby says

I read this book fifteen years ago or more. It's the story of a young boy orphaned so young that he doesn't even know his own name. He drifts from place to place, but at the heart of the story he ends up on a working sheep ranch in Montana with a woman named Boss. I shan't tell you more, but it's appropriate for young readers ten to seventeen or anyone who was ever that age.

Devyn says

A story about a boy who has no name. That alone was what drew me in. The boy has no identity and is on a trip around the US to find who he is. He goes from camp to camp working in fields. He ends up in Montana with Boss and gets a name, an identity and a family. Such a good book.

I love this book. One of my all time favorites. David is such a great character and it is written so well. It will make you laugh and it might make you cry. I recommend it to anyone. Its a book everyone should have on their shelf.

Angela says

A teacher once read this book to our 4th grade class, I have often thought about the story so I thought I would read it again. It is short.

Amber Scaife says

An orphan boy who has learned to rely only on himself and lives day to day traveling west and working here and there on fruit farms somehow finds himself on a sheep farm in Montana and stumbles into a family to call his own.

A nice little story, if totally predictable. Plus: enter bear stage left. Another plus: sheepherding dogs.

Nathaniel says

a selection of my reactions on rereading this book for the first time in fifteen years:

"I'm gay."

"this book made me gay."

"I can see why this appealed to my third-grade self."

"the cover of this book made me gay."

"Beyond him the road climbed another hill and upon the crest spruce trees bent in the wind and shadows spread like dark water seeping from the mountainside. The ruffled edges of the clouds had turned gold and for a moment it seemed that the whole world had become golden, the dried slopes about him reflecting the coming sunset. He was used to being out of doors at all hours but he had never seen anything like this, and he stood, swaying wearily, caught by its splendor."

"as a child I was odd and alone and thought that was 'the only way to be', as Janelle Monáe puts it, even though I knew not everyone was alone (or had been made to feel alone), and so, seeing no other way forward, I tried to embrace that, to adopt 'loner' as my self-description, told myself I had embraced it; but still part of me longed to feel like I really, truly belonged somewhere, without question — but also because I had earned my place, proven my worth, been deemed worthy. to be judged on my own merits and deemed acceptable — more than acceptable — oddness and aloneness and all. to prove myself while, still, remaining myself. not to have to change (and I knew even then that I was, to borrow another phrase, different from the others)."

"anyway, this book made me gay."

Sharon Zink says

A wonderful book about a homeless boy who stumbles upon a sheep range and is allowed to learn to be a sheepherder, and who ultimately finds a home, a name, and people who care for him and for whom he cares. A children's book, excellent for reading in the classroom or for recreational reading for anyone of any age.

Lynette Caulkins says

Now, here is a mid-20th century Newbery book that's a gem. :) Gives us a look at the life itinerant orphans experienced, and gives us a nice Montana-boonies sheepherding resolution. Kindof the flavor of reading Old Yeller, but I'll let you read the book to see if the dog dies or not.

Hellkitten says

This is a great book. Recommend it highly. The characters stay with you for a long time. It is an early Newbury Prize winner, if I remember correctly. Book about the survival of a child in hostile country, and the friends he meets along the way who help him to survive and learn.

Good book to read at the diner in winter.

Linda Lipko says

I'm enjoying July young adult reading and all the Newbery award winning books I've read. This one is short and sappy and...wonderful!

Winner of the 1963 Newbery honor, this small book is heart warming and poignant. Homeless, nameless, young and stubborn, the character has no knowledge of a family. He simply remembers fending for himself for a long, long time. With no history of anyone to assist him, he struggles to survive and he does so barely, by eking out a bare subsistence living traveling as a migrant worker.

En route to California where he believes more opportunity may await, emaciated, starving and ill, he is found in the Montana wilderness by a tough woman who tends a large flock of sheep. Taking him in, she gives poetically gives him the name of David, the shepherd who valiantly fought the lion to guard his sheep.

This is an amazing tale of strength, courage and fortitude. It is a tale of building walls to protect. It is a story of a young boy who is afraid to trust and love and a woman who has suffered loss and likewise fears vulnerability.

Recommended.

Amy says

I just finished reading this book with my nine year old son. It was my great-grandpas book and my dad gave it to my son. So it was pretty sentimental just reading this old copy for that reason. But I thought the book was beautiful. The characters were dynamic and engaging and even the ones you only got to meet for a minute, you felt privileged to know and connected to or 'good-riddance'.

The whole story was an emotional journey that you took right along with the main character. Watching him find his name and grow to understand who he truly was and what it meant to love and be loved and show that love was just so touching.

The lessons were sweet, poignant, and powerful. I'm surprised this book doesn't have a higher rating. I wish there were more such stories.

If I had to describe this book in one word it would be: Touching.

