



The Story of Ferdinand

Munro Leaf, Robert Lawson (Illustrator)

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A true classic with a timeless message, **The Story of Ferdinand** has enchanted readers since it was first published in 1936. All the other bulls would run and jump and butt their heads together. But Ferdinand would rather sit and smell the flowers. And he does just that, until the day a bumblebee and some men from the Madrid bullfights give gentle Ferdinand a chance to be the most ferocious star of the *corrida*—and the most unexpected comic hero. This cherished hardcover is perfect for those who love Ferdinand, and those who have yet to meet him.

The Story of Ferdinand Details

Date : Published January 1st 1936 by Viking

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Author : Munro Leaf , Robert Lawson (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 72 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Classics

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From Reader Review The Story of Ferdinand for online ebook

Krista Stevens says

I had read it before - but revisited it recently. What I loved most this time is the controversy that swirled around the book - I had no idea. Lots of readers like this for the non-violence, peace choosing theme, but that message doesn't seem accurate. I like that Ferdinand chooses to do what he loves - he doesn't judge, criticize nor disparage the other bulls who want to fight- he just wants to smell flowers. The stronger message for me is to find what makes you happy and do that regardless of what others (society) tells you.

Ferdinand's mom doesn't receive a lot of press, which is too bad, as she should be a model for parents everywhere. She worries about Ferdinand when he is young as he is always off by himself and she was concerned that he would be lonesome. He explains to her that what he is doing is making him happy and - she listens. Wow. Then the best line in the book as far as I'm concerned is "His mother saw that he was not lonesome, and because she was an understanding mother, even though she was a cow, she let him just sit there and be happy." You go mom.

Finally, once I really started looking at Robert Lawson's illustrations with lots of help from the internet - I was blown away.

The historical timeframe of this book, published just as World War II is ramping up, also intrigued me. That, in and of itself, was fascinating.

A little book - a lot of punch.

Brian Yahn says

The mood and tone of this story are both spot on. And even though Ferdinand is easy to love, and even though the beginning is cute and entrancing, overall, the story is just pretty okay.

It's about a bull who doesn't want to fight like all the others, because he'd rather just relax and smell flowers. Can you blame him? No. But there's really not much more to the story than that.

Kandace says

I was always curious why my school library had multiple copies of "The Story of Ferdinand." Until now. Upon scanning some of the other reviews I feel left out because Ferdinand was not part of my collection growing up.

I was blown away by the simple story of a gentle bull named Ferdinand, content with his life in the Spanish countryside. When it is time to choose a strong and tough bull to fight in Madrid, Ferdinand does not care and would rather smell flowers under his favorite cork tree. Ferdinand is stung by a bee and in his natural reaction of snorting and butting, he is mistaken by the city men as a suitable candidate for the bull fight and

they take him away. What will happen to Ferdinand when they reach the ring? Will he turn into a rough and tough competitor as expected? Or will he remain true to his mild, contemplative nature?

Published over 70 years ago, the straightforward significance of this story is clear. Along with the rich and uncomplicated black and white drawings of Robert Lawson, Munro Leaf captures the essence of attaining happiness. Stereotyped expectations can be avoided by remaining true to oneself. Readers of all ages can identify with the notion that being different doesn't make it wrong. Sometimes it's the small things in life that make us the most happy. Ferdinand proves this true when he attains bliss by simply sitting and smelling the flowers.

Ahmed H. Mansour says

A classic children's story that even for a grown man like me means a lot, even though I'm not as strong as a bull, I believe that Ferdinand looks like me when I was a little boy :)

da AL says

Lovely, lovely book. Sweet story -- plus bonus magical illustrations of romanticized Spain of yore to delight all.

Stephanie Anze says

"This is the story of Ferdinand - a little bull who would rather sit and smell flowers than fight in the bullring."

This book truly is a gem. While I had heard about this work before, this is the first time that I have read it and I absolutely love it. Originally published in 1936, this work has been translated into more than 60 languages and has rarely been out of print. As this title is well known, I want to talk about its background. Its a hefty one. While Munro Leaf is an American author because of the timing, setting and main character, this work is thought to have a political agenda. The book was published shortly before the Spanish Civil War. Described by some as subversive with a pacifist view (which challenged the facism that currentlty predominated Europe), "Ferdinand" was banned in many countries including Spain and Germany. Hitler is quoted as describing the book as "degenerate democratic propaganda". Franco was not a fan of the book either (the book was not available in Spain til after Franco's death). Its no surprise that the book was loved by Ghandi and Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt, among other important figures.

When asked Munro denied any political ties saying "its a happy-ending book about being yourself". In fact, it is alleged that this work was written in 40 minutes on a whim to be give Robert Lawson an opportunity to illustrate. The illustrations are marvelous, by the way. Whatever your personal take away from the book, its impossible to deny its impact. Mine? I just adore this gentle and kind bull and love the message of the book. Its a sweet and charming work for people of all ages. This is my final book for 2017 and it was a good one.

15/01/18 EDIT: Saw the movie this past weekend and absolutely loved it. While there was a story added, it kept the essence of the book. It is a perfect compliment to the original.

Where was this little gem when I was young? Hard not to cast my childhood as poorer in hindsight seeing how many great children's literature I missed back then. Well, better late than never! Nobody said "grown-up kids" can't read this book and enjoy it as well..

My mom used to read it to me when I was a kid. She used to call me her little Ferdinand, because all the

other little boys wanted to run around and roughhouse. And I didn't. I just wanted to sit and read and think.

I'm not an impartial judge of this book. But I'm fond of it. And when a book's been around for 70 years, there's usually a reason for it.

Plethora says

I celebrated the *Freedom to Read* for the 2013 ALA Banned Book Week by reading this selection. Yes, it is a short children's picture book, but I was knee deep in other reads this year.

So why was this book banned you ask?

This book was originally published in 1936. Some saw the material as fascist, socialistic, pacifist or communistic. Munro Leaf, an American writer, had chosen to set this book in Spain. Well, history will tell us in 1936 the Spanish Civil War began a few months after publication. Hitler's Third Reich was already in power in Germany.

The leader of the Spanish Nationalist, General Francisco Franco and his supporters saw the book as being pacifist, so it was banned.

Hitler called it degenerate propaganda and had it burned, he also supported Franco's Nationalist movement.

What exactly is this book about?

Being that is a short read I won't give away too much, but Ferdinand is young bull. He doesn't wish to partake in the rough horseplay that his brothers do all day. He would rather sit under a cork tree and enjoy life.

Be sure to enjoy the illustrations in the book, as they are fairly accurate for the area. Munro Leaf actually wrote this book for his friend Robert Lawson to illustrate. Lawson was in need of somewhere to showcase his work.

See slightly reworded review on my blog.

Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

I enjoyed this book on several levels: a wonderful book about being yourself for children - but also a subconscious commentary on fascist Spain - a bull with a big heart picked to be slaughtered at the Blood Wedding of Franco and fed to his guests - my interpretation.

Brad says

Many of the kids books I've been revisiting are filled with specific, vivid memories of my childhood that are almost narratives unto themselves. Reading them transports me back to those (probably apocryphal)

moments in my brain, leaving me full of a sort of joyful melancholy for things past and a hunger for more of those memories, a desire to relive all those locked up personal stories, so I grab another book I have always loved and devour it looking for more.

I didn't find those memories in *The Story of Ferdinand*, but I may have found something more precious.

I found that this story, with its beautiful illustrations and its little bull turned big bull who just wants to live peacefully and smell his flowers, made me think about people I care about rather than remembering some synopsis tale of them.

It made me think of my mother, Chris. I always called her "Chris," which drove my father crazy because of how "disrespectful" it was. I thought of Chris and guessed that she probably read this book to me first. And I thought of how every book I touch and word I write is her gift to me, for teaching me to read, then teaching me to challenge myself with books that were "inappropriate," then sharing our reading when we were older.

It made me think of my cousin, Fred, who I called Ferdinand behind his back. I thought of his moustache and 80s hair. I thought of how we both had brutally abusive fathers, but have never talked about it, even now, so many years after escaping their fists.

It made me think of K.I. Hope, and how the anger of her writing -- that wonderful, necessary, emotional, ethical rage -- would cringe at the other bulls, Ferdinand's friends and family, showing off in the hopes of travelling to Madrid to be slaughtered in the bullfights. I thought of what a true friend she is and how unlikely it is to find a genuine friend on something like this social media platform, and how I have found so many.

It made me think of Brontë and Miloš and Scoutie, and how much they love *The Story of Ferdinand*, and how Miloš is always trying to mimic the light Spanish accent I use to read them the book aloud, and how Brontë loves the art, and how Scoutie babbles the story back to me with her incomprehensible toddler language, punctuated by a "Ferdie-and" or "cow."

And it made me think of Munroe Leaf. She and all the other authors I've had a relationship over my life. They have been my best friends. And each book that I love ... it's a gift written by them just for me. Thanks, Munroe. I love you too.

Julie says

It could be said this has been on my TBR list since childhood. I don't remember reading it then, and don't remember reading it to my daughter. Although I've known the story of the "little bull with a gentle heart who turned into a big bull with a gentle heart" for quite some time, I'd never picked up a copy until now.

Lovely little story, which shook the world one might say.

It was banned in Spain during the Spanish Civil War since it was seen as a "pacifist" book. (Oh, the horror!)

It was banned in Nazi Germany (by none other than Little Adolf) for being "degenerate democratic propaganda."

We better watch out, girls and boys, if The Trumpet ever learns to read!

How can you rate it less than 5 glorious stars when you know that it made Franco and Hitler shake in their tiny little boots, just at the thought of it?

(And for what it's worth, it's a great little book for children too!)

Nikki says

This is, without a doubt, my absolute FAVORITE book from childhood. I remember my mother reading this to me as a small child, and having to fight back the tears, the story touched me so deeply. I found significance in the extreme simplicity of the words and illustrations. I was impressed with Ferdinand's gentle, yet strong, nature. He stood firm against the strongest pressures and remained constant. I like to analyze this book on many levels. On a side note (and dork moment): my husband holds the same valuable characteristics I have always cherished in Ferdinand. I think I fell in love with Ferdinand as a child and as an adult found him realized and embodied in my husband.

Krista Regester says

Awe Ferdinand is such a cutie pie!
