



First Boy

Gary D. Schmidt

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A fast-paced political thriller

“You’re my first boy, Cooper, my first boy,” grandfather says just before he dies. All alone in the world, without even a dog, the only thing that keeps Cooper going is running the dairy farm.

Suddenly, black sedans are swarming all around Cooper’s small New Hampshire town, driven by mysterious men in dark suits. Cooper’s barn is burned to the ground, and his house is broken into and searched during the night. The President of the United States calls on Cooper for a visit, and her opponent wants Cooper to join him on the campaign trail.

This fast-paced political thriller will have the reader turning the pages in anticipation of the next clue.

First Boy Details

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Author : Gary D. Schmidt

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From Reader Review First Boy for online ebook

Isaac Alcantar says

Cooper Jewett is a 14-year-old boy who has no siblings, no grandparents, and no parents. He lives on a farm that he works very hard on, but a senator who is trying to ruin the President's race for re-election gets in Copper's way a lot. Cooper struggles a lot with his grandfather's recent passing and he gets a lot of help from his neighbors, Mr. Searle, and Mrs. Perley. This book is really good in my opinion because the book starts off slow and you think it's going to continue like that but it just gets better later on. One part I didn't really enjoy from the story was when Cooper was in his house and a big guy broke in and started to twist Cooper's arm, which to me sounded pretty brutal. In my opinion, I think that the author could have added more action and suspense at the beginning of the story. I mostly enjoyed when Cooper would show he's not scared to rebel against Senator Wickham. I would mostly recommend this book to the people who love to read about suspense, action, and mystery. This book was really good and I would highly recommend reading!

Jesus Jimenez says

First Boy By Gary Schmidt was a book full of emotions as you go through the story of a boy named Cooper Jewett but it was a very interesting and one of the best books that I've read in awhile. The book I couldn't really pinpoint what genre it was as it's a mix of a lot of genres like mystery, action, and you do feel compassion towards Cooper after hearing and learning about the story that he has gone through. I would recommend this book to anyone who has the chance to read this book and it's not a very long book so it won't take you so long to read. Even though the book is short the story is really great and it fits perfectly with the length of the book. You could read this book an hour for I would say 3-4 days each day and you could get it done.

I would take this book when you're going on a short road trip time would fly by as you really get into this book and don't want to stop reading until you've learned about what happens. I read this book in 3 hours because I didn't want to stop until I finished it all. The part about the book that I enjoyed the most was the mystery element that the bad had. The scandal that Copper will be in is very intriguing, it makes you think about what is going to happen to him as the book moves on.

The author really hits your emotions when he tells you the background story about Cooper and the terrible things that he has to go through. It makes you really root for Cooper and you want to see him have a happy ending after what he's been through. I really liked how the author uses a mix of genres in the book as it makes the book 100 times better and I really rate this book highly.

Lena says

I fell in love with this author after reading The Wednesday Wars and Okay for Now, so I grabbed this when I saw it at the library. I wasn't nearly as impressed by this one. It had some sweet parts, and the main character was definitely loveable. Whatever decision you think you might make, you still think he's right for his choice, and I can't imagine a reader not rooting for him as he battles evil politicians and their cronies. However, although I connected with the protagonist, and, as usual with Schmidt's books, the wonderfully quirky set of supporting characters, I missed the humor that I found so appealing in his other books. I've also read Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy, which was more sad than humorous. Still, the reasons I enjoyed

the others so much was that they maintained a sense of humor throughout, although sometimes biting, even through some heart-wrenching scenes. This one might be funny to some, but I didn't connect with the humor as well in this one. Also, throughout the book, Connor has two main things going on--his life on the dairy farm, and the political side. Sometimes it was easy to forget the other. I felt like the two storylines were tied together in a clumsy way at times.

However, I did enjoy the book. It has mild humor, nothing crude, and would be appropriate for all ages, but I'd recommend it more for the middle grade audience than YA. The author does a great job with the descriptions, as usual, and also of making us feel Connor's strong connection to the cows and the dairy farm, so that we understand his struggle as he contemplates giving it up. A lovable cast of characters and some good action make it a fast-paced and engaging read.

Recommended for middle grade readers, especially boys, especially special boys who live on dairy farms.

Marilyn Pettigrove says

This is a lovely little story of a New Hampshire farm boy set in a political thriller genre for Y/A. It is short. It is tender. It is worth the read.

Thomas says

"First Boy" can pretty much be summed up entirely by its title. Cooper Jewett is a fourteen year old boy who has pretty much lost it all - his parents, his grandparents recently passed away, and he is struggling to keep and maintain his farm. Then, several events send him spiraling into a political conspiracy that he never would've imagined.

I thought this was a decent book, the age group was probably a bit too young for me. It was well written but not terribly impressive, there were a few plot holes due to the far-fetched nature of the story though. Also, some of the dialogue fell flat and felt awkward, there was one part where a lady was correcting herself for starting sentences with conjugations, but that's not how people normally talk. Especially in the south, for that matter. Either way I thought it was a decent read but not Gary Schmidt's best.

Liz says

Cooper Jewett's grandfather and only guardian just died, leaving him to run a dairy farm in New Hampshire by himself. Cooper's parents died in a car accident when he was a baby, at least that's what he's been told. After his grandfather's death, Mrs. Perley helps out by cooking for Cooper and sleeping downstairs instead of going home to her own house at night. Mr. Searle, another dairy farmer, helps out with the chores around the farm. Cooper does the best he can to keep up with his schoolwork and with his position on the cross-country team. But black sedans are following him, and soon he finds himself in the middle of a fight between President of the United States, who's running for reelection, and Senator Wickham, the challenger.

Political dirty tricks are the basis of the book. Cooper is the tool, and he spends most of his time trying to keep himself from being used.

Senator Wickham is the bad guy here, and he's very bad, and very one-dimensional. The President and the

people working for her are slightly more three dimensional than the people working for Senator Wickham. Mr. Searle and Mrs. Perley are both good guys, and they're very good, in spite of their gruff New England top layer. The Methodist minister and his very large family, including Cooper's friend Peter, are also very good.

Senator Wickham tries one destructive act after another to try to get Cooper to cooperate with him. While the acts move the story along, they seem contrived.

Cooper is the only multidimensional character. He's dealing with the loss of his grandparents, the fear of losing his farm, the work involved in maintaining the farm and going to school. Mr. Searle and Mrs. Perley love him, and this gives their characters a bit more multidimensionality.

The descriptions of the farming lifestyle and Cooper's Farm in particular makes me want to live on a dairy farm in New Hampshire. I can almost feel the warmth coming from the cows as Cooper leans into them while milking them on a cold morning.

Over all, this is not a masterpiece, but a fun romp into political dirty tricks.

Miss says

Plot Summary

Fourteen year old, Cooper Jewett, recently lost his guardians, his grandparents. Grandma and Grandpa Jewett became his "grandparents" after Cooper was brought to them by an unknown couple. This couple gave him to them, along with some other documents including a birth certificate. After Cooper's grandparents died, a lot of weird things started happening to him. For example, one of the barns burned down. After he came in from putting out the fire, he noticed that his house was ransacked. His fence was destroyed as well. Senator Wickman, who is running for President of the United States, came to Cooper's school to ask him to help with his campaign. Cooper refused. But he is caught up in a scandal after Senator Wickman made an announcement about a 14 year old secret. Senator Wickman got a team of doctors and nurses to hold a press conference. This conference was to reveal that the President and the First Gentleman are Cooper's parents, whom they abandoned fourteen years ago. When the doctor got up to speak, he said that he did not remember Cooper's birth, therefore, he cannot confirm that they are the parents. Cooper was able to go back and live on the farm with Mrs. Perley, who has been taking care of him, as his guardian. And Mr. Searle in charge of the farm.

Personal Reaction

From the start, I assumed that there was going to be an issue for the remainder of Cooper's life. With the death of his grandparents.

Critical Insight

I think this was a coming of age story because it places Cooper in many positions for him to become responsible. I also think that the author did a great job in helping return him to the farm that he is familiar with. The typical book would allow him to go back to his farm, but would eventually turn him in to the

Social Services. So this breaks away from the conventions. I also think the author did a great job on taking a while before he reveal the gender of the President. I could see how the audience would believe that the president would be the father. But because it was the mother, it took a while to catch on. So this allowed the reader to be in some suspense for a while by not revealing this information. We usually suspect that the President is a man.

Suggest

Heather Fuller says

Sort of goofy plot but interesting for middle grades. Still heartwarming as with all G.D. Schmidt books.

Art says

Made me miss the farm

Sheila Summerhays says

A Middle Grades to Young Adult book, I still loved it.

Mandy Roth says

Suspense

Cooper Jewett is an ordinary dairy-farm boy--that is until his grandfather passes away leaving him an orphan, alone to run the farm, and a series of mysterious events begin to occur. Cooper is soon pursued to campaign for presidential-candidate, Senator Wickham, who turns out has an alternative motive. As the plot unfolds with car chases and kidnappings, it is discovered that Jewett is very much an ordinary boy related to very popular people. However, all Cooper really wants is to be himself and have his own life back, and be loved. In the end, he gets just that, discovering that he was never really alone.

Although the car chases, kidnappings and political scandal kept the plot moving, the forfeit of absolute independence for love and support is what will resonate to readers and did to me. I think Schmidt wants his readers to know that during the times when we feel most isolated and lost, we really just need to look around and realize that there are people who care for us. Other than that, the book falls short in answering impending questions, satisfying reader curiosity in plot elements, and carrying through with anticipated promises. Not one of Schmidt's best novels.

Paul H says

First boy is a book about a boy named Cooper Jewett who is a boy that doesn't know his parents and thinks his parents died. Then one day in his own house people came in and broke into his house, smashed the windows and kidnapped him and his Grandfather. The only question they asked him was, where is your birth certificate.

My favorite part of the book was the characters and how in-depth the story was with Cooper's backstory. I like how Cooper and his Grandfather cared for each other so much. One of the parts I don't like is the plot of the story because the story is around someone being the "First Boy" and also the way it was set up was different from what I usually like. Never the less it was not a bad book.

Jennifer says

A political thriller featuring two octogenarians and a fourteen-year-old boy living on a dairy farm-- as much as I never thought I'd string those particular words together, there you have it.

The magic of Gary D. Schmidt is that his stories center around that which is found through loss. He has a gift for writing such whole and complete young male characters, and having recently read this somewhat disheartening article, it was refreshing to come across this early work (which pre-dates both *Okay for Now* and *What Came from the Stars*).

With the exception of clearly portrayed antagonists, each character is written with so much compassion, humor, and honesty, reading this fills me with a sort of wistful ache for "the good old days," even though there is nothing in this story to suggest that it takes place in the far past. (In fact, it could be said that a certain character makes this quite a modern tale, in a progressive sort of way.)

I love quick reads that are also good reads-- a much better alternative than getting caught up in a YouTube "study break" cycle that unintentionally lasts for hours. Ahem.

Anne says

This book does not have the same feeling of the other books by Schmidt that I have read. There is lots of politics and lots of action in this one but the gripping word choice is lacking here.

Kendra says

Entertaining story, but too many frustrating loose ends.
