



# Turn Left at the Cow

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## **Turn Left at the Cow** Lisa Bullard

Thirteen-year-old Trav has always wondered about his dead-before-he-was-born dad. But when he heads from California to his grandmother's house in rural Minnesota, hoping to learn about his past, he gets more than he bargained for.

It turns out his dad was involved in a bank robbery right before he mysteriously disappeared, and the loot from the take is still missing. Along with Kenny and Iz, the kids next door, Trav embarks on a search for the cash. But the trio's adventure quickly turns dangerous when it becomes clear that someone else is looking for the money—someone who won't give up without a fight!

## **Turn Left at the Cow Details**

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Author : Lisa Bullard

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# From Reader Review Turn Left at the Cow for online ebook

## Peggy says

Trav has a hard time adjusting to his new life with his mom and stepdad in their new home. His dad disappeared before he was born, so Trav decides to take off to his grandmother's in a podunk town in Minnesota to learn more about his father. He runs into unexpected problems when he learns that the whole town thinks his dad was a bank robber and that Trav knows where the money is. He learns about himself and his family in this adventure. The author has a delightful sense of humor that makes the story line even more enjoyable. Trav grows up as he learns to deal with his family issues and learns more about who he is. This is a good teen read.

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## Zakari says

This fictional book by Lisa Bullard was published in 2013. The reason why I didn't like this book is because the dialogue was a little funky and rushed, and you have to keep on track with the book or you'll miss what's happening in the book. The main character of this novel is Trav who is ambitious because he wants to find his father's money, and he'll never stop until he does. This story is about how Trav goes to his paternal grandmother and tries to find out what happened to his father and how he disappeared. The main conflict is that the father is missing.

In the story, the author didn't tell much about Trav's father and why he robbed a bank; she jumped right into how Trav was going to find his father.

I found the story believable because it could happen in real life where someone would be interested in trying to find more details about how a parent went missing.

I didn't like this book, so I can't really recommend it for people. However, I can recommend this book to people who want a very detailed mystery. I don't recommend this book for ages kindergarten through fifth grade because you have to understand, and there is some Things a kindergartner should not know.

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## Cynthia says

So many kids' books are insipid. You won't find this to be true of "Turn Left at the Cow". It's a fun mystery about a young boy who's having trouble adjusting to a new stepfather and a new school. He takes off to stay with his Grandmother in Minnesota to escape a summer of boredom and upset at home and finds himself on an odyssey to get to know the father he never knew, a father, unfortunately, who died before our hero, thirteen year old Travis, was born. Along the way he and his grandmother strengthen their previously tenuous bond.

He also meets the feisty kids who live next his grandmother. Together they search for lost treasure, purportedly the money Trav's dad stole from the local bank prior to disappearing. As they sift through the past for clues to where the treasure is hidden they learn valuable lesson concerning which of the grownups can be trusted and which can be deadly. First love is also on the agenda. All of this might sound serious, and it is, but Bullard's humor lights up the story and helps keep things in perspective. If your experience is

anything like mine you'll find yourself laughing out loud alternately with tearing up.

This review is based on an advance reader's copy provided by the publisher.  
(Disclaimer given as required by the FTC.)

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### **Sharon says**

I loved how this author gets right into a 13-year old teenage boy's head and puts his thoughts into such a humorous way. I thoroughly enjoyed the friendships, the mystery, the family relationships (good and bad) and how these kids worked things out. A very enjoyable read.

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### **Lauren says**

Always nice to read a book set in Minnesota! Although this one maybe relies a bit much on stereotyping (jell-o salads, heads made of butter, giant fish statues, etc...). I found the mystery well-structured and well-paced, with some genuinely thrilling peril at the end. I think Trav, the main character, had a unique narrative voice that was maintained throughout and fairly believable. I also liked the novel's sensitive exploration of the theme of family, and particularly the ways that broken families try to put themselves back together.

There are a lot of jokes that I think many middle schoolers might find funny, but most of them fell flat to me, which made it a little tedious. Too many easy targets and moments of sarcasm-bordering-on-insults. Also a lot of the dialogue was a little cringey.

Recommended: There's a little something for most readers: adventure, mystery, humor, romance, friendship, family, and a lot of Minnesota charm. I'd give it to about 5th grade and up (the main character is 13). I'd give it to fans of Three Times Lucky, Alibi Junior High, or The Case of the Case of Mistaken Identity.

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### **Online Eccentric Librarian says**

*More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>*

Turn Left at the Cow is a very hip and witty mystery featuring a fish-out-of-water main character and the quirky individuals with whom he interacts over one Summer.

13 year old Trav, frustrated over his mother's remarriage and lack of time for him, grabs a bus and heads for his long-lost father's family in Minnesota. Amidst butter sculptures, chicken crap bingo, and long Summers at the lake, he finds a mystery involving his father and a bank robbery, new friends, and a different way at looking at life.

What makes the book special is the tone of voice of all the characters. Trav considers himself the very hip

California boy and speaks in a very assured but nearly comical inner voice laden with cultural references. I liked that inner dialogue most - it felt genuine and gave us a really good perspective on his personality. As well, it flowed and felt natural.

Iz and Kenny, the two Trav befriends in Minnesota, are well drawn individuals with home-town perspectives that aren't cheap shots on small town life. And that smaller world fits well with the confusion Trav has over coming to grips with a father who abandoned him and was supposedly dead - as well as the grandmother he's never had an opportunity to meet. Trav is less concerned about the mystery of the missing bank robbery loot than finding out how he feels about his father never coming to find him in California before his mysterious death.

In all, I enjoyed reading this with my 10 year old. She didn't get all the cultural references but really enjoyed the mystery and the friends all the same.

Received as an ARC from the publisher.

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### **Debra says**

Lured in by the cover and title and grabbed by the first chapter where Trav is cleaning out his Grandmother's freezer of very old frozen wild animals and frozen heads - yes, a frozen head, I just had to keep on reading. Travis has lit off for Minnesota and his Grandma to escape his mother's new husband (his new step-dad) and to find out about his dad who had split before he was born. What he finds is a very real mystery in a very nosy small town and two kids his age who have the potential to becoming the friends that he desires. A fun read and some really dicey, scary situations.

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### **MikeL says**

Turn Left At the Cow was a fascinating adventure of suspense, sorrow and deep thoughts involving his father missing during his childhood.

Throughout his adventure, he is nagged by a girl named Iz and her cousin, Kelly, they're only in it to help him find his Dad's money from the robbery he had done before Travis was born. The book follows him and his thoughts as he explores old memories and clues of how his dad really was and who he was, with detailed in depth thoughts of Travis's emotions, and his suspecting Grandma who he thinks knows where the money is. If you love suspense and twists, you'll adore this book!

Overall, the book is well written and very suspenseful, as each event chains out to the next.

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### **Leo says**

In the book Turn Left at the Cow, Lisa Bullard tells an amazing mystery about kids trying to solve a mystery. There are only two questions. Is Travis's dad dead and did he actually rob that bank? At the beginning, Travis starts to wonder what ever happened to his dad; all he know is that he is dead. Or is he? But his mom won't tell him anything, so he runs away to his grandma's house. Along the way he meets two kids named Kenny and Iz. Trav finds out that Kenny and Iz are searching for the reward money that his dad supposedly

stole. Then a old friend of Grams named Carl says he knows where the money is. Karl says, "I know where it is. I know what you're looking for" (117). Could Carl actually know where the money is? Or is he sending Kenny, Iz, and Trav an a wild goose chase for fake money? I would recommend this book to people in 4th-8th grade, and I gave it 5 stars.

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### **Mlunapd1 says**

"Turn Left at the Cow" was a great novel, don't let its name fool you. Despite it having no images, the vivid imagery and suspense

is personally my favorite aspect of this novel, and how one event strings to another!

In this book, you need to remember what he did in the past in order to solve whats going on in his future, as you follow the protagonist Travis, who is searching for the missing millions his dad supposedly left behind, and was pressured into joining a girl named Isabelle and her cousin, Kenny to find the money.

The book is fascinating, with plot twists hiding behind every corner, and suspense builds towards the end as your mind is filled with questions!

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

When Travis' mother gets remarried, he decides to hop a bus and spend the summer with his deceased father's mother in Minnesota. He gets in trouble, of course, and his grandmother sets him to doing chores, which start with him cleaning out a deep freeze and finding a frozen head... a butter head, but still! With the help of neighbors Kenny and Iz, Travis investigates the long ago crime of which his father is accused-- robbing a local bank. It is especially timely since the money taken during that heist starts showing up at local businesses. While Travis and his friends manage to get themselves into some funny situations (and eat some hot dish along they way), when they come close to the truth, they get themselves into real danger.

Strengths: This is going on my order list right now! I really enjoyed all of the characters, especially the grandmother, who was dealing with the death of her son all over again as she had to explain it to Travis. The mystery was realistic, and reminded my strongly of John F. Carson's *The Mystery of the Tarnished Trophy* (1964), which is one of my favorite books. Plenty of action, a cool town dump, strong sense of place-- great stuff.

Weaknesses: I could have done without the drama with Travis' mother, since there was so much going on, but it was kind of essential to his trip to Minnesota.

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### **Cheryl says**

Travis is always hearing from his mother that he needs to show some initiative. So Travis does just that. He travels from California to Minnesota to his grandmother's house. Travis get's punishment duty. This is not right as Travis was just listening to his mother. However it is during his clean up duty that he learns that his grandmother has a lot of dead bodies in her freezer. Who knew that such a sweet, old woman was home to the dead. Travis meets the next door neighbors, Kenny and his cousin, Iz. They inform Travis that they are searching for missing money. It seems that a long time ago, Travis's father robbed a bank and disappeared with a bunch of money. The story goes that the money is buried close by. Kenny, Iz, and Travis plan to find

the money.

I picked up this book because I thought my ten year old nephew would enjoy this book. Also, I was intrigued by the title of this book and wanted to know what it meant. I can so relate to the title after learning its meaning. I went to Nebraska for two weeks at a flying camp to get hours towards my pilot's license. It was like turn left at the light green field and turn right at the double dark green field.

Travis, Kenny, and Iz made a fun, group. Iz is the leader. Plus I could really relate to her with her attitude and hanging with the boys. Kenny is the sweet but naive one. Travis is the muscle but with brains. This is a book that my nephew will have fun reading.

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## **Sreeman says**

THIS BOOK IS SOOOOOO GOOD

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## **Beth says**

So disappointed. Really wanted to like this one with MN ties and a Maud Hart Lovelace nominee...but alas, I did not like at all. It was a struggle to actually read all vs just skipping to ending to what I'd already guessed. MC Trav was condescending and shallow. No character development for grandmother either. Introduced lots of characters like Kenny, Iz, and crazy Carl but never gave much back story or any fill in the blank moments for a good wrap up at end. I really wanted to know more about Carl...but he just faded away...the mom seemed disconnected from her son too.

Really did not like the way Trav related his thoughts is snarky phrases about EVERYTHING.

Examples:

ch 14 pg 120-...the entire population of Chicken Scratch had gathered there...

...I was waiting around for them to Judge Judy me...

Ch 16 pg 155 Someday, maybe I would get up the courage to push past the sad in her face and just ask her my hardest questions.

\*\*\*Someday ask??? The kid ran away TO his grama to do just that...now that he's there, he's just gonna hang out??

more on pg 155...She'd spent at least enough time with the guy who'd donated my Y chromosome to create a lifetime souvenir...

Ch 20 pg 201. .. I have a lot of questions about the Big Guy in the Sky...I was too distracted to make time for The Man Upstairs...\*\*\*can't you just say God???,

\*\*\*really, must everything be explained in such weird sarcastic descriptions?

I can't even count all the snarky names Trav used for his fathers home town. Don't think the real name of town was ever mentioned...

Just End of Nowhere, Chicken Scratch etc...

Romance seemed unnecessary and forced for 13 yr olds.

Got tired if reference to Deputy Dude also. Just screams disrespect.

Also confusing for Trav only seeming to have disdain for small town MN to not want to leave?? I was glad to be done with this book and sad that I can't recommended to anyone...

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**Jessa Franco says**

Something with this great a synopsis and title shouldn't have been this boring.

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