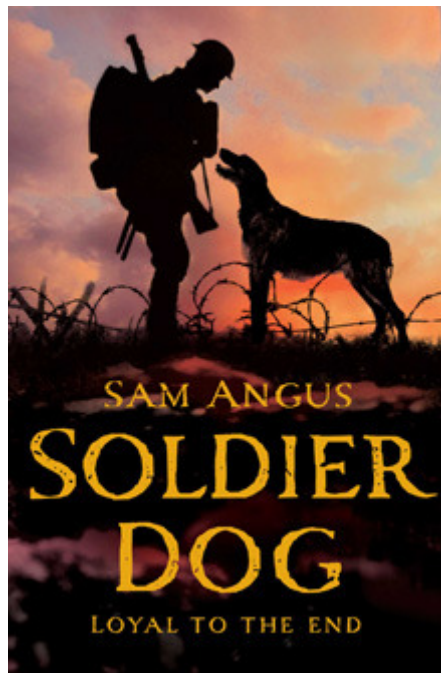




Soldier Dog

Sam Angus

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Soldier Dog Sam Angus

Stanley's dad hasn't been the same since his wife died and his eldest son went off to fight in the war. Now Stanley's only friend is his dad's prizewinning greyhound, Rocket. Stanley runs away and enlists in the army to train as a messenger dog handler, and is soon heading to France with a great Dane called Bones by his side.

Soldier Dog Details

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From Reader Review Soldier Dog for online ebook

Anastasia202 says

Soldier Dog by Sam Angus is a very disconsolate yet heart-warming novel which encompasses a WWI history lesson and the adventures of a young boy and dog all in one heart-wrenching and fascinating tale. I always had a box of tissues by my side while reading this book; so the author of it definitely did something right if it was capable of touching my conscience to such extent. This novel shined light on several significant topics; a dog's distinguishing identity, the impacts of grief and finally, the delicate system of identities in war.

The philosophy of animals embodying their own distinguishing identity may seem baffling, however, it has been recognized in many historic and contemporary proses, especially Soldier Dog by Sam Angus. Not only did this enlightening text illumine dogs' unconditional love, but it also portrayed how these incredible creatures are capable of vividly expressing emotion. Bones and Soldier remained loyal to Stanley, they sacrificed their welfare for the army's success and victory, and they were capable of emoting just like humans, which definitely brought them closer to Stanley.

Unfortunately, this novel also explored the disheartening theme of how an individual is impacted by grief, whether it be grief from a family member's death or grief from being abused and persistently degraded. In Soldier Dog, Stanley's father was shrouded by sorrow because of his wife's death and his son's departure to the battlefields of France, and as a result, he locked up his heart to Stanley. In turn, Stanley, realizing the tragedy of being abandoned by everyone; his brother, mother and father, falls into depression and he absconded his home to join the army. Grief is what triggered Stanley to join the army, and accordingly, what triggered the plot (hook/trigger incident) and also the factor which greatly contributed to his identity's shaping. He started to reach out to those in distress, be compassionate by understanding what others are going through, to value what he had and consequently, developed his moral standards.

Lastly, throughout the course of this novel, I was able to distinguish the theme of how delicately everyone's identities are weaved together in war. Everyone's hearts beat in one chorus, all of their souls invested into the same efforts. The consequences of one individual's failure produce a domino effect, and these consequences impact the lives, and determine the life or death, of all other soldiers.

Megs says

I was very apprehensive to start this one for the same reasons that I've never seen War Horse. I'm a huge animal lover and I hate thinking of them being hurt even a little bit, let alone going through the horrors of war. But, I gathered up my courage and read this one anyway. And it was every bit as sad as I expected, but also more interesting than I expected.

This is one of those books you need to read beside a box of tissues. I kept a personal "cry counter" on this one and I believe my final tally was 5 bouts of tears. Two of which were full out sobbing. Just so you can't say I didn't warn you.

A book that makes you cry that much must be doing something right (although I'm sure I'd cry in a poorly written book on the same subject). I found Soldier Dog to be well written and engaging. I cared deeply about Stanley and even more about Bones and Soldier.

The thing I didn't expect was to be interested in the war aspect as well. I found this book to be very well

researched and really informative. I'm about as far from a war buff as you can be, but I actually enjoyed learning about how dogs were used as messengers in WWI. So hooray for learning something!

The only other I'd question on this one is its suitability for younger readers. The grade range on this one is 4-7. I'm not sure a 10-year-old could handle this book. It destroyed me and I turn 25 this week! However, on that note, this book might be good for boys interested in war to get them reading. But there were images in this one that are terribly haunting and awful and I bawled as I read them. The use of gas was absolutely terrifying and devastating.

Soldier Dog is an extremely moving look at the use of canine soldiers in WWI, as well as the journey of a brave young man who leaves his safe life in England to face the unknown horrors of war. This one will have you bawling your eyes out and feeling so thankful that your pets won't have to go through the terrible situations war dogs did.

Samantha says

Set against the backdrop of World War I, 13-year old Stanley watches his beloved older brother Tom depart for service and soon joins him after a misunderstanding involving his father, Da.

The family dog runs off and returns pregnant which Da sees as a burden. He threatens to drown the puppies even though Stanley has developed a strong bond with the runt whom he has named Soldier in honor of his brother Tom. When Stanley awakens one morning unable to find Soldier he believes Da has made good on his promise to kill the dog so he runs away to enlist in the service, lying about his age to gain entrance.

Stanley finds his place training dogs for service, but he is only given one dog to train while his peers are given three each. Stanley is desperate to be sent to France and his hard work pays off. What follows is a story of bravery and miracles, of a family repairing its wounds, and of the atrocities of war.

This book is well written, incorporating letters into the prose, giving readers a unique view of one character's voice. World War I often seems to be the overlooked war when it comes to children's literature; the Civil War and World War II receive much better coverage. This book features memorable characters, a plot that tugs at the heartstrings, and enough war details to put the reader there and teach them something significant without making them put the book down due to revulsion.

I'd recommend this book for grades 4-6, especially boys as the action is gripping and the story moves along at a great pace.

Shirley says

I immensely disliked the actions of Stanley's father as the book began. Despite the fact that Da was grieving, I found his actions unforgivable.

I am not fond of war stories and am repulsed by the violence and death.

I am extremely disturbed by cruelty toward animals. The military treatment of animals is an affront to the

value of life. The use of horses in the story was reminiscent of the descriptions found in War Horse by Michael Morpurgo.

Despite the content of the book which I am sure accurately described the experiences of a boy, his family, and events during World War I, I found the book to be exceptional.

I struggled with some of the terminology spoken by English characters in 1917. I would recommend reading the book on an electronic device with immediate dictionary access. I need to remind students to not let the vocabulary discourage them from reading the book. They will not be disappointed.

Why did I like a novel with content that was so different from my usual genre of reading?

The Colonel made this comment when Ryder and Bones had completed their training. "You've done well, Ryder, very well. Bones has taken your courage, your sense of honor for his own. He'll always be true, faithful, and brave, even to the last beat of his heart, would-I've no doubt-give his own life for you." (84) You can't beat a good dog story!

"At four forty-five the enemy howitzers belched into fire, the enemy guns launching an onslaught that whisked the night into shooting tongues of flame. The earth itself was erupting. Stanley's heart pounding a tattoo to the thudding of the guns, the screaming of the howitzers tearing his eardrums, the veins in his temples throbbing." (120) I might not like war stories but Sam Angus is an incredible writer.

How interesting that a platoon leader would bring a rum ration around to soldiers on the front line. (174)

"Haloes of luminous mist cradled the hollows and crevices of the plain. a whispered word of warning flew like wind along the trench. Stanley's blood ran cold, fear for himself and fear for Pistol compounded into one." (174) Can you see it? Can you hear it? Can you feel it?

A historical note says that the stories of two of the messenger dogs were partially based upon a real dog during World War I named Airedale Jack. (241)

Larissa Benevides says

Soldier - Sam Angus

"Bones assumiu sua coragem, seu senso de honra como sendo dele próprio. Ele sempre será verdadeiro, leal e corajoso; até a última batida do seu coração ele dará - e disso eu não tenho dúvida - a própria vida por você. Seja o que for que esteja esperando por vocês dois, lembre-se de que para Bones você é toda a vida dele."

Sabe aquele livro que desde o começo deixa o seu coração pequenininho, que consegue atingir em cheio seu coração e te leva a sofrer junto com o protagonista? Bem assim foi o Soldier comigo!

Eu já sou uma pessoa muito sentimental e quando eu me conecto com a obra sou transportada para outro mundo e vivo a história (uma coisa muito louca mesmo!). Posso dizer que esse livro foi intenso, lindo e encantador.

Então vamos a história, o livro com a narrativa em terceira pessoa conta a história de Stanley. Um jovem de 14 anos que perdeu a sua mãe, na mesma época estoura a Primeira Guerra Mundial e o seu irmão mais velho é recrutado para a linha de combate. E para piorar a situação, seu pai não é o mesmo desde a morte de sua amada.

Completamente sozinho, o jovem tem que conviver com seu pai rabugento e que em qualquer breve oportunidade tenta ignorar ou magoar o seu filho mais novo. Como um mecanismo de defesa, o menino se torna o saco de pancadas emocional de seu pai.

A história inicia com a busca da cadela premiada de seu pai, em um momento de descuido Stanley perdeu Rocket quando estava no cio. Seu pai transtornado recusa o retorno da cadela prenha, pois diz que ela nunca mais correrá como antes. Bem como condena os filhotes e não aceita que os mesmo fiquem com Stanley.

Stanley consegue manter um cachorro consigo, o menorzinho, o último a nascer. Deu a ele o nome de Soldier, em homenagem a seu irmão e prometeu cuidá-lo até a volta do Tom. Apesar de difícil, Stanley consegue seguir com sua vida, estudando e cuidando do filhotinho. Tudo muda quando o seu pai comete uma atrocidade e Stanley decide fugir de casa e ir em busca do seu irmão.

"O DEPARTAMENTO DE GUERRA SOLICITA MAIS UMA DOAÇÃO DE CÃES PARA FINS MILITARES

Nossas mulheres têm entregado seus maridos, seus filhos, seus pais, seus irmãos - e, agora, seus cães. Doze mil cães já foram entregues até agora, uma resposta impressionante. Mas ainda são necessários mais. Já foram feitas várias convocações pelo telégrafo e pelos jornais para que a população doe seus cães. Já requisitamos os cães dos canis de Leeds e Battersea..."

Assim começa a aventura do livro. Toda história gira em torno do treinamento de Stanley e sua busca pelo seu irmão Tom. Por causa de sua conexão com os animais, Stanley se candidata no Serviço de Cães Mensageiros.

"Os cães são quatro vezes mais rápidos do que os seres humanos. Eles conseguem atravessar as crateras de bomba alagadas e os canais. Eles conseguem encontrar seu caminho durante a noite e correr muito rápido, tanto de dia quanto à noite. Não têm medo de cruzar essas crateras. E podem pôr em prática seu instinto de direção apenas uma semana depois de chegar a uma nova área, escolhendo um cheiro individual e passando a segui-lo, apesar dos milhares de cheiros concomitantes, através de um terreno que é intransponível para o cavalo, o homem ou a máquina."

Assim temos no decorrer da história drama, emoção e bastante conhecimento. A autora estudou sobre a utilização dos cães durante a primeira guerra e por meio de relatos de alguns cães criou as histórias descritas nessa obra. Eu desconhecia a utilização de cães durante a Primeira Guerra e achei bem interessante.

Gosto bastante de histórias ambientadas nesta época pois podemos sentir o que se passava na vida das pessoas e o que aconteceu com os combatentes, assim o conhecimento não fica somente naquelas partes históricas como o motivo e quem saiu vitorioso no combate.

Toda a reviravolta que uma guerra causa na vida de todas as pessoas que vivem em países envolvidos no combate pode ser observada quando pegamos obras ambientadas nessas épocas.

Além disso SOLDIER: Leal até o fim é um livro intenso e que consegue passar toda a dedicação e o amor que os cães devotam aos seus donos.

"O cão deve querer estar com você. Se ele quiser estar com você, então ele será leal, corajoso e honrado. Não é só isso: ele vai ser impulsionado como se por uma espécie de magnetismo, atravessando em meio às bombas caindo, através de furacões de fogo e de campos com tanques se deslocando, pelo seu desejo de estar com você. Se ele o amar, vai correr para casa, para você, mesmo através de nevascas de estilhaços de ferro."

A capa é linda e o livro contém algumas cartas enviadas ao Stanley ou ao seu pai, com a letra cursiva como uma carta de verdade. Muito fofo! Além disso com páginas amarelas e letra média a leitura corre tranquilamente.

Maravilhoso! Recomendo, pois além de toda essa demonstração de amor, grandes lições podem ser tiradas desta obra.

Confira no blog: A culpa é dos leitores

Jimmy Sharp says

I generally read non fiction military books, although I found some of the historical references off or wrong this is outweighed by the sheer love of dogs in this book. It's a nice story and although quite sad also uplifting along the way. It was nice to read something fictional for a change.

Danielle Mitchell says

I loved this book! From the first to the very last chapter. My attention was held right through, and then during the final chapters I could not bring myself to put the book down.

This book really highlights how loyal dogs can be to their masters, and how losing your best furry friend can involve as much grief as losing a human loved-one.

I highly recommend!!

R.A. says

Oh my. Wow!

I knew this book would be good. Like A Horse Called Hero, I enjoyed every moment of it! I was pulled in from the beginning to the end and could have stayed in longer. :)

There's so much to say, but I don't know how to put it to words!

Stanley - I understand why he ran away and I felt so bad for him. He was a courageous boy!

Da - Although I didn't cry at any of the parts, Da just made me so sad! Like Stanley, I felt so bad for him.

Da's sadness and bitterness tore him and his son's relationship apart, (view spoiler)

Hamish - I don't know why I like him. The author never says his age or a lot about him, but some reason I like him. He and a couple other soldiers befriended Stanley, when Stanley has no one else.

Bones - ;(

Soldier - A lovely dog, even though he's a hound! :)

I knew there was going to be action, but in the middle I stopped for a little bit because it wasn't very interesting. I was definitely right though, the action was amazing later on!!

Content: there were a few swear words. There wasn't a lot of violence, but I think it would be a good read for younger teenagers.

A definite "must-read" and favourite! I totally recommend this book!

Chiara says

Recensito su ChiaraLeggeTropo.

Parto sempre un po' prevenuta e molto molto molto spaventata, quando si tratta di libri per cani. L'averne uno, ma soprattutto l'aver imboccato un determinato percorso assieme a lei, mi ha portata ad abbracciare la cultura cinofila con assoluta radicalità e il mio sguardo si è fatto esageratamente critico nei confronti di qualsiasi cosa possa anche solo accennare una parvenza di ignoranza sulla materia. Mi rifiuto categoricamente di leggere un libro che, per quanto osannato o famoso o divertente o commovente contribuisca a diffondere un'immagine sbagliatissima non solo di determinate razze (vedi Labrador e Golden Retriever, cani da caccia che il mondo ritiene, con grandissimo torto e grandissimo danno nei confronti dei cani stessi, cani da divano) ma del cane in sé. Ho dei problemi persino con Hachiko, per la tempesta di stupidaggini che gli sono seguite, figuriamoci quando si tratta di qualcosa di davvero aberrante sotto questo punto di vista! Proprio non ce la faccio a sopportare, per amore di una lettura piacevole, di avere a che fare con un qualcosa che contribuisce a diffondere ignoranza e disinformazione sullo splendido universo cinofilo. Per questo motivo mi sono approcciata a Per te qualsiasi cosa con le pinze, in punta di piedi, terrorizzata al pensiero di saltare in aria dopo poche pagine e di dover abbandonare il libro. Non è andata così, per fortuna, e quindi oggi sono qui a parlarvene, con gli occhi a cuoricino e il cuore devastato dalla commozione per la quale incolpo, senza vergogna, Sam Angus.

Stanley è giovane, un bambino, e vive in tempi che non hanno nessuna pietà per i bambini come lui. La prima guerra mondiale sta divorando l'Europa, lontana dalla campagna inglese dove vive assieme al padre, ma ha già stretto la sua morsa sulla sua famiglia: Tom, suo fratello, già combatte in Francia quello che si rivelerà un sanguinoso e mostruoso conflitto di trincea. Stanley non ha una vita facile, orfano di madre, e il dolore che grava su di lui come un'ombra è invece una mancanza troppo grande da sopportare per suo padre,

il quale si rifiuta di affrontarlo e preferisce nascondersi dietro una rabbia cieca che allontana tutto e tutti, da Stanley alla splendida Rockett, fedele compagna leggera come il vento. Ed è proprio quando questa rimane incinta di un cane di campagna che il destino impone il suo volere, legando un piccolo cucciolo grigio ad un bambino che è alla disperata ricerca di qualcosa di saldo, di un affetto sincero a cui aggrapparsi nella tempesta che si ammassa all'orizzonte e nel vento che già scuote le fondamenta della sua esistenza. E sarà proprio questo legame, la sua rottura, a portare Stanley ad arruolarsi nell'esercito per fuggire da una crudeltà insensata e ad affrontare tutta una serie di prove che lo porteranno a crescere, gli insegneranno ad amare e ad amare persino nella perdita, e infine lo restituiranno ad un mondo che non sarà più lo stesso, con la consapevolezza che le cicatrici del conflitto rimarranno lì, incise nel suo animo, ad imperitura memoria di tutto ciò che ha vissuto.

A scanso di equivoci, Per te qualsiasi cosa è un romanzo storico. L'autrice si è prodigata in uno scrupoloso lavoro di ricerca, tanto sul conflitto mondiale quanto sull'uso che entrambi gli schieramenti fecero dei cani al fronte – e la bibliografia citata in chiusura ne è la prova lampante, assieme alla grandissima ricchezza di dettagli che si assorbono in corso di lettura. Per quanto la storia di Stanley sia inventata, quella dei cani che lo accompagnano – Soldier, Bones e Pistol – è invece ispirata a quelli che sono stati veri cani da staffetta, utilizzati per trasportare messaggi dal fronte alle retrovie quando ogni altra comunicazione era impensabile e impossibile. Se quello dei Segnalatori è un capitolo poco noto della storia mondiale, quello dei Guardiani è pressoché sconosciuto e Sam Angus, con il suo lavoro, rende loro una giustizia che, con uno stile lineare, elegante e straordinariamente evocativo nella sua semplicità, tratteggia figure di grandissima dignità e dall'umanità sconvolgente. Figure che, di fatto, non sono neppure umano ma fanno il loro lavoro come e meglio di uomo: i cani staffetta, raccimolati con grande urgenza da tutto il paese, affidati a uomini perché questi diventassero la loro ragione di vita, addestrati ad ignorare la paura e il dolore per riuscire a tornare da loro. Creature dalla straordinaria fermezza, creature amate e che amano oltre ogni nostra comprensione, e tra tutti Bones.

Bones troppo grande; Bones dal manto di velluto; Bones dalle orecchie attente e il passo scattante, bestia troppo pesante forse ma non per questo meno coraggiosa. Bones che conquisterà Stanley e sarà il suo appiglio in una realtà che non è adatta ad un bambino; Bones che con quel bambino instaurerà il rapporto che ogni essere umano dovrebbe avere con il proprio cane; Bones che con caparbia sacri-ficherà persino se stesso per fare ciò che Stanley gli ha detto di fare – tornare, tornare da lui, ad ogni costo. Bones mi ha spezzato il cuore, sarò onesta, e tra tutti i cani è stato quello che ho amato di più per la fiera intelligenza, il grande cuore, la mole sgraziata e la solida presenza, perennemente appoggiata contro il fianco del suo piccolo umano, come a volergli sempre ricordare di non essere solo in un mondo sporco e insanguinato. Ma prima di Bones c'è il piccolo Soldier, cucciolo dal pelo argentato e gli occhi chiari che insegnerà a Stanley cosa significhi essere responsabile di qualcuno. Soldier, zampe leggere come il vento, affidatogli dalla sua stessa madre, che verrà coraggiosamente salvato e poi perduto; Soldier sempre vivo nel suo ricordo, intoccato e intoccabile, piccolo animale amato oltre immaginazione, la cui scomparsa segnerà per Stanley il punto di non ritorno tra la sua infanzia e una maturità ancora lontana.

E dopo Bones, Pistol. Un cane che ha perso fiducia nell'uomo, che ha subito le peggiori angherie, che è stato tradito proprio da chi riteneva essere il centro del suo universo – il suo vecchio umano, a cui la guerra ha mangiato la ragione -, che ha sofferto e che ha perso tutto, persino il pelo – tranne la sua straordinaria dignità. Pistol che guarda al mondo con paura, che ringhia, che abbaia e che minaccia. Pistol che, però, rinascerà al fianco di Stanley e lo aiuterà a ritrovare, nel buco dove una volta aveva un cuore che la perdita di Bones ha spezzato, un soffio d'amore così puro da riuscire, col tempo, a scacciare l'infinita oscurità dei dolori vissuti. E che, inaspettatamente, si rivelerà essere molto più di quel che pare, squarciando un orizzonte pregno di oscurità con un raggio di sole, un'aurora destinata – col tempo – a farsi giorno dopo una notte troppo lunga.

Sono questi, gli incredibili protagonisti di questo romanzo. I cani, e un ragazzino che cresce sotto i nostri occhi e matura piano piano, trovando nei suoi fedeli amici a quattro zampe il sostegno e il calore che le trincee hanno rubato ad un'intera generazione di uomini trasformati in fantasmi. Non c'è spazio per gli

artifici letterari, i ghirigori e i giochi di parole: Per te qualsiasi cosa è una storia troppo importante per poter essere raccontata diversamente da come è stata scritta. Vi trascinerà in un mondo incrostato di fango e sangue, ma senza mai perdere il tenero disincanto di un ragazzino troppo giovane che non comprende del tutto la situazione in cui si è andato a cacciare, e che grazie alla confortante presenza dei cani al suo fianco nonprofonderà mai nella cupa disperazione di una parentesi buia dell'umanità. Vi toccherà il cuore, suonando le corde più profonde delle vostre emozioni e lo farà senza guardarvi in faccia. Ma così, del resto, è anche la guerra che Stanley vivrà sulla propria pelle. Così è la perdita, così è la speranza, così è la vita che, nel suo sembrare spaventosamente fragile, è per questo quanto mai preziosa. Dovessero farne mai un film, ne verrebbe fuori qualcosa di molto simile a War Horse, ma se possibile infinitamente più commovente e straziante. Non è un libro da leggere, è un libro da amare. Consigliatissimo.

Stephanie says

I was so happy this book didn't end the way I thought it would! I had no idea how important messenger dogs were and that 7,000 of them were killed in WWI. It was a great historical angle for a story, but it was a slow read. I put it down twice to read other books before finishing. While I appreciated the themes of empathy and forgiveness along with the historical approach, it's not a book I would recommend.

Jules says

The best novel I've read in ages! If you love dogs this is the book for you. Please don't be put off by the war theme. I have no real interest in war books, and chose it solely because of the dog theme.

I read it over 3 nights, as I found it very hard to put down, and cried at least twice each night. It left me loving my own dogs even more. Even though I read this a few months ago, I still regularly think about this book and how it affected me emotionally. This book will stay with me forever, and constantly remind me of that special relationship between human and dog.

I would definitely read this again, and have recommended it to everyone I know.

Katy Noyes says

I don't know why I kept bypassing this on the library shelf, but I was persuaded I needed to read this and I gave in. I listened to the audio version and recommend this as a great edition with a clear and appropriate voice, and an easy story to follow by ear.

I loved this. Very much in the vein of Michael Morpurgo (with obvious similarities to War Horse in this case), it's a three-tissue (if not more) affair, that brings home the issues of animals used in wartime within the moving story of a family drama.

Stanley has lost his mum, his brother is fighting in France. It's 1918 and he's 14 years old. His father is angry, distant and cruel. When their thoroughbred dog Rocket becomes pregnant with 'mongrels' he worsens and threatens to drown the puppies, even Stanley's favourite, Soldier. Stretched to breaking point, Stanley enlists, hoping to find his brother Tom in France.

Most of the story takes place on the Front. Stanley's ability with animals is spotted and he joins the team that trains dogs to run messages around the trenches.

It's an area that's well covered in fiction, the trenches of World War One, but just as Morpurgo brought the unique horse perspective to the table, Angus makes us realise the use dogs were put to and how they suffered alongside the men. Several times I was in tears listening. I thought I knew what the ending would bring, but there were some twists I missed, and I liked the structure and flow of the story and what Angus did with the characters. Stanley's father and Tom, though secondary characters, play a large role in the story, always in Stanley's thoughts, and as Stanley, too young for war, sees the horrors around him, he comes to understand them more.

This would make an excellent teaching tool in KS2/3 history lessons on WWI and life in the trenches, as it's realistically bleak without being overly so.

And just like War Horse, this would make an excellent film, though maybe in a few years time to avoid seeming too similar to Morpurgo's work.

An excellent YA wartime read, but do expect tears.

Claire says

Oh my goodness, where do I start? This is quite simply the best book I have read in a long while. Although recommended to me ages ago, I've only just got round to reading this, as it's one of the two books I'll read this month for the bookclub I'm a member of.

I'll admit that I was initially a bit put off this book by the front cover picture and description on the back cover, as I'm not very interested in books about war and fighting. However, although it is set during the first world war and a lot of the scenes take place close to the front lines in France, this story is so much more than just a war book.

Fourteen year old Stanley is the main (human!) character and he is endearing and well written. The supporting characters (human and canine) spring into life from the pages and managed to bring forth just about every emotion in me. Happy to angry, frustrated to sad, i finished this feeling wrung out and left me an emotional wreck!

This book is extremely rare in that I didn't pick up a single grammatical error whilst reading. I have to say I can't honestly remember when that last happened. The use of vocabulary is wide and the descriptive language fantastic.

This is a tale of love, betrayal, hurt, pride, family and, most importantly to me, it depicts the level of emotion that I feel for my dogs like nothing else I've ever read. A true masterpiece that I'll be recommending to all my friends, especially my fellow dog lovers. This book just made me want to cuddle my hounds all the way through. Brilliant brilliant writing.

Rosie says

A boy goes into war to find his brother not knowing that the two dogs he trains one dies in action and one is his dog at home sons not knowing that Stanley loses his sight

Natalie says

I had a lot of feels about this book.

I should start by pointing out that I'm not a fan of animal books, unless they are nonfiction. I don't like reading stories all about animals or from an animals point of view. So, I wasn't very thrilled to see this book on the Battle of the Book List.

I'm not even sure how to explain this book. In short, it's about a boy who escapes his father by running away to war. Even though he's too young they let him join and he is put in the dog messenger unit.

Of all the books on the Battle of the Book list this year, this is the one that hit me the hardest. It wasn't my favorite, but it's the one I can't stop thinking about it. It made me bawl at several times. Even just thinking about it now, I'm getting teary-eyed and I finished it a month ago.

My heart just ached for Stanley. The author did such an excellent job at showing how young and vulnerable Stanley really was, yet also demonstrating his courage and bravery. Such a well-written character.

I don't read a lot of war books, but this is one of the best I've encountered. It pulls at the heart strings without leaving you feeling completely hopeless. I could see myself reading it again.

One Note: They had this on the list for 5th/6th graders, but I think it's more appropriate for 7th/8th grade.
